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*From Violence to Mobilization:
War, Women, and Political Power in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina*

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor
of Philosophy in Sociology

By

Marie Elizabeth Berry

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

From Violence to Mobilization:
War, Women, and Political Power in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina

by

Marie Elizabeth Berry

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Abigail Cope Saguy, Co-Chair

Professor Andreas Wimmer, Co-Chair

How does war impact societies in its aftermath? How does war impact women in particular? At its most fundamental level, war is an accelerated period of social change: it destroys social structures, dismantles institutions, and forces power relations to shift. This dissertation seeks to understand how violence can transform social structures, using the experience of women after violence as a lens through which to do so. Case studies of Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina animate the project. Drawing from ten months of fieldwork and interviews with 238 women in both countries, I illustrate how war can serve as a period of rapid social change that can trigger a reconfiguration of gender roles. I argue that war does this by precipitating three interrelated and overlapping shifts: (1) a demographic shift, due to the disproportionate death, conscription, and imprisonment of men and the massive displacement of people from their homes; (2) an economic shift, due to the destruction of infrastructure, agricultural capacity, and the arrival of

international humanitarian aid; and (3) a cultural shift, due to the reconceptualization of women as legitimate public actors, as women juxtapose their “more peaceful” nature with men’s propensity for war. Then, these three shifts lead to a fourth: an increase in women’s political engagement. A focus on both informal and formal politics allows me to analyze the multifaceted and varied ways that violence restructured women’s lives and allowed for some women’s increased participation in public, political spaces. As the closing chapter shows, however, many of these gains were short lived, as international actors, the state, and revitalized patriarchal norms intervened to undermine and set back women’s progress.

The dissertation of Marie Elizabeth Berry is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2015

—To all women survivors of war around the world

&

— To M., T., Y., and P., who survived genocide but cannot speak freely or live safely in their country today.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS: RWANDA

Bagosora, Theoneste: Hutu Power extremist within Habyarimana's government; member of the Akazu. De facto head of Rwandan government during the genocide. Major architect of the violence.

Bizimungu, Pasteur: Hutu member of the RPF, was appointed President of Rwanda during the immediate post-genocide period. Considered the head of the "Government of National Unity."

Kagame, Paul: Current President of Rwanda. Commanding general of the RPF.

Kanjogera: Queen Mother during Musinga's reign.

Kayibanda, Gregoire: President of Rwanda from 1962-1973. Head of PARMEHUTU political party. From the south of Rwanda. Hutu.

Habyarimana, Juvenal: President of Rwanda from 1973-1994. Head of MRND political party. Hutu. From Gisenyi. Shifted powerbase of Rwanda to the north of the country.

Ndadaye, Melchoir: Hutu president of Burundi, assassinated on October 21, 1993.

Mitterand, Françoise: President of France during the genocide, close ally of President Habyarimana

Musinga: Tutsi King of Rwanda from 1896-1931.

Uwilingiyimana, Agathe: Hutu Prime Minister of Rwanda from 1993-1994, when she was assassinated during the first day of the genocide.

Rwigyema, Fred: Early leader of the RPF in Uganda, killed during the first days of the RPF invasion of Rwanda in 1990. Former Army Chief of Staff and Deputy Minister of Defense in Uganda after fighting in Museveni's National Resistance Movement.

Sindikubwabo, Theodore: Interim President of Rwanda during the genocide.

TERMS

Interahamwe: "Those who fight together"/"Those who work together." The name of the militias who conducted much of the killing during the genocide. Many were former MRND political party members, especially from the youth wings. Technically the first civilian militia.

Génocidaires: [Derived from French but incorporated into Kinyarwanda lexicon]: Term used to refer to anyone who committed the genocide. Has taken on new political meaning, as it is used to accuse people in Rwanda who challenge or oppose the new RPF regime in any capacity.

Gacaca: A court system resurrected from pre-colonial Rwanda, which the post-genocide government implemented to try the millions of cases related to genocide crimes.

Mwami (plural: *Abami*): King in Kinyarwanda.

“Bapfuye buhagazi”: The walking dead, used to refer to Tutsi survivors of genocide, often by the diaspora Tutsi

Akazu: “The little house,” used to refer to the inner core of Habyarimana’s regime, including his wife Agate Habyarimana and her clan.

Inyenzi: Cockroaches in Kinyarwanda. Term used to refer to Tutsis, largely out of spite. Often used during the genocide against the RPF, as well as against ordinary Tutsi.

Kinyarwanda: The language of Rwanda. As Prunier (1995) smartly points out, it is spoken *exactly* the same by Hutu and Tutsi.

Ubugake: A formal of personal contract in traditional Rwandan society, in which an individual was bound as a producer to their “patron” or “chief” and was required to give his/her labor in that service.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADLF (Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre): National Army of the Democratic Republic of Congo that brought Congo President Laurent Kabila to power in the First Congo War (1996-1997).

CDR (Counsil National du Développement): Extremist political party that spun off from MRND and supported Habyarimana, before deeming him too moderate. This party began one of the key organizers of the genocide.

FAR (Forces Armées Rwandaise): the Rwandan government’s military during the Habyarimana regime and the genocide-era government. FAR troops were responsible for committing much of the genocide, and also engaging in the civil war against RPF forces.

PG: Presidential Guard (or in French, *Garde Présidentielle*): The group of trained fighters commanded directly by the President. After Habyarimana’s assassination the PG was commanded by Bagosora, and were the initial instigators of the genocide.

MRND (Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (et la Démocratie)): Habyarimana’s political party that controlled the state from his ascent to power in 1973. Its leaders were heavily involved in planning and executing the genocide.

MDR: Mouvement Démocratique Républicain: The primary opposition party to Habyarimana’s MRND; later a coalition partner in the “Government of National Unity”

PL: Parti Libéral: Opposition party to Habyarimana’s MRND. Counted many Tutsis among its members. Later a coalition partner in the “Government of National Unity”

PSD: Parti Social Démocrate: Social Democratic party which was one of the largest opposition parties and later a coalition partner in the “Government of National Unity”

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front: the political arm of the guerrilla movement led by Paul Kagame that originated in Uganda

RPA: The military arm of the RPF

UNHCR: UN High Commission for Refugees

UNAMIR: UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda. Initially consisted of 2,500 peacekeepers, but this number was reduced to 270 during the first days of the genocide.

CAST OF CHARACTERS: BOSNIA

Boutros-Ghali, Boutros: UN Secretary General from 1992—1996.

Broz, Josip (Tito): Founder of Communist Yugoslavia, leader of the Partisan resistance movement during WWII, ruled Yugoslavia from 1945 - 1980. Died in 1980.

Izetbegović, Alija: Founding leader of the Muslim Party of Democratic Action (SDA) who became President of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1990—1996, when he then joined the rotating tripartite presidency until 2000. Died in 2003.

Karadžić, Radovan: President of Republika Srpska. Indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Sometimes referred to as the “Butcher of Bosnia.” Trained as a psychiatrist. In hiding for years after war. Finally arrested in 2008 and is currently on trial at the ICTY.

Milošević, Slobodan: President of Serbia. Indicted for war crimes by the ICTY. Died during trial at ICTY in 2006.

Mladić, Ratko: General in command of Bosnian Serb Army beginning in 1992. Indicted for war crimes by the ICTY in 1995 but lived as a fugitive for years after war. Finally arrested in 2011 and is currently on trial at the ICTY.

Morillon, Phillipe: Commander of UN forces in Bosnia from 1992-1993.

Orić, Naser: Led resistance from Srebrenica in 1992. Former bodyguard for Milošević.

Plavšić, Biljana: Member of the pre-war Bosnian Presidency. Serb nationalist.

Ražnatović, Željko-Arkan: Commander of notoriously brutal paramilitary group known as “Arkan’s Tigers.” Accused of war crimes. Killed in 2000. Indicted for crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Silajdžić, Haris: Prime Minister of Bosnia from 1993—1996, became the Bosniak representative to the rotating presidency from 2006—2010.

Tudjman, Franjo: Founder of Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and first President of Croatia after independence. Died in 1999.

TERMS

Bosniak: Term that came into widespread use in 1993 to describe an ethnic Bosnian Muslim, but without asserting a specific religious affiliation. Not to be confused with “Bosnian,” which is a citizen of Bosnia of any ethnicity (Serb, Croat, Bosniak, or other). The term “Bosnian Muslims” was used to refer to the same group prior to 1993.

Croat: Bosnian citizen of Catholic ethnicity. Not to be confused with Croatian, which indicates a citizen of Croatia.

Serb: Bosnian citizen of Serbian Orthodox ethnicity. Not to be confused with Serbian, which indicates a citizen of Serbia.

Republika Srpska: The Serbian entity within Bosnia as established at the Dayton Accords in 1995. It comprises 49% of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and shares a loose federal government with the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but maintains its own government institutions as well.

Federation: The other entity in Bosnia, referred to colloquially (and sometimes insultingly) as the Muslim-Croat Federation. It comprises 51% of the territory of Bosnia as established at the Dayton Accords.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFZ: Antifascist Front of Women within Tito's Partisans and later within the Communist Party in Yugoslavia

JNA: Yugoslav National Army, commanded by Milošević during the war.

BIH: Abbreviation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Acknowledgements

During the final few weeks of dissertation writing I heard a radio interview with a man in Syria whose apartment building had been bombed many times. He described the exhausting repetition of bombs breaking windows, shattering belongings, and sending his family to take refuge in the windowless stairwell of the building. While describing the constant fear he lived in, he commented that before the war he hadn't known any of his neighbors. Now, with regular shelling of the building, the neighbors had become close; they had started playing games, singing, and comforting each other while stuck in the stairwell during each attack.

This short interview made a lasting impression on me for two reasons. First, as I write this dissertation, mass violence unfolds in several countries around the world. This is deeply, morally tragic. After studying Rwanda and Bosnia in depth over the past decade, what sticks with me most is the abhorrent nature of war and that it is never over when it is "over." Instead it persists, in different forms, for years and decades to come. The fact that such brutal forms of conflict still exist in the 21st century should be of the deepest ethical concern to individuals of all nationalities and backgrounds.

The interview also stuck with me for a different reason. It is in these periods of destruction, these periods of pain and fear, that devastation can be forged into something new: new forms of social organization, new types of activities, new gender roles. The idea that war is not only a period of destruction, but is also a period of transformation, motivates this project.

It has been a tremendous privilege to work on this project over the past seven years. It is to the individual women in Rwanda and Bosnia who agreed to sit with me for an interview that I am the most grateful. Their extraordinary stories of resilience,

strength, and anger are at the root of this study. It was a privilege to be invited into their homes, to share food, meet their children, and try to understand their struggles.

For allowing me the freedom to do this project and for constant support along the way, I owe tremendous gratitude to my accomplished and supportive dissertation committee. From my first visit to UCLA as a prospective student, Andreas Wimmer was my mentor and advisor, frequently taking my ideas apart and putting them back together stronger than ever. It was an honor to work closely with him during his years at UCLA, and I am grateful he stayed on as my advisor after he departed for the east coast.

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I am duly indebted to Gail Kligman, for her mentorship, poignant critical feedback, and support of me as a person and a scholar. She planted many ideas in my head that have challenged me to grow as a scholar and feminist, and I am exceedingly grateful for her guidance on this project.

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My fieldwork in Rwanda was fraught with frustrations but was also a period of tremendous learning. I am so very grateful to several Rwandan friends and research assistants who were my partners in this research. I would love to mention each of you by name, but out of respect for you and in acknowledgement of the political environment in Rwanda that is intolerant of criticism, I choose to omit. In addition to them, I am grateful to the support of many in the field, including Iina Älli and Perttu Saralampi for hosting me in your home, Jesse Hawkes, Kate Doyle, David Loewenguth, Keri Schmit, Shelly Rosen, Nicky Fox, Erin Jessee, Milli Lake, Tim Williams, Sarah Watkins, Laura Heaton, Rebecca Davis, Marcella Pasotti, Sam Smith Pritchard, Elizabeth Powley, Maggie Zraly, Susan Thomson, and many others I am certainly forgetting. The FFRP in Parliament and the Center for the Study of Gender at the Kigali Institute of Education also provided research support and affiliation. Of course, only I am responsible for the ideas discussed in this dissertation.

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what around, you can actually finish stuff. I'm quite proud of us, and look forward to Ojai Writing Retreat 2016.

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- Co-recipient of the 2011 Charles and Louise Tilly Award for Best Graduate
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Marie E. Berry, 2015. “When ‘Bright Futures’ Fade: Paradoxes of Women’s Empowerment
in Rwanda.” **Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society**: 41(1).

- Recipient of the 2015 ASA Human Rights Section Graduate Paper Award

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Rwanda’s Emergent Developmental State.” **New Political Economy**.
DOI: 10.1080/13563467.2015.1041484

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feature at **The Society Pages**: <http://thesocietypages.org/specials/ethno-racial-categories-rwanda/>

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Remarkable, Two-Decade March from Genocide has Left Women Behind.”

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http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/04/07/no_hope_better_life_rwanda_women_future.

Marie E. Berry, 2013. “Environmental Inequality, Class, and Life Chances.” **The Society**

Pages: <http://thesocietypages.org/teaching/2013/09/19/environmental-inequality-class-and-life-chances/>

Marie E. Berry, 2013. “War, Women, and Politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina.” **International**

Research and Exchange Bureau: <http://www.irex.org/resource/women-war-and-politics-bosnia-herzegovina-research-brief>

AWARDS

- 2014 **Charles E. and Sue K. Young Graduate Award**, given by the UCLA College Deans for exemplary academic achievement, research and service to the campus and community
- 2011 **Peter Kollock Graduate Teaching Award**, the top teaching award given by the UCLA Department of Sociology

FELLOWSHIPS

- 2014-2015 UCLA Dissertation Year Fellowship
- 2014 Dorothy L. Meier Fellowship
- 2012 IREX Individual Advanced Research Opportunities Fellowship (Bosnia)
- 2012 Jean Stone Dissertation Research Fellowship, UCLA Center for the Study of Women
- 2012 UCLA International Institute Fieldwork Fellowship
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- 2012 Maurice J. and Fay B. Karpf Peace Prize Award
- 2011-2012 UCLA Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship
- 2010 Social Science Research Council, Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship
- 2010 UCLA/Mellon Program on the Holocaust in American and World Culture, Summer Mellon Research Fellowship
- 2009, 2011 UCLA Graduate Summer Research Mentorship
- 2009 National Science Foundation, Graduate Research Award Honorable Mention
- 2008-2012 UCLA Department of Sociology Graduate Student Fellowship

**From Violence to Mobilization:
War, Women, and Political Power in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina**

“Violence is destructive; it constrains, it devastates, and it undoes...Yet the conflicts and activities in which violence is involved are not always purely destructive. In destroying, violence can also keep things in place; it can even set in motion change and the construction of the new.”

— Christopher Cramer (2006: 279)

CHAPTER 1: From Violence to Mobilization: Women, War, and Power

In early 1994, Ignatinne was a young housewife living in the south of Rwanda. As a child, she dreamed of growing up to be a doctor. In 1973, her father was killed in a wave of ethnic violence targeting Tutsis. Despite the trauma of his violent death, Ignatinne excelled in secondary school. Because of her ethnicity, however, she was denied entrance to university. When the genocide broke out in April 1994, Ignatinne's husband and many members of her family were killed. She found herself alone after the bloodshed. As she put it to me in an interview, to move forward "wasn't a choice, it was an obligation. Either you do it, or you die. Either you provide for yourself, your children, or others, or you die."

Instead of dwelling on the loss of her husband, Ignatinne asked herself what needed to be done. Having seen thousands of children suffer during the violence, she felt compelled to help. She managed to go back to school, and then she took a job with UNICEF. She helped children who were incarcerated, living on the streets, or in precarious housing situations. She joined with other initiatives and organizations advocating for children's rights. Soon, Ignatinne said she felt like she needed to ascend to a higher level to make a greater impact. In 2008 she ran for political office. Her first campaign was successful—today, Ignatinne sits in Rwanda's parliament, which boasts the highest level of women legislators of any country in the world.

WOMEN AND WAR

Ignatinne's story raises an important question: What is the impact of war on women? The destructive effects of war are well known. War causes displacement, institutional breakdown, psychological damage, physical suffering, economic collapse,

and myriad other harms. The global media repeatedly emphasizes war's negative impact on women; images of "weeping women, wringing hands" (Del Zotto 2002: 1) are used to capture the immense suffering caused by violence. Such news coverage builds on the political realist paradigm, which constructs the world's problems as characteristically violent and anarchical (Tickner 1996; Del Zotto 2002). In recent violence in Sudan, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, journalists fixated on women's experiences in two primary roles: as victims of sexual violence and as refugees. In contrast, men were shown in combat fatigues, bearing weapons (Elshtain 1987; Mertus 1994; Cockburn 1998). In such depictions, men's dominance in combat roles renders them "active" subjects meant to protect "passive" subjects like women and children.¹

This passive narrative contrasts with examples of strong, proactive women like Ignatienne. Further, it does not reflect a robust literature on the active roles women play both during and after episodes of violence (see Baumel 1999; Aretxaga 1997; Bop 2001; Sharoni 2001; or Lorentzen and Turpin 1998 for an overview). While few serve as combatants, women are not absent during military conflicts and are even conscripted into military service in some countries (e.g., Israel). In the second half of the 20th century, women played active combat roles in guerrilla movements in countries such as Nicaragua, Vietnam, Iran, Eritrea, El Salvador, Argentina, Sri Lanka, and Lebanon. Women's involvement in Algeria's war of independence from France (1954-1962) was instrumental in revealing the potential for revolution to liberate women and served as a model for many of these later movements (Turshen 2002). Combat roles sometimes serve as a launchpad for women's increased participation in public life. For example, women

mobilized as guerillas in El Salvador's civil war (1979-1992), which catalyzed their involvement in new political capacities (Viterna 2013). In Sri Lanka, women's participation in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam inspired a concurrent women's movement for rights, increased wages, and labor protections.² In other guerrilla movements in Latin America, women's combat roles sometimes restructured traditional gender hierarchies and opened spaces for women to participate in new political roles (Chinchilla 1983; Luciak 2001; Kampwirth 2004). Inspired by these past studies, this project explores how large-scale armed conflict can open unexpected spaces for women's increased participation in various political capacities.

Women's increased political participation during war does not always stem from their role as armed combatants: it can also emerge through public protest. In East Timor, an indigenous women's association fought to liberate women from the patriarchal structures of Timorese society and simultaneously challenged the Indonesian military's occupation of the island nation (Franks 1996).³ In Liberia, a diverse coalition of women organized public sit-ins and protests to demand an end to the civil war; women even led a campaign to withhold sex from their husbands until they agreed to put down their weapons (Moran and Pitcher 2004; Fuest 2008; Moran 2012).⁴ In Israel and Palestine, women organized silent public protests against war to condemn the patriarchal militarism that perpetuates violence in their homeland (Helman and Rapoport 1997; Sharoni 1995, 2001). This protest model, epitomized by the organization "Women in Black," has been replicated in other contexts, including in the Balkans during the early 1990s.

"Mothers' movements" have also emerged in wars from Argentina to Sri Lanka (Femenía 1987; Schirmer 1989; Noonan 1995; De Alwis 1998). Motivated by grief over

the loss or conscription of their children, these movements tend to invert traditional notions about women's passive status as "bearers of the nation" by agitating for justice for crimes committed during the war (Ray and Korteweg 1999). These movements typically do not attempt to upend patriarchal hierarchies or even criticize women's role in society. In the process of publicly making their claims, however, such movements establish motherhood as a basis of legitimacy and thereby implicitly challenge conventional gender norms. Members of some mothers' groups have eventually run for political office, and some mothers' groups have gained official political status (Hunt and Posa 2001). In these contexts and others, we see how women can serve as voices of resistance to war, often challenging the male-dominated military machine (see Tickner 1992; Aretxaga 1997).

Many mothers' movements—and women's peace movements more broadly—draw on essentialized notions about women's "more peaceful" nature to make their claims. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993) noted that subaltern or oppressed groups sometimes consciously use "strategic essentialisms" as a way of simplifying differences that might raise problems in existing structures of power. Groups that highlight women's more peaceful and caring nature essentialize women; however, such "essentialisms" can sometimes afford women an opportunity to make political claims on the basis of their gender (Helms 2013). This is despite warnings from feminist scholars emphasizing that women's difference from men may ultimately exclude women from political spaces and prevent them from gaining sustainable power (Lorber 1994; Epstein 1997).

Difficult and painful experiences during war can also inspire collective resilience among survivors. The sheer magnitude of sexualized violence in recent wars has broken

down social taboos and made rape an easier topic to discuss in public. In Liberia, sharing experiences of sexualized violence helped victims recover together (Utas 2003). In Bosnia, women's groups brought survivors together and provided trauma counseling and psychosocial support (Helms 2003; Mertus 2004). In Rwanda, rape survivor groups helped women understand that they were not alone (El-Bushra and Mukarubuga 1995; Zraly 2008; Mukamana and Brysiewicz 2008). Sharing experiences and giving testimony can forge solidarity bonds between women and even catalyze the formation of women's groups to address war's traumatic consequences (Newbury and Baldwin 2000; Koomen 2013). It can also have political consequences: as Rwandan and Bosnian survivors of sexualized violence testified at the International Criminal Tribunals established for both countries in the aftermath, their testimonies helped to transform the way mass rape and sexual violence are defined and prosecuted under international law.

While the aforementioned scholarship reveals that women are not simply passive victims during war, two recent quantitative studies find something even more surprising: countries that have experienced war since the 1980s have higher rates of women in their legislatures than countries that have not experienced war (Hughes 2009; Tripp and Hughes 2015). Melanie Hughes (2009) incorporated war into standard statistical models explaining women's political representation (see Paxton 1997; Matland 1998, 2009; Reynolds 1999; Kenworthy and Malami 1999); she found that certain types of armed conflict in low-income states were associated with an increased level of women in parliament. Her subsequent study of this phenomenon with Aili Mari Tripp narrowed the analysis to Africa and found that states that experienced civil wars since 1980 had between 4 to 6 percent higher rates of women's legislative representation. Openings in

the “political opportunity structure” (Tarrow 1998; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001) after war—including peace talks, constitutional referendums, and new electoral commissions—are the suspected cause. In other words, war created opportunities to build new institutions. The historical timing of the conflict is important, as women’s initiatives after more recent conflicts have built on women’s increasing rights to press for greater equality (Tripp and Hughes 2015).

In a collaborative project with Hollie Nyseth Brehm, I extended Hughes and Tripp’s (2015) findings beyond Africa to investigate whether the timing of the conflict matters for the relationship between war and women’s legislative representation globally. Our preliminary results, perhaps surprisingly, find no relationship between war and women’s legislative representation when taking the timing of the violence into account. Although this work is still in progress, this finding complicates both prior studies and motivates us to identify the processes through which—and the conditions under which—war may be associated with increases in women’s political representation in some cases, but not others.⁵ This finding also encourages us to investigate which aspects of the post-war political opportunity structure inhibit or facilitate women’s political engagement after war.

In sum, while destructive, war can also be a period of rapid changes in gender roles. Oversimplified depictions of women’s suffering, shame, and victimhood do not reflect the full range of identities and experiences women encounter during war. With these varied experiences of women in mind, in this project I compare the impact of mass violence in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina on women in the aftermath. I analyze the structural shifts and processes through which war can precipitate women’s increased

political engagement. However, I also show how women's gains after war are often short-lived, as international actors, domestic political structures, and revitalized patriarchal norms combine to undermine women's progress.

ON LANGUAGE AND THE "GENOCIDE" DEBATE

At this point, it is prudent to clarify one thing. Many scholars, human rights activists, and journalists refer to the violence in Rwanda and Bosnia as genocides. This is more common in Rwanda, but is also used in reference to Bosnia, especially as the International Criminal Tribunal of the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) formally declared the massacre at Srebrenica to be an instance of genocide (see Cigar 1995; Bećirević 2014; Nyseth Brehm 2014). In an attempt to resist the "politics of naming" (Mamdani 2010), here I refer to specific elements of the violence as genocide, and yet I generally refer to both cases as "mass violence" or "war." There are a few theoretical reasons for this, which are worth explaining at the outset.

The 1948 UN Genocide Convention defined genocide as "the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a racial, ethnical, religious, or cultural group."⁶ The Convention was signed in the immediate aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust against Jews, the archetypal genocide in which the Nazi-controlled German state was undoubtedly the perpetrator and exhibited clear "intent to destroy" the Jewish population.⁷ The Convention describes genocide as "an odious scourge" that must be condemned by the "civilized world," establishing genocide as violence that is evil, amoral, and barbaric. In the years since the Holocaust, the term has been used to refer to certain subset of violent conflicts—most "genocide scholars" put Armenia, Cambodia, Guatemala, Rwanda, and Bosnia on the list. Scholars debate whether other cases—such as East Timor, Indonesia, or Darfur, Sudan—

should be included, often evaluating whether there was clear evidence of “intent to destroy.” In recent years a debate has also escalated over whether the destruction of native populations in the Americas, Australia, and elsewhere should also be considered cases of genocide. Participants in these debates are generally human rights activists, genocide scholars, and, increasingly, policy-makers from the West. Their role is a powerful one because naming violence to be genocide ostensibly commands an international responsibility to intervene.

Yet these debates, and the concept of genocide in general, are problematic for several reasons. To begin, I reject the idea that genocide is violence that is evil or amoral, while war is considered the normal—and acceptable—purview of states (see also Mamdani 2010; Zarkov 2008, 2012). This framing demonizes genocide perpetrators, while allowing the perpetrators of other forms of violence to operate with impunity. If genocide is uniquely barbaric, it is at least in part because it deliberately targets civilians. Targeting civilians is, of course, counter to the Geneva Convention and every other “rule” of war. Yet one only has to look at the high rate of civilian deaths in all wars in the 20th century to note that the targeting of civilians (or at the minimum, the acceptance of civilians as “collateral damage”) is a defining feature of wars. Civilian casualties have climbed from an estimated 5 percent in 19th Century wars to between 50 and 90 percent in recent wars of the 1990s. One could argue that this makes all modern wars amoral and barbaric. Indeed civilian deaths in current wars—including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, the DRC, and Pakistan—far outnumber combatant deaths.

Moreover, the term genocide tends to simplify complex, overlapping conflicts into a neat framework where one social group is the perpetrator, and another group is the

victim. This Manichean understanding of good versus evil is rooted in reference to the Holocaust—the most one-sided destruction of a people in recorded history. This schema of categorization precludes the possibility that members of the “perpetrator” group could be victims, or that members of the “victim” group could be perpetrators. And yet when we look closely at episodes of “genocide”—such as Rwanda and Bosnia—we see that such categories are rarely clear-cut. For instance, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) massacred tens of thousands of Rwandans as it invaded and took control of the country; the Bosnian Armed Forces also murdered civilians during the course of the conflict. Even further, some members of each ethnic group committed atrocities against their co-ethnics; for example, Hutu extremists killed tens of thousands of Hutu who were political opponents of the regime, were married to Tutsis, or who refused to participate in the violence. Many Hutu men also raped Hutu women. In Bosnia, a paramilitary group that defended Sarajevo eventually turned on it, raping and stealing from the population it was ostensibly protecting. Understanding those killed in genocidal violence as somehow greater victims than those killed in more conventional military engagements can create hierarchies of victimhood that intensify social divisions and perpetuate cycles of violence.

Further, the term lets certain people off the hook. By elevating genocide as the “crime of crimes,” human rights activists and genocide scholars implicitly view violence that is perpetrated by states or insurgents against civilians for reasons *other* than to destroy an “ethnic, national, racial, or religious group” as somehow less offensive than genocide. It is this classification that establishes Nazi Germany as the leading villain during World War II, and lets Japan’s rape and murder of millions of Chinese (not to

mention other East Asian populations) comparably off the hook. More recently, it allowed Western activists to rally and organize against genocide in Darfur—during which between 200,000 and 400,000 civilians were killed—while more than 400,000 Iraqi civilians were dying as a result of the U.S.-led invasion.⁸

The term also facilitates lazy scholarship. In Rwanda and Bosnia, exclusively using the term “genocide” oversimplifies both conflicts and leads to determinist explanations of both cases by allowing *what we know now* to shape the evidence included in our analyses. Both cases of violence had multiple fronts and different groups perpetrating violence at different times. Both conflicts began as civil wars, in which armed forces engaged in “legitimate” armed combat against state-backed armed groups. All sides committed atrocities against civilians, although certainly not at the same level. Members of each ethnic group committed atrocities against their co-ethnics. When the wholesale massacre of Tutsi civilians began in Rwanda, it certainly constituted genocide. The shift in the type of violence from civil war to genocide, however, can only be understood by looking at how the violence unfolded temporally and by accounting for contingency in every step of the process. Many of these atrocities were not the result of a planned system of annihilation but rather a series of contingent escalations resulting from contestations over state power. Furthermore, a civil war and other forms of political violence unfolded concurrently with the genocide. Thus, referring to the entire episode simply as the “Rwandan genocide” misses these additional logics of violence.⁹ Similarly in Bosnia, the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and the Bosnian National Army participated in conventional military engagements. While Srebrenica and the brutal

massacres around Krajina might be considered genocide, the entirety of the conflict should not be as it followed a conventional logic of a separatist civil war.

I am not arguing that people do not commit genocide; they do, and when they do, it is atrocious. I am arguing that using the term “genocide” selectively creates hierarchies of victimhood within the countries that experience it, while giving impunity to other forms of violence that occur simultaneously. This leads perpetrators of only certain types of violence to be held accountable, letting others off the hook. It also obscures the fact that members of the so-called “perpetrator” group can also be victims. It further deepens the “Orientalist” or Neo-colonialist gaze of the West, seeing the savagery with which some countries experience genocide as a different phenomenon from our annihilation of native populations, bombing campaigns against civilian targets, or invasions of Vietnam, Iraq, or Afghanistan. Even the UN mandate that signatories to the convention undertake to “prevent and punish” the crime of genocide situates the West in the “savior” category, ignoring the role of the West in furthering the processes of militarism, capitalism, and neo-colonialism that shape the emergence of genocide itself.

Given the problems the term genocide raises in these contexts, I only use the term genocide where appropriate (i.e., in reference to the specific instances and dynamics of violence that constituted genocide during the broader civil wars, particularly in Rwanda). In so doing, I do not intend to minimize the severity of violence or human suffering in either case; rather, my approach stems from my conviction that no violent death should matter more or less than any other violent death.¹⁰ It is my hope that this approach allows for a more careful and dynamic analysis of all of the varied and multifaceted processes of violence that unfolded in each place. Moreover, doing so allows me to situate these cases

within the broader social science literature on war and thereby draw on established theoretical frameworks to understand the impact of violence on women in the aftermath.

TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF WAR

Understanding the impact of war on women requires us to first understand war. Historical sociology and political science literatures demonstrate how states experience long periods of institutional stability that are punctuated by periods of flux and structural change. War is the paradigmatic example of these periods of flux. Referred to in different literatures as “critical junctures,” “crises,” or “unsettled times,” these periods of significant change reflect a discontinuation of the status quo and the possibility for new social processes or institutional arrangements (Swidler 1986; Collier and Collier 1991; Mahoney 2000; Pierson 2004, Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Mann 2013).

War can transform the people who live through it in myriad ways. It can abruptly destroy lives, families, and material possessions, leading to death and despair, suffering and financial destitution. War can also bond people together as comrades in arms, victims, or neighbors. For example, World War I veterans saw their war experience as forcing a personal transformation that distinguished veterans from the rest of the population (Leed 1981). The Spanish Civil War conditioned political identities and voting patterns in the population decades later (Balcells 2012). An emerging field in political economics looks specifically at the unexpected positive consequences of civil wars (Bellows and Miguel 2008; Blattman 2009; Annan, Blattman, Mazurana and Carlson 2011; De Luca and Marijke 2011). Drawing on trauma studies in psychology, Blattman (2009) and Bellows and Miguel (2009) found that individuals and households that directly experienced high levels of violence during wars in Uganda and Sierra Leone

are more likely to vote, participate in community politics, and be politically active in the aftermath than those who witnessed lower levels of violence. Violence, in other words, has a transformative effect on individual lives.

Just as war transforms individuals' sense of community and political engagement, it can also have aggregate political consequences. Max Weber understood war as a powerful force pressuring power holders to embark upon the path of state formation and capitalist development. The development of bureaucratic rationality within militaries was particularly important and eventually allowed for the development of modern state institutions (Weber [1922] 1978). Subsequent scholars have further developed this idea. Charles Tilly (1986) famously noted that "wars make states" and identified interstate war as an essential factor driving the formation of modern Europe. This is because war forced states to develop their administrative, coercive, and extractive capacities and forge strong national identities among the population (Moore 1966; C. Tilly 1986; Mann 1986, 1993). Military structures were then transformed into civil bureaucracies, and states strengthened as they attempted to harness their population's productive capacity. Michael Mann argued that "war is ubiquitous to organized social life" (1986: 48) and posited that certain economic and military power relationships culminated in the emergence of the state itself.

In the 20th century, wars likely killed more than 110 million people (Eckhart 1992; Rummel 1994). Since World War II, an estimated 260 civil wars have occurred around the world (Gleditsch et. al. 2008),¹¹ and civilians have comprised as many as 90 percent of the casualties (Carnegie Commission 1997; Kaldor 2013). While political scientists and sociologists have used cross-national datasets to quantitatively analyze the

outbreak, scale, and duration of war (see Small and Singer 1982; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Sambanis 2004; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009), historical sociologists have looked at war's consequences for other macro-level processes. These processes include the emergence of revolutions (Moore 1966; C. Tilly 1978; Skocpol 1979; Goldstone 1991; Mann 1993), the welfare state and civic organization formation (Skocpol 1992; Skocpol et. al. 2002), citizenship rights and civic participation (Markoff 1996; Kestnbaum 2002), and the entrenchment of autocracies (Celestino and Gleditsch 2013). These studies illustrate the many ways war can shape institutions and social structures for years to come (see Wimmer 2014 for a review).

Little of this research has used gender to animate studies of war's transformative effects. Research on women and war is typically confined to disciplinary subfields, including feminist international relations or regional studies. Moreover, the research that does exist principally examines women *during* war, paying less attention to war's gendered impact on institutions and social structures in the aftermath. Given the ubiquity of war in the first fifteen years of the 21st century, this absence seems shortsighted: better understanding war's enduring effects on women is of value to both social science theory and policy more broadly.

Indeed, war may be one of the few comprehensive disjunctures that initiate processes of women's mobilization. Women's status across the world has been on a slow but steady upward trajectory over the past few centuries. Since Wollstonecraft's 1792 "Vindication of the Rights of Women," women's movements have gradually become more prominent worldwide. In the 19th century, women in Europe, the U.S., and beyond campaigned for suffrage, education, and legal rights. In 1893, New Zealand became the

first country to give women the right to vote, and countries across the world began to extend political rights to women. But progress has not been swift; in the U.S., for example, women gained the right to vote in 1920, but only entered the labor force in great numbers during World War II. They were then pushed out of these new positions after the war. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided women formal protection against sex discrimination, but it was not until the following decade that the courts clarified the substantive terms of this protection.¹² Today, women in the U.S. lag behind men in many key areas, including in political representation, income, wage employment, and managerial positions.

The history of American women's rights alerts us to the transformative role war can play in the quest for gender equality. The suffrage granted to American women immediately after World War I was due, in part, to suffragist movements joining with broader peace movements during the war effort (Clemens 1999; Taylor and Rupp 2002). Further, the women's movement gained momentum during the war, and international feminist organizations forged networks between activists around the world. World War II ushered in a political sea change in American women's roles, as women's employment in the wage economy increased by 50 percent during the war to reach unprecedented levels (Chafe 1972; Anderson 1981; Hartmann 1982; Milkman 1987). As the U.S. mobilized for war during both periods, women were depicted as essential to the war effort. They became not only mothers and wives, but also workers, citizens, and soldiers (Hartmann 1982: 20). Women's domestic tasks were thus infused with a broader nationalist purpose.¹³

Thus, while war indisputably has certain negative impacts on women, we see how interstate wars also helped shape American women's employment patterns and political rights. Moreover, recent scholarship suggests a link between war and women's legislative representation in low-income countries around the globe. We also know from the case-specific literature that wars can shape women's lives by motivating collective action or inspiring new social bonds. However, we know little about how war causes structural shifts that can precipitate ordinary women's mobilization in less formal political capacities, or about the social processes through which women mobilize after war has ended. That is where this project comes in.

Case studies have revealed how women organized during wars in Sri Lanka, Algeria, Israel, and Palestine and challenged traditional expectations about women's roles in the domestic sphere as they got involved in everyday struggles to demand peace, reject militarism, and advocate for political change. Such ordinary political action is not captured in quantitative cross-case analyses on women's parliamentary representation after war, nor in historical accounts that look principally at macro-level outcomes. In this project, I use Rwanda and Bosnia as case studies to construct a framework for understanding the impact of mass violence on women's political involvement. To do so, I employ a theoretical approach that conceptualizes political participation from two perspectives: "everyday" politics and the formal political realm.

UNDERSTANDING FORMAL AND EVERYDAY POLITICS

Studies of political participation have tended to distinguish between formal participation in elections, political parties, and government offices on the one hand, and informal participation in neighborhoods, communities, and identity-based activities on

the other hand. This distinction between informal and formal political spaces reflects the long-running debate about the opposition between public and private spheres. The public, formal political realm is centralized, highly institutionalized, bureaucratic, permanent, resource-intensive, and largely concerned with *de jure* change. It is based on particular forms of cultural and social capital—such as formal education and credentials—which, throughout history, have predominantly been attributed to men. Such formal political spaces require little explanation: women’s legislative representation is one of the most visible indicators of women’s status, and understanding the political, social, cultural, and economic conditions conducive to the advancement of women in politics has been the subject of extensive study.

Rwanda has the world’s highest percentage of women in parliament at 64 percent. In the U.S., women hold approximately 20 percent of the seats in both houses of Congress. In countries like Iran, Belize, Lebanon, Haiti and Tonga, women hold fewer than five percent of the legislature’s seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015). The legislative underrepresentation of women is one of the most pronounced forms of inequality in the world today. Yet, while women’s legislative representation serves as an indicator of women’s formal political power, such statistics are a poor indicator of women’s advancement. Around the world, the advancement of women in formal political positions is often done for the benefit of powerful men’s political interests. Moreover, there is no guarantee that women in positions of power will act in the interest of women as a whole. These issues have fueled the debate over women’s substantive versus descriptive representation (see Lovenduski and Norris 1993; Phillips 1995; Walby 2005; Wangnerud 2009).

Further, the boundaries between the formal political sphere and the private one are not always clear (for further discussion see Landes 1988, 1998; Pateman 1988; Habermas 1989; Gal and Kligman 2000, chapter 3; Gal 2002). Limiting the analysis to the formal political sphere overlooks vast arenas of women's informal political action. Informal political spaces, by virtue of their deinstitutionalized nature, require more explanation. They are more decentralized, less bureaucratic, emotional, emergent, resource-light, and more concerned with immediate, *de facto* gains. Such realms privilege other forms of social and cultural capital beyond formal education or credentials.

To explore informal political realms that bridge the public/private divide further, I borrow from the micro-politics and resistance paradigms pioneered in works by James C. Scott (1985, 1990), Lila Abu-Lughod (1986, 1990), Asef Bayat (1997, 2007, 2010), and others. These approaches are useful for understanding political activities that occur outside of formal political realms and help reveal the complexity of power relations in a given society. Moreover, in political or cultural contexts where organized resistance is infeasible, such an approach investigates alternative spaces and forms of struggle. Foucault's (1980: 96) notion of decentered power underscores much of this perspective, which holds that power exists not only in the center but also in more regional and local institutions at the "extremities" of society and through the "citizen-subjects" themselves. For Foucault, power circulates; it therefore is not confined to the institutions of the state. Gramsci's (1971) conception of civil society also plays in, as power is rooted in institutions outside of the formal political realm.

In order to make sense of how everyday activities can be political, I draw on Bayat's work in particular. Bayat (2010) writes about a "politics of practice," the idea

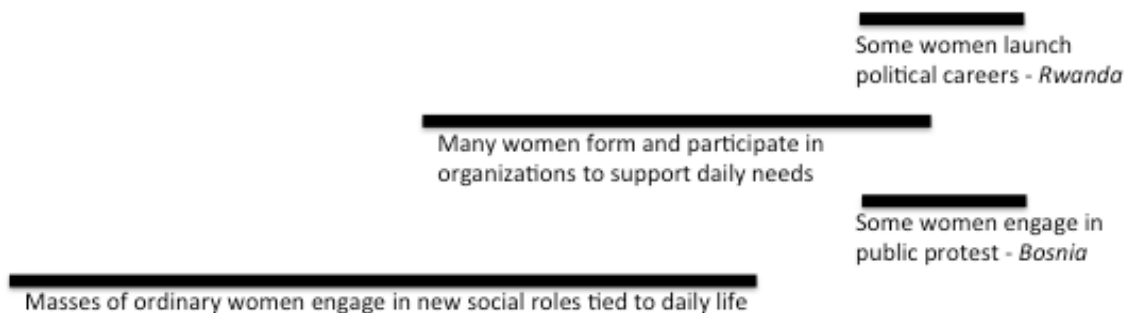
that the ordinary activities of a subaltern population can be political even if they do not look like a more western understanding of “politics.” Instead, people selling items in public, working outside of the home, building houses, pursuing education, playing sports, and the like can be political, *if* a large number of people participate and *if* these activities breach conventional social norms. Such actions are not necessarily consequential by themselves, but as large numbers of ordinary people struggle to survive and improve their lives, their actions can quietly accumulate (Bayat 2010). This can lead to new forms of organizing outside the political realm, such as in community organizations. By extension, these ordinary actions can slowly create social and political change.

Crucially, Bayat notes that the state is never absent from these contestations of power, implicitly critiquing Foucault’s inattention to the state. The everyday political activities of the subaltern can both strengthen and undermine the stability and legitimacy of the state, and they are in turn constrained and shaped by the reach of state power. For instance, Bayat notes that in the context of women’s actions in Iran, women’s daily activities bore little resemblance to what we generally think of as acts of defiance or collective action—they were not public protests, labor strikes, or mass demonstrations. Rather, they were intimately tied to the ordinary activities of daily life because the state tightly controlled citizens’ ability to engage in public actions (Bayat 2010: 17).¹⁴ And yet as tens of thousands of women participated in these daily activities that resisted the status quo, their activities began to accumulate and establish new roles and rights for women in Iran.

This approach is particularly useful after the upheaval of war, as people take on new social roles intimately tied to survival and the ordinary activities of daily life. In

Rwanda and Bosnia, women were more likely than men to assume new roles that impinged upon the established social order (e.g., doing “men’s work”); this led women to make small claims that became “stepping stones” for further claims, and eventually generated new opportunities for women to demand rights (Bayat 2010: 17). These everyday encroachments catalyzed the formation of community organizations, which soon became a space for political organizing outside of traditionally male-dominated political realms. These organizations ultimately codified women’s leadership at the local level and provided a platform for some women to launch political careers. As the figure below captures, these processes of mobilization overlapped: only by first having massive numbers of women engaged in new social roles did community organizations form, which then allowed some women to participate in formal politics (Rwanda) and protest movements (Bosnia).

Figure 1. Overlapping Process of Women’s Political Mobilization



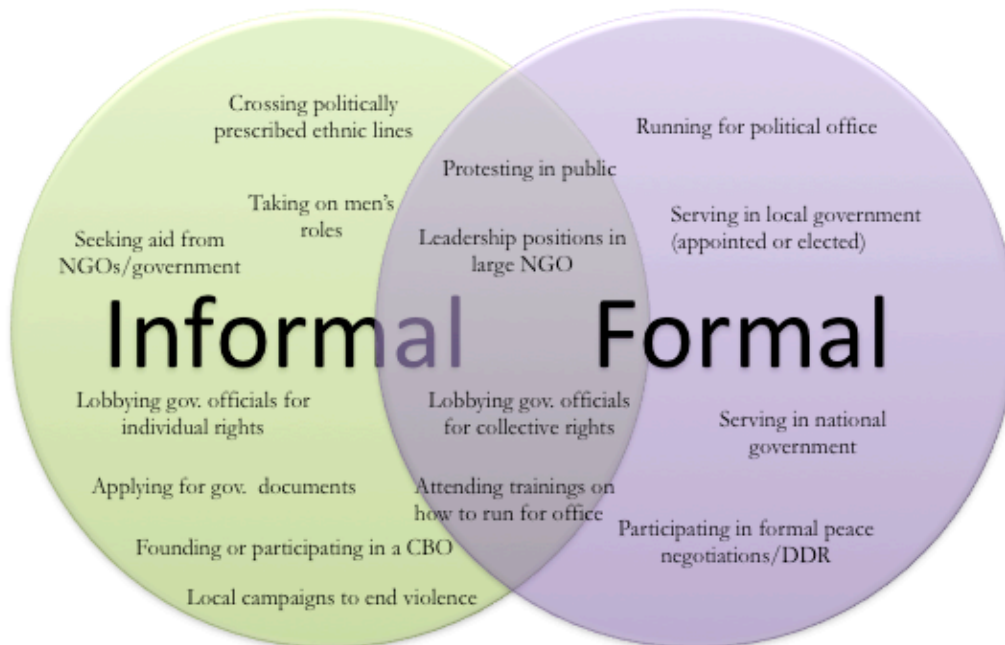
This theoretical approach builds on past feminist research that shows how women’s collective action often occurs outside of the formal political realm (L. Tilly 1981; Marx Ferree 1992; Clemens 1993; Taylor 1999; Ray and Korteweg 1999). Particularly when looking at the “Third World,” feminist scholars have challenged assumptions that women only have power if they enter the “male” political domain

(Elshtain 1981; Sharoni 1995, 2001; Yuval-Davis 1997; Gal and Kligman 2000). This reflects the feminist insight that “the personal is political”: oppressive institutions within the marriage, family, and home reveal that the personal sphere is, after all, a highly political one (Stanley and Wise 1983; Miles 1996). Thus, statistics on the percentage of women in government or parliament are not a fully satisfactory measure of women’s political power, as national parliaments are hardly the only venue for political action (Gal and Kligman 2000: 13; Heath, Schwindt-Bayer and Taylor-Robinson 2005).

Instead, civil society is a critical space for analysis. When cut out of politics, women—and particularly African women (Tamale 1999; Bop 2001)—often retreat to the civil sector. As is frequently the case in the developing or post-socialist world, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can represent a dynamic space in-between the public “male” government realm and the private “feminine” one. Such an in-between space—or “third sector”—must be considered when looking at women’s political power (Clemens 1993; Geisler 1995; Gal and Kligman 2000). For example, Elisabeth Clemens (1993) showed how American women invented a new model of non-electoral political action by founding women’s organizations in the late 19th century. Gal and Kligman (2000) described how in East Central Europe after the end of the Cold War, civil society—especially the collection of informal aid networks and community organizations—was dominated by women, and it increasingly became *the* arena of women’s political action. Aili Mari Tripp also showed how women in Uganda engaged in politics through the pursuit of tangible results on the ground; instead of demonstrations or electoral politics, women mobilized to solve the problems at hand (2000: 16-17; see Ray and Korteweg 1999 for a review of similar research). Looking beyond formal politics is essential for

understanding women’s political engagement after war. I show some examples of these varied types of political action in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2. Examples of Women’s Informal and Formal Political Participation



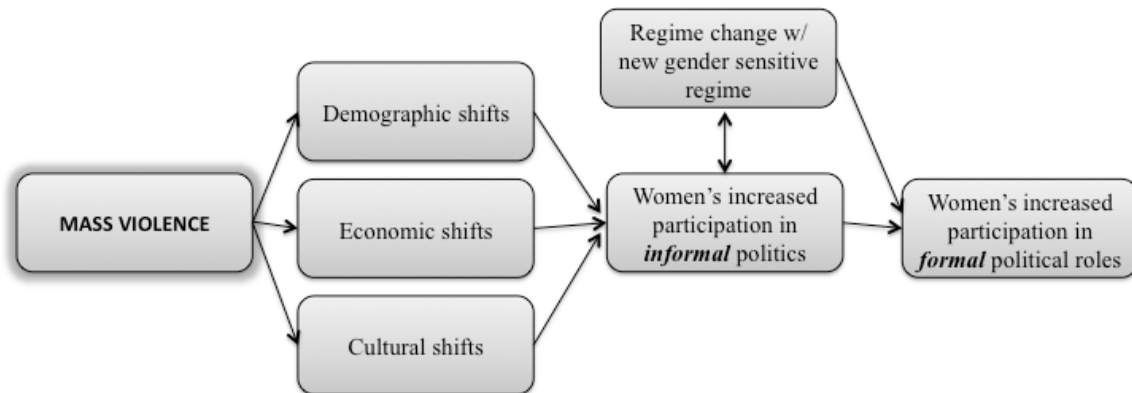
To be sure, it is important not to over-romanticize these forms of everyday politics and resistance (see Scott 1985: 29-30; Abu-Lughod 1990: 42; Bayat 2012: 55). While such forms of political action are not trivial, we should not read every action “as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated” (Abu-Lughod 1990: 42). As such, this project looks at political action as something that unfolds temporally, in stages, and in many different social spaces and institutions. Mass violence can lead large numbers of people to experience shifts in their ordinary daily activities, which can then lead to new forms of

political organization.

ARGUMENT

Informed by the sociological literature on war and the feminist literature on spaces of political contention, my central argument in this project is as follows: war can loosen the hold of traditional gendered power relations, as it restructures the institutional and structural layout of society. In Rwanda and Bosnia, war did this by precipitating a series of interrelated and overlapping structural shifts that occurred at variable rates and temporalities. These include: (1) a demographic shift, due to the disproportionate death, conscription, and imprisonment of men and the massive displacement of people from their homes; (2) an economic shift, due to the destruction of infrastructure, agricultural capacity, and the arrival of international humanitarian aid; and (3) a cultural shift, due to the reconceptualization of women as legitimate public actors, as women juxtapose their “more peaceful” nature with men’s propensity for war. Combined, these three shifts produce the outcome under investigation: the increased participation of women in informal political capacities. Under additional conditions—including comprehensive regime change and the installation of a gender sensitive regime, which occurred in Rwanda but not in Bosnia—women’s informal political mobilization may culminate in women’s increased participation in formal political capacities.

Figure 3. Impact of Mass Violence on Women’s Informal and Formal Political Participation



A focus on both informal and formal politics allows me to analyze the multifaceted and varied ways that violence restructured women’s lives and allowed for some women’s increased participation in public, political spaces.¹⁵ Women’s claims to rights and justice are often made urgent and amplified by war, and women’s everyday activities during and after violence—such as providing for their families, going outside of the home to find food or cooking fuel, and resisting the idea that they were involved in the violence—reflected a “politics of practice” whereby women took on new political roles in their households and communities. These new roles led women to form community organizations, which created spaces for women to build new social networks and engage in collective projects. While broadly perceived as extending women’s domestic care work, these organizations simultaneously became a new form of political organization, institutionalized women’s leadership at the community level, and served as a springboard for some women to participate in more formal political capacities. In Bosnia, these organizations also facilitated women’s protest movements. The comparison between Rwanda and Bosnia allows me to illustrate similarities and differences in how

women's grassroots political mobilization unfolded in each case; further, it allows me to reveal how these activities eventually led to shifts in women's legal protection and more formal political participation. Finally, I show how in both cases, many of these gains were ultimately set back.

A HISTORICAL-INSTITUTIONALIST APPROACH

My approach in this project falls within the framework of historical institutionalism, as I attempt to explain variation in real world problems or events over time (Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1984; Pierson and Skocpol 2002; Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; Pierson 2004; Waylen 2009). Historical institutionalists explain large-scale structural changes, identifying the “critical junctures” that instigate change and the causal processes and mechanisms that emerge from such periods. They also pay attention to the temporality of social change, looking at how events transform structures and produce social processes that are both path dependent and contingent. Such an approach understands events—like war—as a moment of institutional transformation and creativity, which set in motion processes that are then constrained by the cultural and social structures that pre-date the event (Sewell 1992, 1996; Mahoney 2000; McAdam and Sewell 2001; Pierson 2003). Here, historical institutionalists ask about other possible outcomes at every stage of the event trajectory, engaging counterfactuals and expecting contingency. Such an approach is essential when studying the impact of war, since hindsight often leads to overly deterministic explanations of war's occurrence and impact.

In this project I focus particular attention on the gendered elements of institutional and structural transformation during war. As such, I analyze how actors in a given

institutional context are shaped by gendered power dynamics (Skocpol 1992; Thelan 1999, 2003; Waylen 2009). Doing so advances Georgina Waylen's (2009) call for more "feminist historical institutionalism."

Case studies

The case study approach also informs the analysis (Ragin and Becker 1982; Ragin 1999; Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; George and Bennett 2005; Gerring 2007). Through cases studies of Rwanda and Bosnia, I delve deeply into the specific historical context to identify the institutional changes that occurred during violence and their repercussions for gendered power relations. Interviews with individual Bosnian and Rwandan women serve as the primary data for these cases studies, allowing me to analyze institutional transformation from the bottom-up. This approach provides richness and nuance to a literature dominated by more top-down accounts of institutional transformation after violence.

I designed the case studies through the paired case comparison method of historical analysis. When I initially began this project, I selected the two cases based on a "most similar conditions" research design with a divergent outcome. Both Rwanda and Bosnia shared an experience of mass violence in the early 1990s that featured the targeting of non-combatants, heightened ethnic antagonisms, widespread sexualized violence against women, and massive population displacement. In the aftermath, the status of women looked very different. Rwanda appeared to be a positive case: women reached the world's highest percentage of seats in parliament, as well as top positions in the judiciary, police, and government ministries. Bosnia was the negative case: few gains for women were made at the national political level, and in the first post-war elections,

women were elected to less than three percent of the seats in the national legislature. This, however, turned out to be a superficial first impression. As I delved further into the cases, it became clear that Bosnia was not a strictly negative case if I considered political engagement more broadly. Indeed the violence in both countries pushed women into new social and political roles and facilitated women's mobilization in many areas. While looking just at the national political level suggests a divergent outcome, women in Bosnia participated in informal political spaces in many of the same ways as women in Rwanda. This suggests a more universal pattern in how war impacts women's political engagement in the aftermath.

There are, of course, many differences between the cases. While Rwanda was transitioning from a single-party authoritarian system of government to a multiparty democracy before the violence, little real change had occurred and its authoritarian leader was firmly entrenched when the war broke out. Bosnia, on the other hand, was undergoing a massive transition from the socialist era as it broke off from the collapsing Yugoslav federation. This left Bosnia reeling from both political and economic turmoil prior to the outbreak of violence, and the country had barely declared its independence when the war broke out. The end of each conflict also presents also a notable difference; in Rwanda the violence was ended by the invading RPF, a mostly-Tutsi rebel army based out of Uganda, while in Bosnia the violence was ended by the Dayton Peace Accords, an internationally-brokered peace agreement. Furthermore, the differential death toll between the two cases is important: there were approximately 107,000 wartime deaths in Bosnia, compared to a "best estimate" of 800,000 deaths in Rwanda. This amounts to approximately 2.4 percent versus 11.2 percent of the total populations of each country.

These differences are important. Still, at the core of the comparison is a shared experience of mass violence in the early 1990s, which allows me to sketch out the conditions under which violence can be transformative for gendered power relations. In addition, it allows me to analyze patterns produced by violence itself, identifying the impact of demographic, economic, and cultural shifts on gender relations in the aftermath.

Conducting research in Rwanda and Bosnia today

The international community's involvement in Bosnia has, in many respects, faded since the 1990s. The war broke out less than a decade after Sarajevo hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics, and Bosnia's location in Europe rendered the war very visible to Western audiences. Nightly broadcasts from besieged Sarajevo featured images of children dodging sniper fire and of prisoners starving in concentration camps. Western horror ultimately led to NATO's involvement in the conflict, which culminated in the Dayton Accords. Yet following a rapid invasion of foreign diplomats and "colonization" ¹⁶ by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and humanitarian aid agencies, the involvement of internationals faded around 2002.¹⁷ In the years since, Bosnia has recently comparably less international media attention than Rwanda.

In contrast, Rwanda has become increasingly familiar to Western audiences in the years since the genocide and civil war. Books like Philip Gourevitch's "We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families" (1998), Samantha Power's "A Problem from Hell" (2002), and movies like "Hotel Rwanda" (2004) sparked

a global conversation about genocide and the human capacity for evil. In addition, the country's purported development success over the past two decades has made it a darling of the international aid community. Today business students and entrepreneurs visit Rwanda not to visit the country's genocide memorials, but rather to witness its innovative development programs firsthand.

Yet, Rwanda has been the subject of a heated debate in recent years. On one hand, many journalists and some scholars have heralded the country as a model of reconciliation and development (see Gourevitch 1998; Kinzer 2008; Crisafulli and Redmond 2012). On the other hand, the state's increasing authoritarianism has generated many critics, who accuse current President Paul Kagame and his government of extrajudicial killings during the war and of the intense repression of political rivals and ordinary citizens who fall afoul of the regime (see Reyntjens 2004, 2011, 2014; Longman 2006, 2011; Prunier 2009; Thomson 2013). While I attempt to stay agnostic in some of these political debates, my findings nevertheless echo many of the concerns raised by the most critical of scholars, as I too find that many of the narratives about Rwanda's success obscure the daily reality for ordinary citizens. I also find that the high level of women in parliament is part of a broader political strategy aimed to distract attention from the overwhelming number of Tutsis in government and to win accolades from the international community. While this should cause us to pause and reconsider using national legislative statistics to capture women's empowerment, it should also inspire us to look beyond formal political spaces to in order to more accurately measure women's political power.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The core data for the project come from semi-structured biographical interviews I conducted with 152 women in Rwanda and 86 women in Bosnia during 10 months of fieldwork between 2009 and 2013. Alongside the interviews are corroborating sources from government documents, organizational reports, secondary literature, and archival collections of survivor testimonies. I analyzed approximately 200 organizational reports and briefing papers, including from international organizations (e.g., Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the World Bank, the International Conflict Group, and the International Labor Organization) and local community organizations. Many of these reports contain excerpts from hundreds of interviews, which provided another useful source of women's experiences during and after the violence.

Further, the analysis herein stems from my many experiences in the field. These experiences included countless informal conversations with friends, government employees, international development workers, expatriates, and many other locals (both women and men). In addition, in each country I engaged in participant observation with women's organizations, parliamentary sessions, NGO conferences, and human rights organizations. These observations greatly informed the research. My fieldwork also benefited from my status as a Board Member of a well-respected international non-profit organization, Global Youth Connect (GYC), which has run human rights education programs in both countries over the past decade. My work with GYC during two previous summers spent in Rwanda (2007 and 2008) also informed the research, and granted me networks and connections I was able to use to gain access to certain populations.

I selected interviewees using a stratified purposive sampling design, targeting women respondents from three social groups: (1) high-level government officials and NGO executives (“elite” women);¹⁸ (2) NGO employees/members; and (3) poor urban and rural women (“ordinary” women). Eventually the formal distinctions between category 2 and 3 were abandoned, as many women of various class and ethnic backgrounds claimed membership in some sort of formal NGO. It thus became unnecessary to differentiate between the two categories; however, I still aimed to interview women who were both leaders in NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), in addition to women who were the beneficiaries of these organizations.¹⁹ I approached interviewees from category 1 individually via email, phone, and through various contacts. I approached interviews from category 2 and 3 through a variety of strategies, primarily through local interlocutors and community associations.

Table 1. Completed interviews in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina

Rwanda	Bosnia	Category of Respondent
40	20	Political elites, government-linked NGO executives
112	66	Ordinary women, women involved in the foundation of CBOs
152	86	Total Completed Interviews

Between 2009 and 2013 I conducted three research trips to Rwanda for a total of six months in country (2009, 2012, 2013). I conducted 40 semi-structured interviews with women in Rwanda’s government, including with 25 members of Rwanda’s Parliament. While it is illegal to discuss ethnicity in Rwanda today, based on each elite woman’s

biography, I estimate that 35 percent (14) were widows or survivors of genocide (likely Tutsi), 38 percent (15) were returning refugees (likely Tutsi), and 28 percent (11) made no mention of their victimization during the genocide (ethnicity unknown, likely Hutu). I conducted an additional 112 individual or small group interviews with “ordinary” Rwandan women in women’s associations, school groups, and rural cooperatives. After the initial period of fieldwork, I revised my one-on-one interview strategy and conducted interviews with thirty women in small groups (between three and five women in each). This facilitated a more open and comfortable environment for my participants and served to cultivate more substantive and detailed answers to my questions. I conducted the majority of my interviews in the capital city of Kigali, but conducted additional interviews and fieldwork in two additional sites: Musanze, in Northern Province, and Bugasera, in Eastern Province. This allowed me to make subtle comparisons between the regions, which experienced different levels and types of violence during the war.

I took two research trips to Bosnia for a total of four months in the country (2010 and 2013). During these trips I interviewed 20 high-ranking women in the state and Federation-level government. Within this group of elite respondents, 50 percent (10) of the women were Bosniak, 25 percent (5) were Serb, 10 percent (2) were Croat, and 15 percent (3) were of mixed ethnicity. I also interviewed 66 “ordinary” Bosnian women, most of whom were members of various NGOs and CBOs. I conducted all interviews with Bosnian women one-on-one. I conducted the majority of my interviews in the capital city of Sarajevo, but also spent time conducting fieldwork in the Krajina and Drina valley regions of the country. In particular, I concentrated on the town of Kozarac (in the Krajina region), and Potocari and Tuzla²⁰ in the Drina valley. Like in Rwanda,

different field sites within the country allowed me to more thoroughly analyze how different processes and logics of violence affected women differently in the aftermath of war.

I conducted some of the interviews in each country in English, but conducted the majority in the local languages of both countries (Kinyarwanda or Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian) with the help of a local translator. I recorded the interviews with an audio recorder with the permission of the interviewee; when permission was not granted, I took extensive notes by hand.²¹ I transcribed the vast majority of the interviews; some interviews were not transcribed because of poor sound quality, or because of the limited utility of the interview responses. In these cases, I analyzed the hand-written notes I took during each interview. I analyzed the interview transcripts in Dedoose, a qualitative coding software.²² I selected the quotations included throughout the project to represent themes consistent in multiple interviews. These quotations have been lightly edited for clarity, while keeping the original meaning intact.

In order to preserve the anonymity of my interview subjects who are not public figures or who did not grant me permission to use their names, I assigned pseudonyms from a list of common Rwandan and Bosnian female names or simply refer to their interview number.²³ I do use the real names of organizations and places in order to give credit for their work and to provide a roadmap for future researchers. In general I protect the identities of my Rwandan interviewees more vigorously than my Bosnian ones, given the tense political climate in Rwanda today. This involved altering and randomizing basic identifying details about many respondents.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT

I approach the project in three sections. The first two sections, on Rwanda and Bosnia respectively, contain three chapters each. I first sketch out an historical overview of the status of women in each country (Chapter 2 for Rwanda, Chapter 5 for Bosnia). These historical chapters outline the context in which the war occurred and illustrate the role of past violence in shifting women's roles. I next analyze the major structural shifts caused by the violence in each place (Chapter 3 for Rwanda, Chapter 6 for Bosnia). These chapters examine the demographic, economic, and cultural shifts caused by war and mass violence in an effort to specify the particular ways that war can be transformative for gendered power relations. Here I extend current research that looks at the puzzling positive relationship between violence and political participation by identifying the structural shifts and social processes through which this relationship arises. In the third and final chapter of each section, I unpack the outcome of these structural shifts by assessing how they impacted women's political engagement in both informal and formal political capacities (Chapter 4 for Rwanda, Chapter 7 for Bosnia). Despite the differences between the violence in Rwanda and Bosnia, delving deep into the various processes that emerged from violence reveals many similar patterns between the two cases.

In the third section, Chapter 8, I ask an essential question: how well have these shifts in women's political power held up in the years since the violence? Despite many initial political gains made by women, as time progressed, many of these gains were ultimately lost or set back. This occurred for similar and different reasons in each case that were intertwined with power dynamics and instability in the post-war period. Three general themes emerged from my interviews. First, foreign actors that arrived after the violence often knew little about the local context. As a result, their programs created

hierarchies of victimhood that were ultimately disempowering for some women and that undermined local organizing efforts. This discussion draws from recent studies that have explored the contradictory and often detrimental impacts of international humanitarian and peace building efforts (see Fechter and Hindman 2011; Moore 2013; Autesserre 2014). Second, the domestic political settlement in both cases created new barriers to women's participation in political spaces. In Bosnia, political stagnation, corruption, and economic collapse led to a resurgence of male-dominated politics. In Rwanda, the new political elite advanced ambitious development projects that aimed to get women involved in "modern Rwanda," and yet the state's authoritarian nature regularly intervened in women's lives, causing additional hurdles for women attempting to ascend the economic ladder or enter new political spaces. Third, and finally, both countries experienced a revitalization of patriarchy in the aftermath of the violence. This led to a retrenchment of women in the home and the continuation of violence in women's lives despite the formal end of the war. In both cases, efforts to mitigate women's subordinate status in the aftermath of war at times unintentionally reinforced it.

In the concluding chapter I suggest ways that future studies might extend this framework to other cases of mass violence. I also highlight the implications of my arguments for different fields of social science research, as well as for policy makers and NGOs interested at implementing more effective policy solutions in the aftermath mass violence. I conclude by reflecting on the continued cycles of violence that persist in our world today, and the importance of understanding that war is never really over when it's "over."

Rwanda is a small, landlocked, densely populated country in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. In 1994, it was the site of a brutal civil war and one of the worst genocides in history. Today, it boasts the world's highest level of women in parliament and impressive economic growth, and it has garnered accolades for ease of doing business and low corruption. When I first traveled to Rwanda in 2007, these dualities were striking. Rwanda is a stunningly beautiful place; sunbaked red earth roads cut across this "land of a thousand hills." At the same time, these hills are dotted with purple banners commemorating massacres and marking memorials where human bodies, skulls, and tattered, bloodied clothing are on display. As I traveled back to the country five times over the next six years, I came to understand Rwanda as a country full of paradoxes, which, as Filip Reyntjens rightly put it, makes the country "difficult for outsiders to comprehend and to apprehend" (Reyntjens 2011:1). It is at once a place of tremendous hope and overwhelming suffering; of economic prosperity and entrenched poverty; of women's progress and women's oppression.

My own understanding of the country has undergone a dramatic evolution since my first visit, when I came to the country as a delegate on a cross-cultural human rights program. During my first weeks in the country, I sat down with a handful of young genocide survivors—mostly men—and was surprised as they told me stories about their experiences during the violence. One chronicled how he watched militias kill his mother with his baby brother on her back. He hid for weeks before a Hutu family took him to the Congo. A second described how, at sixteen years of age, militias had forced him to beat an elderly woman who later died; if he had refused, they would have killed him.²⁴ During my next trip in 2008, I met man in his mid-20s who recounted how he survived

the genocide by hiding with friends at his boarding school away from where his parents and most of his siblings were killed. Another friend confessed that at eight years of age, he watched as Hutu militias raped his mother and then cut her body into pieces. These four men's stories profoundly shaped my desire to understand how human beings live and even thrive after such unimaginable atrocity.

During my subsequent visits to Rwanda I began to turn toward the experiences of women during and after the violence. While conducting research for this project, I continued to spend time with each of the young men I had met on my initial trip. As the years passed, our friendships became tenuous. I frequently felt like they were uncomfortable speaking to me in public, and they began to tell me stories—quickly and in private—about things that were worrying them. At the same time, I began to hear concerning rumors: a friend's family was blown up by a grenade after being invited to a community political meeting; the research assistant of another foreign researcher had turned up dead under mysterious circumstances; an impressive journalist I had met on my first visit had fallen ill, and everyone believed he had been poisoned. These rumors—true or not—began to complicate my impressions of the country's progress since the violence.

Between 2010 and 2012, all four of the young survivors I befriended on these earlier trips went into exile. I later learned that each had been targeted by agents of the state—physically beaten, threatened, and even poisoned—before fleeing to the U.S., Canada, South Africa, or in one case, to a small island nation as a stowaway on a commercial vessel. The purpose of this research project is not to explain why each of these young men was forced to leave their country. There are several studies that provide context for their experience (see Reyntjens 2004, 2011; Straus and Waldorf 2011). Rather

I mention them here because to understand any research that comes out of Rwanda today, readers must understand the context in which such research is produced. Rwanda is not a free country; citizens and foreigners alike are subjected to surveillance and monitoring. Academics who are critical of the current regime risk being harassed by government agents on social media,²⁵ denied a research permit or entry, or having limited or heavily curated access to people and documents while in country. This hostile research environment stymies critical engagement by pressuring researchers to not openly criticize the government and by limiting access to ordinary Rwandans. Indeed foreign researchers have been detained (e.g., Christian Davenport), declared persona non grata (e.g., Gerard Prunier), involuntarily sent to “re-education camps” (e.g., Susan Thomson) and denied entry after years of living in and studying the country (e.g., Alison Des Forges). Human rights organizations and journalists do not fare any better.

As a result, many foreign researchers today depend on the willingness of local elites to navigate the complicated government bureaucracy and conduct research in collaboration with various government institutions. This results in a skewed perspective, because since the war, these local elites are predominately Tutsi, from the upper or upper-middle class, and most grew up outside of Rwanda. This gives them the linguistic skills necessary to work with foreign researchers, as well as the political connections to operate smoothly on the ground. But it limits the range of experiences and networks to which researchers are exposed. Many researchers also inadvertently end up with local fixers who have an agenda, as they aim to sculpt the image of Rwanda presented to these foreigners in order to convince them of the Rwandan success story. Indeed many

Rwandans today are eager to praise President Kagame to foreigners and tell stories of how Rwandans have reconciled and forgiven each other since the genocide.

My own research aimed to follow recent studies by Straus (2006), Fujii (2009), Sommers (2012), Burnet (2012), Thomson (2013) and others by attempting to dig deeper under the surface, and by refusing to accept declarations of Rwanda's progress at face value—which includes declarations that Rwandan women are all “empowered.” This required deliberately making connections with ordinary Rwandans and even with political dissidents. I believe this strategy considerably strengthened the project, but it also made me extremely cautious about asking ordinary Rwandans about subjects that could be perceived as politically contentious. I was always aware that my actions as a researcher could complicate the lives of those I interviewed. Topics like ethnicity, for example, were almost completely off limits. I was careful not to probe interviewees to criticize the government, and instead often asked open-ended questions. As a result, I lean heavily on secondary literature, NGO reports, and government documents to situate my original data (presented in Chapters 3 and 4) within a broader political and historical context.

“PLANTING THE SEEDS”: A BRIEF HISTORY OF RWANDA

At the outset it is important to clarify the historical background of Rwanda's three ethnic groups, as there has been much debate. While described by non-specialists during (and after) the genocide as “tribes,” the categories of Hutu (approximately 85 percent of the population), Tutsi (approximately 14 percent of the population), and Twa (approximately 1 percent of the population) have come to be understood as dynamic identities that have held different meanings during different time periods. Very little is

known about how these *ubwoko*—or ethnic categories—were used before 1860 (Pottier 2002: 12). What we do know is that in the pre-colonial era, the most salient social and economic distinction was between sedentary farming and pastoral animal husbandry. Pastoralists, who were predominantly Tutsi, were of higher economic and social status than sedentary farmers, who were primarily Hutus. Pastoralists primarily raised cows, which were highly valued. Tutsis controlled the monarchy. Hutus, in general, were of a lower economic and social status. Despite these social distinctions, members of these groups traditionally spoke the same language (Kinyarwanda), lived in the same areas, practiced the same religion, and belonged to the same clans (Newbury 1988; Prunier 1995; Mandani 2001; Straus 2006). Indeed, historically it was also possible to change *ubwoko*: wealthy Hutus who obtained cattle could be considered Tutsi, and poor Tutsi farmers sometimes identified as Hutu (Newbury 1988; Fujii 2009).

GERMAN COLONIAL PERIOD: 1895-1920

German colonialists arrived in Rwanda in the mid-1880s and formally established the colony as part of the German Empire in 1895. Upon arrival they found a monarchal political system that was ruled by a Tutsi king (*mwami*). The King was seen as a divine being and the patriarch of the Rwandan nation appointed by God (Prunier 1995: 9). The Europeans immediately saw Tutsi as a different race than Hutu and Twa, noting that Tutsi were taller, more slender, and of a slightly lighter complexion than their compatriots.²⁶ Since Tutsi occupied all positions of prominence within the Royal Court and comprised the elite, they were also assumed to be of a higher intelligence than the Hutu masses.

King Rwabugiri died in 1895, ushering in a period of political turbulence (Prunier 1995: 23). Rwabugiri's son assumed the throne, but he was young; therefore, one of Rwabugiri's wives, Kanjogera, was assigned to be his advisor or "Queen Mother." Kanjogera had grander ambitions for her clan and soon conspired with her brother to kill the King and proclaim her own biological son as King. Her son Musinga ruled as King until 1931, but Kanjogera and her brothers were the most powerful people in the kingdom. They eliminated those who opposed the transfer of power and even killed some of Rwabugiri's other sons whom they feared might someday threaten Musinga's power (Lemarchand 1970; Des Forges 2011). Kanjogera's ruthlessness became well known and eventually shaped the way Rwandans imagined women in positions of power.

During Musinga's reign (1896-1931), the *mwami* and his court were exclusively comprised of Tutsi. The Tutsi nobility, from the same clan as the monarchy, comprised the ruling class and tended to be well educated in missionary schools and universities. The monarchy ruled the country through a decentralized government of chiefs, sub-chiefs, councilors, and administrative auxiliaries, who were almost exclusively of the Tutsi ethnic group (Lemarchand 1970: 82). The chiefs, who ruled the countryside, were usually Christian converts, although they were rarely educated beyond the secondary level. A small, but significant, percentage of Tutsi were peasants. They often owned cattle, however, which situated them in a slightly different position within the rural social system than their Hutu counterparts (Lemarchand 1970: 136; Newbury 1980).

Gender in the Household²⁷

Throughout the colonial period, the gendered division of labor in Rwanda was similar to that in other patriarchal agrarian societies in sub-Saharan Africa. Women and

men had complementary roles within the household and community that were culturally defined. While men were generally in charge of animal husbandry and heavy labor, women were charged with the arduous farming tasks of digging, planting and harvesting, as well as caring for children (Jefremovas 1991, 2002; Burnet 2012: 46). Girls were expected to fetch water, do household chores, and cook, while boys were often sent to watch over livestock. Motherhood was the primary duty of married women and women averaged more than eight children each (Republic of Rwanda 2014).²⁸

Polygamous marriages were common in elite Tutsi families. Wives typically raised their children in their own household on their husband's land. At 12 or 13 years of age, boys would move to their father's house to join his other adult children. The growing popularity of Christianity in the early 20th century limited the practice of polygamy to some degree, but even those in Christian marriages often discretely took polygamous partners (Codere 1973: 143). Compared to Hutu women, many Tutsi women did not engage in physically demanding labor and enjoyed relative economic security. Domestic servants—either poorer Tutsi or Hutu—were common in Tutsi households. Due to Tutsis' elevated status in the social hierarchy, many had regular interactions with Europeans or Europeanized men.

Hutu families were generally less wealthy and therefore less likely to be polygamous, as most Hutu men lacked the means to support multiple households (Codere 1973: 145). Hutu women were responsible for their family's heavy agricultural labor. "Digging" to cultivate maize, plantains, sweet potatoes, vegetables, and sorghum—the major crops in the Rwandan diet—was the primary profession. A Hutu woman's burdens were lessened if she married a man who continued to work with her in the fields,

particularly if they continued to live as part of a corporate unit with his parents, who could help with the childcare and agricultural labor. But this household arrangement was uncommon; most Hutu women were expected to perform unrelenting physical labor from their early childhood throughout their lives (Codere 1973: 246). During the colonial period, most Hutu girls did not go to school. Some poor Hutu girls (and boys) were sent to live as domestic servants in wealthier households. This was particularly common among orphans.

Marriage was an important rite of passage for both Hutu and Tutsi women, as it marked the beginning of adulthood and the transition of a girl from her parents' home to that of her husband and husband's family. Before marriage women derived their social identities from their fathers and brothers; after, a woman joined her husband's patrilineage and relied on his family for access to land and property (Jefremovas 2002: 99; Burnet 2012: 42-44). Divorce was possible although rare and was almost always initiated by men. After the death of a spouse, a marriage was dissolved. Women had no property or inheritance rights and as such, they were often compelled to marry the brother of their late husband in order to remain in their home. Male widowers were able to re-marry as they wished (Burnet 2012: 43). For women, pre-marriage promiscuity or pregnancy was extremely stigmatized. Male family members would sometimes kill a girl who got pregnant before she was married (Codere 1973: 144).²⁹ Unmarried women were dubbed *femmes libres* (free women), a term that suggested their promiscuity and social marginalization (Jefremovas 2002: 99; Codere 1973: 144). Many were the concubines of married men, who supported them financially without formally marrying them.

BELGIAN COLONIAL ERA: 1920-1962

Germany's colonial presence in Rwanda was minimal: by 1914 there were only five German administrators and just 96 Europeans in the country as a whole (Newbury 1980: 102; Prunier 1995: 25). After World War I, Germany's claim to Rwanda was given to Belgium as part of the post-war settlement. During Belgian rule, the colonial administration expanded by using the Tutsi monarchy and chiefs as its proxies. Patron-client relationships between Tutsi landowners and Hutu peasants consolidated Tutsi power over state resources and continued Tutsi wealth. During this period, typical economic relationships transitioned from kinship-based lineage groups to vertical patron-client relations. This shift towards patronage networks curtailed women's access to land and power (Jefremovas 1991: 380).

During the Belgian colonial era, the vast majority of Hutu peasants were primarily concerned with agrarian production and self-subsistence farming on plots of land usually owned by their Tutsi "patrons." Through the institution *ubuhake* (translated variously as "contract of pastoral servitude" or "cattle contract"), these peasants became "clients" of Tutsi "patrons," who gave them rights to land and cattle in exchange for agricultural products grown on the land (Lemarchand 1970: 36; Newbury 1980: 17). Along with other coercive and exploitative labor institutions like *uburetwa*³⁰ and *umuheto*,³¹ the *ubuhake* system and fostered deep resentment across the countryside both *within* the peasantry and *between* the Hutu peasants and Tutsi chiefs (Newbury 1980: 102-107). Rather than cultivating social interaction, such labor systems inhibited the development of solidarity among the peasants and created social cleavages that had dramatic consequences later in the 20th century (Lemarchand 1970: 17; Verwimp 2013).

While male peasants sold their labor to Tutsi “patrons” or to the state, women tended their husband’s land and cared for children (Vidal 1974: 58-64). Women’s labor was essential to household production; however, they had little to no control over any surplus they produced (Jefremovas 1991: 381-2). Men could earn money and then choose to spend it as they wished—often at bars. According to Villa Jefremovas,

Men have no obligation to use the cash they earn from cash crops or wages to contribute to the subsistence of the household...Women in Rwanda have limited control over the cash they produce, whether it is gained by selling the crops they produce or through wage labour. Women can and do earn cash, but can only control small amounts of the income they generate. Any control they have over land and income depends on the personal relationship individual women have established with individual men (1991: 382).

As I explain below, this gendered division of labor in the home remained largely unchanged from the pre through the post-colonial period.

In 1933, amidst the rising popularity of Social Darwinism and the eugenics movements in Europe, the Belgian colonial administration took a census of the Rwandan population. While the categories of Hutu and Tutsi were traditionally rooted in the social class system in the country, at this point the colonial administrators formally codified the ethnic categories as different races. After observing and conducting measurements of individual Rwandans’ physical features, Belgian social scientists declared that Tutsis were a non-indigenous “Hamitic” race descended from “Caucasoid” people from Egypt. As such, they were deemed to be close relatives of white Europeans with an intellectual ability far superior to their Hutu counterparts. Hutu were declared indigenous, inferior Bantu “negroids” (Mamdani 2001: 99-102; Straus 2006: 20). Following this census, the colonial administration issued mandatory identification cards marking an individual’s

ethnicity. This newly codified racial hierarchy justified Tutsi political dominance and Hutu oppression and made it extremely difficult to change ethnicity.

This exclusionist political regime and exploitative labor system led to protests and riots in the mid 1950s. Belgian administrators felt pressured to grant Hutus some political representation and slowly introduced reforms to that effect. A Hutu counter-elite emerged from the “rural proletariat” (Lemarchand 1970) and began to develop a subaltern ideology devoted to breaking the Tutsi monopoly in government and transferring power back to the “indigenous” masses (Lemarchand 1970: 141; Mamdani 2001: 117). Perhaps inspired by the wave of pan-African independence movements, Belgian colonialists began to support this new counter-elite, which was made up of Hutus who had managed to obtain education at missionary schools or in the seminary during the period of time when higher education was restricted to Tutsi (Lemarchand 1970: 141). The constant inability of this group of Hutu intellectuals to find decent employment because of their ethnicity had generated a burning sense of grievance. In 1957, nine members of this counter-elite produced the *Bahutu Manifesto*, which “challenged every conceivable feature of the feudal system” by demanding the equal education of Hutu children, the recognition of individual landed property, the promotion of Hutu to political office, and more (Lemarchand 1970: 149). These sweeping demands were a stinging indictment of the Tutsi regime.

REVOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

Tensions gradually came to a boiling point in 1959, as the King Rwabugiri died unexpectedly and bands of militants affiliated with newly forming Hutu political parties began assaulting Tutsi chiefs. Lemarchand explains how “violence spread like wildfire

through the entire country,” and compares this 1959 revolution to 1789 France, likening Hutu revolutionaries to the Jacobins (Lemarchand 1970: 111; Prunier also makes this comparison, 1995: 112). As a result, Belgium suddenly switched political allegiances and decided to counter Tutsi hegemony in favor of the Hutu peasant masses (Straus 2006: 21; Lemarchand 2009: 31). During 22 months of fighting, militias killed an estimated 150,000 Rwandans of all ethnicities. Another 130,000 Tutsis fled the country, including many members of the monarchy (Lemarchand 1970).

Belgium officially granted Rwanda independence in 1962. Soon after, popular elections installed an exclusionist Hutu regime led by President Grégoire Kayibanda, a Hutu from the south of Rwanda. In the initial months of the “Hutu Republic,” violence was used to drive Tutsi off their land and into exile so that Hutu revolutionaries could take their possessions and land. The revolution failed to produce many lasting social or economic reforms (Lemarchand 1970), although it did introduce policies granting women the right to vote and run for political office (Burnet 2012: 50).³² Most critically, the revolution gave rise to a Hutu counter-elite that assumed control of the state and created deep rifts between Hutu and Tutsi elites, as well as between Hutu factions in the north and south of the country. Thus although the revolution did not fully dismantle property relations or other areas of social and economic life, it did transform the political power structure in Rwanda by removing the former Tutsi elite. In doing so, the revolution sowed the seeds of the genocide that would occur 35 years later.

Waves of killings during the decades after the revolution sent tens of thousands of Tutsi and political dissidents into exile in neighboring countries, including Uganda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Burundi. Tutsi rebel groups,

dubbed “*inyenzi*” or cockroaches because they often came at night, waged periodic attacks around the country in an attempt to destabilize the new Republic. Before long, Kayibanda’s ruling party (PARMEHUTU) began to face internal conflicts between family clans and power networks from different regions of the country (Newbury 1999: 13). In 1973, during massive violence in neighboring Burundi, a coup d’état ushered Juvenal Habyarimana and his *Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie* (MRND) political party to power. Habyarimana’s reign continued the domination of Hutu politicians, but shifted the power center to the north of the country (Lemarchand 2009; Prunier 1995; Pottier 1993).

President Habyarimana was from Gisenyi, a city in Northern Province across the border from Goma, DRC. Habyarimana’s wife, Agathe Kanzinga, was from a powerful family that had ruled an independent principality of Rwanda until the late 19th century.³³ Her family networks comprised the “*Akazu*” clan, which became the staunchest supporter of Habyarimana’s regime. During his tenure, Habyarimana and the MRND imprisoned or killed many politicians from the south of the country. Violence against Tutsi was generally limited, although institutional discrimination was rampant and restricted the number of Tutsi who could go to school or be employed by the government (Vidal 1969). Civil society was virtually non-existent as the regime exerted tight control over public spaces, although some small farming cooperatives formed in the 1970s (Uvin 1998).

From the perspective of the international community, Rwanda under Habyarimana was a successful model of strong state-led development. The country depended heavily on foreign aid, and received lots of it because of its reputation as a relatively uncorrupt, well-organized society (Uvin 1998). The Habyarimana regime

enjoyed strong support from France and Belgium, relying on them for military and development aid. This aid would later shape dynamics of violence during the civil war and genocide. It also received aid from the U.S., Switzerland, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, and elsewhere (USAID 2000: 12). With this aid, Habyarimana made notable improvements to Rwanda's infrastructure, education and health care systems, and also implemented reforestation programs aimed at increasing agricultural production (Uvin 1998; Newbury 1995: 14). The development community celebrated these accomplishments and appreciated the political stability of the country—even if it fell far short of democratic ideals.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN POST-COLONIAL ERA

A 1973 speech by the Minister of Justice summed up women's position in Rwandan society after independence. He stated that women's "role as a producer...reinforces her motherhood. Her dignity in work pays homage to her husband and reflects back on her" (Quoted in Jefremovas 1991: 392-393). The Minister's speech encapsulated the government's explicitly pro-natalist position; despite being one of the most densely populated countries in the world, Rwanda had no formal family planning policies in place as of the 1970s (Verwimp 2013: 26). Throughout the post-colonial era, Rwandan women continued to have an average of eight children each (Verwimp 2013: 27; Republic of Rwanda 2014). In the national imagination, women's primary responsibility was to bear many children.

Despite the Habyarimana regime's tight control over civil society, a small women's movement emerged in the 1980s (Burnet 2012: 52). In 1985, several Rwandan women attended the UN's Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, where they

were introduced international strategies for involving women in development. During this period, the level of women in formal political positions increased, as the percentage of seats women held in parliament increased from 12.9 percent in 1983 to 15.7 percent in 1988 (Burnet 2008: 370). The parliament, however, was largely ceremonial, as Habyarimana and his single-party regime controlled the state and the women who served in government were predominantly the wives or family members of Habyarimana's closest advisors. Nevertheless, a handful of women's organizations formed during this period with both Hutu and Tutsi members. These organizations included Haguruka, a women's legal advocacy group, Duterimbere, a micro-credit banking cooperative, and Réseau des Femmes, an organization dedicated to furthering the development of rural women. Based in Kigali, these organizations were generally comprised of elite women with close ties to the regime. Unlike in Bosnia (and many other places in the 1980s), these emergent women's movements were not tied to international feminist networks. Instead, they stemmed from the "Women in Development" framework promoted by the UN Development Program and the World Bank.

But women's legal rights lagged far behind men's. Women gained the right to vote after independence, but still required their husbands' consent in order to open a bank account, engage in any profit-making activity, register a business, buy land, or undertake any legal action in court. Men controlled women's property and income and could withdraw money from their wives' accounts without permission. Unmarried women formally had full legal status, but in practice were considered wards of their fathers or brothers (Jefremovas 1991: 382-3; Longman 2005).

Moreover, independent women were subjected to repression from the state or its agents. Authorities launched a series of “moral cleanup” missions around Kigali in the 1980s (Verwimp 2013: 36). Police rounded up young, single, urban women who dressed stylishly, or who consorted with European expatriates, beating them and even reportedly stripping them naked in public. Authorities detained some of these women in moral “re-education centers,” where they were subjected to various forms of harm. The majority of women subjected to this mistreatment were Tutsi (Taylor 1999; see Verwimp 2013: 36 for a discussion). Educated women were not immune to rigid social control either; at the National University of Rwanda in Butare, school administrators and local officials detained women suspected of being promiscuous, having improper relationships, or engaging in drug use (Umutesi 2000:14-15).

ORIGINS OF THE RPF

After the violence surrounding the Hutu revolution, a large number of Tutsi refugees fled Rwanda and settled in southern Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Congo (Lemarchand 1970). More followed them as anti-Tutsi pogroms broke out in the following decades. The largest group of exiles ended up in Uganda, where they lived in large semi-permanent camps between the Rwandan border and Kampala (Otunnu 1999). In the beginning, some were able to pass as “Ugandan” as they had few linguistic or racial distinctions (Jones 2012: 58). This meant that they were able to attend school and find employment, which markedly improved their situation in exile. Yet despite this integration, between 1959 and 1973, political rhetoric emphasized the need to expel the Tutsis refugees from Uganda, and the various Ugandan governments made attempts to resettle or repatriate the refugee population (Jones 2012: 59). Discrimination against

Rwandans in Uganda increased in the early 1980s, causing many refugees to seek opportunities to return to Rwanda (Prunier 1995).

Increased repression against Rwandan exiles in Uganda motivated some Rwandan refugees to join Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA), a guerrilla army that aimed to overthrow Ugandan President Obote. Two Rwandan exiles rose to prominent leadership positions within the NRA: Paul Kagame and Fred Rwigyema. At least another 500 or so Rwandans fought in the lower ranks (Otunnu 1999; Prunier 2009).³⁴ Exiled Rwandans viewed Museveni's NRA as an important base from which they might eventually gain permanent status in Uganda, or from which they could turn towards a return to Rwanda (Waugh 2004). In 1986, after a grueling five-year bush war, the NRA successfully overthrew Obote's regime. This experience gave Rwandan exiles confidence in the possibility of overthrowing entrenched national governments, and it taught the leadership that "violence was not exceptional; it was a normal state of affairs" (Prunier 2009: 13). After, Rwigyema became the Ugandan Army Chief of Staff and eventually Deputy Minister of Defense, while Kagame became acting head of the NRA's military intelligence.

Throughout this period, Kagame and Rwigyema were part of a Rwandan diasporic network that sought to organize an armed political movement with the goal of repatriating all Tutsi exiles and eventually securing a Tutsi presence in Rwanda's government and military. This movement was initially known as the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU); from 1987 on it was the Rwandan Patriotic Front (or RPF, and for the military wing, Rwandan Patriotic Army, or RPA).³⁵ Several of the leaders of this movement were admirers of Mao Tse Tung and Che Guavera and were motivated by

pan-Africanist struggles for independence and dignity around the continent (Waugh 2004: 37). The movement cultivated strong internal discipline and its leaders began to seriously think about retuning to Rwanda with military force. To do so, the RPF developed expansive financial networks among the diaspora, particularly in English-speaking countries. They benefitted from the growing prominence of Rwandan refugees in Museveni's administration and the growing business success of many Rwandans in exile. Equipped with such military support and financial resources, the RPF grew into a sophisticated and disciplined politico-military organization (see discussions in Prunier 1995; Otunnu 1999; Lemarchand 2009; and Jones 2012, 2014).

Women played an integral role in the early days of the RPF movement. Modeling itself on Museveni's NRM—which had mobilized women in its network—the RPF mobilized women in a range of roles. According several women I interviewed, women took on important roles in the refugee camps after the violent deaths of their spouses. Men came to appreciate women's capabilities and therefore supported women's involvement in the movement. As the RPF grew, women served as recruiters for the cause and also took charge of soliciting donations from the diaspora. Wherever Rwandan exiles lived, young and eager members of the RPF worked to build consensus and recruit members. Some women, including Aloesia Inyumba, rose within the ranks to hold senior positions in the political side of the movement. Others, like Rose Kabuye, rose in the military ranks. During my interviews with both women, each described the RPF's encouragement of women, saying, “we were never discriminated, and when we came to power, they never pushed us aside. They pushed us in the front, we were with them throughout” (Rose Kabuye, Interview #30, 2/12/2013). The RPF gave all Tutsi exiles—

women and men alike—the hope that one day they might live lives of respect within their own country’s borders.

CIVIL WAR BEGINS

While the RPF was growing in Uganda in the mid 1980s, the economy within Rwanda was in a dramatic decline. The price of coffee, Rwanda’s primary export, dropped 50 percent in 1989 (Newbury 1995: 14). A Structural Adjustment Programme mandated by the International Monetary Fund devalued the Rwandan *franc* by 67 percent, leading to the rapid inflation of basic commodities like food and fuel (Newbury 1995: 14; Mamdani 2001: 147). Tin prices also collapsed on the world market, shutting down Rwanda’s tin mines and sending shock waves through the domestic economy (Prunier 1995: 84). With an estimated 90 percent of the population dependent on self-subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods, a famine—partially triggered by the economic crisis—haunted the south and southwest areas of the country and killed an estimated 300 peasants (Pottier 1993; Newbury 1995: 14). This crisis was exacerbated by the high tax burden placed on the rural population, which was expected to pay water fees, school fees, health taxes, and more, on top of providing several days of labor each month to the state (Newbury 1995: 14; Prunier 1995: 87-88). At the same time as these economic shifts, unknown terrorists threw grenades into crowds in Kigali and at busy bus stations. A pervasive sense of uncertainty spread throughout the population.

Overpopulation was the most pressing issue for both the peasantry and the regime. In some parts of the country there were over 1,000 people per square mile (Newbury 1995: 14), which led to land grabs and unrest in the already overpopulated countryside (Prunier 1995: 88). During the 1980s, the population had grown at an annual

growth rate of 3.1 percent—one of the highest growth rates in the world (Verwimp 2013: 55). The average size of cultivated land per family dropped from 1.2 hectares in 1984 to just 0.9 hectares in 1990 (Republic of Rwanda [1984, 1989] 1991). As word spread that Tutsi exiles wanted to return to Rwanda and reclaim the land they had fled from in previous decades, Hutu peasants were alarmed—there was simply not enough space. Many, including extremists within Habyarimana’s regime, began to imagine the country free of pastoralist Tutsis who threatened to suffocate struggling Hutu agriculturalists. Such an imagining of an ethnically pure country of small landholder peasants could not accommodate the RPF, which was knocking at the country’s northern border.

In the context of this economic and political instability in Rwanda, the RPF decided it was an opportune time to initiate their military strike. On October 1, 1990, RPF forces attacked a border post at Kagitumba in the north of Rwanda (Prunier 1995: 93-97). They soon encountered the *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (FAR), the reasonably well-organized and trained Rwandan military of about 5,000 men. The FAR had technical military support from France, which helped them to push back the RPF offensive. Fred Rwigyema was killed under suspicious circumstances during the first few days of fighting, delivering a substantial blow to the movement.³⁶ This forced the RPF to reconsider its offensive, and it retreated to the mountainous region in the Virunga Mountains bordering Rwanda and Uganda.

Rwigyema’s death elevated Kagame³⁷ to a central leadership position within the RPF. For several months, RPF members lived in the freezing cold mountains where several froze to death. Because of the ongoing efforts of its network, however, funds and new recruits poured in. Many came from the Tutsi exile community in Burundi, and

others still from DRC, Tanzania, and elsewhere in Europe and North America—although the leadership remained overwhelmingly “Ugandan” in origin. Most of those who joined the RPF were well educated; almost all had attended primary school, and nearly 20 percent had reached university (Prunier 1995: 117). The rebel army swelled in numbers: by 1992 there were nearly 12,000 fighters in the ranks.

In order to counter the growing threat from the RPF, the FAR expanded rapidly, growing to 30,000 troops by the end of 1991. France supplied the weapons for the expanded army and even aided in military operations in the north (Prunier 1995: 113). Habyarimana commanded an elite force known as the Presidential Guard; recruited primarily from his home region, this group was loyal to the President and to the *Akazu* clan that comprised his core power base (Des Forges 1999: 45). Habyarimana also cracked down on domestic opposition, arresting between 8,000 and 10,000 people in Kigali alone immediately after the RPF attack (Verwimp 2013: 130). Local authorities organized civilian defense units by conscripting one man from every 10 household unit. These armed groups set up road blocks and monitored activity in order to protect their neighborhoods from the rebel threat (Des Forges 2006; Straus 2006: 26; Verwimp 2013: 147). In 1992 and 1993, MRND leadership and military officers formed youth militias, dubbed *interahamwe* (variously translated as “those who stand together” or “those with a common goal”; Des Forges 1999: 50). The Presidential Guard selected certain promising members of these youth militias for additional military training, which allowed them to gain skills designed to resist the rebel onslaught (Des Forges 1999: 50; Straus 2006: 26-27). Later, these groups would be among those most involved in genocidal violence.

While the RPF regrouped, pogroms against Tutsi civilians within Rwanda increased, including one in the Matara region (Gisenyi province) where Hutu militias massacred 348 Tutsi in mid-October 1990 (Prunier 1995: 110; Des Forges 1999: 46; Verwimp 2013: 129). Extremist members of the MRND organized Hutus to kill between 300 and one thousand members of a Tutsi subgroup in February 1992 (Verwimp 2013: 130-32). The organizers of these massacres had hoped these killings would spread throughout the region; when they failed to do so, extremists faked an attack by the RPF on a military camp in an attempt to incite the local population to launch a counterattack the next day (Des Forges 1999: 47).

In January 1991, the RPF shifted their invasion tactics to a guerrilla strategy of “hit and run” attacks. They attacked Ruhengeri—one of the key power bases of the Habyarimana regime—where they stormed a prison and released political prisoners. They also captured weapons and other equipment that would aid them in the fight. During the following months of the civil war, both RPF and FAR forces perpetrated small massacres of civilians. Some were committed against Tutsi in “self-defense,” as ordinary Rwandans feared the RPF and thereby understood all Tutsis as potential RPF accomplices (or *ibyitso*). Fake propaganda pieces suggesting Tutsi were coming to kill their Hutu neighbors helped rally ordinary peasants to participate in killing squads organized by local militias (Prunier 1995: 137; Straus 2006: 29).

Between 1990 and 1992, an estimated 300,000 people were displaced because of the fighting between the RPF and the FAR, which was supported by French troops and military equipment (Prunier 1995: 136). Hutu civilians were increasingly terrified of the RPF, as rumors circulated that the rebels were killing civilians in order to take their

land.³⁸ By March 1993, approximately 860,000 people had fled in advance of the RPF army, which now controlled large parts of the north and almost all of Byumba prefecture. These internally displaced people (IDPs) settled in informal camps around Byumba where the conditions were appalling (see Umutesi 2000; Dallaire 2005). The RPF established its military headquarters in Mulindi, sixty kilometers north of Kigali. Fearing insecurity if civilians were allowed to repopulate the area, the RPF prevented civilians from returning to their homes (Dallaire 2005: 66-67). The RPF committed atrocities during this period, killing dozens (maybe hundreds) of civilians and even children (Amnesty International 1994; Umutesi 2000). Reports of these killings, while minor in comparison to the killing perpetrated by FAR and affiliated extremist forces, reduced support for the RPF among the opposition parties in Kigali (Prunier 1995: 176).

“DEMOCRATIZATION”

During this ongoing crisis, challengers to Habyarimana’s power base emerged in the south of the country. Habyarimana’s ministers and cabinet members were almost all from northern Rwanda (mostly from Gisenyi prefecture). This regional imbalance caused intense resentment among Hutu elites in the south of the country—and particularly from former President Kayibanda’s base. Fearing a loosening of his power, and with the urging of France and other international donors, Habyarimana made plans to introduce a multi-party system of government (Newbury 1995: 14). This involved the legalization of political parties beyond his own ruling MRND and opening political space in the country for pro-democracy supporters.

In 1991 Habyarimana announced plans to hold a constitutional referendum and even promised to erase ethnicity from future ID cards or official documentation (Prunier

1995: 122). In addition to MRND, several other political parties announced their formation, including the Parti Social Démocrate (PSD), the Parti Libéral (PL), and the Parti Démocrate-Chertien (PDC). Furthermore, the Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (MDR), banned after the coup d'état in 1973, was resurrected from Kayibanda's former political base in the south of the country. Each political party was essentially a patronage network that drew its supporters from different segments of the Rwandan society (e.g., PL had many Tutsis in it, PSD had its powerbase in the south of the country). Many within these parties wanted to promote democracy and do away with ethnic politics. Habyarimana also encouraged the development of a group of "opposition parties," which had little power in practice (Prunier 1995: 128; Des Forges 1999: 28-38). This liberalization encouraged the growth of the newly formed women's organizations, as they now felt they could pressure Habyarimana to make women's issues a priority. In 1992, a small coalition of women's organizations—including Haguruka and Réseau des Femmes—successfully lobbied for the creation of a Ministry for Women and Family Promotion.

Habyarimana, however, never seriously intended to relinquish any power. He retained tight control over the FAR and the police. Elite military forces silently assassinated many of his strongest political opponents, often using mysterious car accidents as camouflage for the attacks (Newbury 1995: 13; Prunier 1995). In March 1992 a coalition of racist Hutus who were on the "lunatic fringes of radical Hutu extremism" (Prunier 1995: 129) also formed a party, called the Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR). Many of these extremists were fringe members of MRND and supporters of the "Hutu Power" movement, which had published the Hutu Ten

Commandments in 1990. These commandments deemed any Hutu who married, befriended, employed, or even associated with a Tutsi to be a traitor to his ethnic group, declaring that Tutsi women were “tempresses” who were deceitful and not to be trusted (see Hutu Commandments in Des Forges 1999: 39-40). The CDR called for the total elimination of Tutsi from government and the army; thus by definition, it was opposed to any power-sharing negotiations stemming from the civil war. This group of extremists situated the current threat posed by the RPF into a broader historical narrative, where Hutu, the indigenous people of Rwanda, had been exploited and abused by Tutsi “invaders” from the north and their colonial collaborators (Mandani 2001). In radio programs, pamphlets, speeches, and rallies, CDR extremists emphasized that Hutus were victims of a historical injustice: the exploitative yoke of the Tutsi monarchy had made them suffer, and with increasing land scarcity in the country, there was simply no room for the invaders to return.

While Habyarimana tacitly supported many of the CDR goals, he also was under domestic and international political pressure to begin negotiations with the RPF and incorporate them into the new multiparty political system. The prospect of power sharing, however, sent many hardliner MRND members into the streets, and the army mutinied in several regions. As a result, it was the opposition parties (MDR, PSD, and PL) that initiated negotiations with the RPF. After these talks, the RPF—represented by its Hutu political chief Pasteur Bizimungu—announced the armed portion of its struggle was finished, and that only the political struggle would continue. Plans were set to discuss the details of this agreement in Arusha, Tanzania in July 1993 (Prunier 1995: 150). The

Arusha Accords, as they became known, were designed to establish a power-sharing agreement that would end the civil war.³⁹

The pending negotiations with the RPF caused extremists within CDR and the President's own party to worry about ceding power. Evidence of death squads, coordinated by members of the *Akazu*, emerged at the end of 1992 (Prunier 1995: 168; Des Forges 1999: 59). "Network Zero," a group of people close to Habyarimana, rejected his willingness to consider a power-sharing settlement. Many scholars believe this "Network" began to formalize plans to kill Tutsi and other political opponents and stored weapons in secret arms caches around Kigali (Dallaire 2005: 143). However, there is a growing debate about whether this group was indeed responsible for the genocide that would follow, or whether it were constructed by the RPF after its victory to clearly trace the "intent" for genocide back to an identifiable set of actors. Nevertheless, there is evidence that many extremists sought a radical halt to the democratization process through the murder of those who threatened the regime. Extremists, including Léon Mugesera (a Vice President of MRND in Gisenyi with a Ph.D. from Fort Laval University in Canada) began calling for the murder of Tutsis. Mugesera famously stated that Tutsis should be sent back to Ethiopia via the Nyabarongo River that ran north from Rwanda.

But it is important to note that Mugesera's rhetoric was not paradigmatic of political speech at the time; many Hutu elites openly criticized this extremism, and even called for the arrest of people using such racist language. Jean Rumiya, a former member of the MRND central committee, accused Mugesera of calling for murder "in order to launch an operation of ethnic and political purification...I had hoped that the time when

ritual murders were committed for political purposes is over” (Prunier 1995: 172). The Minister of Justice even issued a warrant to arrest Mugesera for inciting unrest, prompting Mugesera to flee the country (Prunier 1995; 172; Mann 2006: 444). This diversity of opinions on the RPF “problem” should temper allegations the genocide was the culmination of a long-orchestrated plan by the Habyarimana regime as a whole. In hindsight, it is tempting to see the escalation of violence as a deliberate, orchestrated process; indeed, identifying clear “intent” is necessary to determine “genocide” was committed, as established by the 1948 UN Genocide Convention. Like others (e.g., Mamdani 2001; Mann 2006), however, I view the genocide as more emergent and contingent. Hutu radicalization was a response to real RPF threats against the northern Hutu stronghold on the state (Mann 2006: 443).

Four major political contingents operated in Rwanda during the early 1990s (Straus 2006: 42). First, Hutu moderates were represented by opposition political parties like the MDR, PSD, and PL. Second, extremist Hutu hardliners, including Habyarimana’s MRND political party and the more extreme CDR, were orchestrated by the *Akazu* clan and their military and media allies. Third was the RPF, led by Paul Kagame. And fourth was the international community, which included roughly 2,500 UN peacekeepers and a diplomatic corps assembled by neighboring governments and Western powers. Each group had vastly different political agendas and was suspicious of the other groups’ motives. Perhaps most critically, Hutu hardliners were convinced that the RPF was just posturing during power-sharing discussions; many were certain that the rebels would not be satisfied until they took the country by military force and secured Tutsi control over the entire government and military (Straus 2006).

The Arusha Accords, signed in August 1993, established various protocols designed to bring about the end of the civil war. The agreement included a ceasefire in addition to a power-sharing agreement that would grant RPF troops a total of 40 percent of the military and 50 percent of the Officer Corps (Des Forges 1999: 33). A Broad Based Transitional Government (BBTG) would be formed to incorporate the RPF into the political system. Representatives from all major political parties were granted positions in the BBTG. Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a Hutu from the south of Rwanda, became the first woman prime minister of the country.⁴⁰ The agreement also granted the RPF five ministerial positions and allowed for the repatriation of Tutsi refugees.

The accords were extremely unpopular among many Hutus for several reasons. For one, they completely excluded radical Hutu parties from power and deprived MRND of its control over the cabinet. Moreover, about 20,000 Hutu soldiers would be demobilized; many would likely find themselves unemployed (Mann 2006: 441). Further, the accords allowed for the return of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi from exile, generating fears of instability and land grabs. As a result, the political situation in Rwanda deteriorated further during the negotiations. CDR refused to participate in any power-sharing agreements with the RPF, and tensions escalated. For protection, the Accords granted the RPF permission to have six hundred troops stationed in Kigali, stoking fears of a military escalation to the political crisis.

On October 21, 1993, in the climate of this tense political situation, members of Burundi's Tutsi-controlled army assassinated Melchior Ndadaye, the first Hutu president of Rwanda's southern neighbor. Earlier that year, Burundians had elected Ndadaye president in the country's first smooth transfer of power since independence. President

Ndadaye had attempted to appease Tutsis and was widely seen as a political moderate. Violence erupted in Burundi after his assassination, and forces from both ethnic groups killed at least 50,000 people—both Hutu and Tutsi—in the following months.⁴¹ Another 700,000 Burundian refugees fled across the border into southern Rwanda (Eriksson 1996: 22). Ndadaye’s murder sent shock waves throughout the Rwandan political system, bolstering “Hutu Power” sects in all opposition parties and fomenting anti-Tutsi rhetoric. The assassination mobilized the extremists in CDR in particular, who feared the RPF might similarly assassinate Habyarimana and attempt a comparable coup d’états in Rwanda.

At this point, tensions in Rwanda were at an all time high, and there was a general escalation in violence of all types (Umutesi 2000). There were multiple delays in implementing the Arusha Accords. The UN Secretary General, Butros Butros Ghali, even threatened to withdraw the UN assistance mission in Rwanda if the accords were not implemented. Regional and international governments urged the transitional government to implement the accords, threatening various sanctions for the failure to do so. In February 1994, Hutu extremists assassinated Félicien Gatabazi, the executive secretary of the PSD opposition party, which triggered massive outrage among Hutu moderates.⁴² Angry mobs killed the CDR chairman—who happened to be traveling in Gatabazi’s hometown of Butare that day—in response (Prunier 1995: 206). These killings led to further unrest in Kigali in which dozens were killed and hundreds injured (Dallaire 2005: 189).

Eager to resolve the various conflicts and avoid a full-fledged civil war, officials from Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, and Uganda met in Tanzania on April 6th, 1994. There

they scolded Habyarimana for his failure to control the political situation in his country and for the many delays in implementing the BBTG (Prunier 1995: 221). Habyarimana left the meeting with the newly elected Burundian President Cyrpien Ntaryamira to fly back to Kigali in Habyarimana's presidential jet—a gift from French President Mitterrand. As the plane attempted to land in Kigali around 8:30 pm, it was struck by two surface-to-air missiles.⁴³ Who shot the missiles continues to be a subject of much heated debate (see Des Forges 1999: 181; Prunier 1995: 213; Straus 2006: 44; Mann 2006: 450). The plane crashed, killing all on board.

GENOCIDE BEGINS, CIVIL WAR CONTINUES

Within hours of the plane crash, Habyarimana's inner circle blamed the RPF for the death of the president and declared that the RPF was attempting a coup d'état. Extremists within the regime mobilized the Presidential Guard, police, FAR, and *interahamwe* militias, and began to carry out supervised killings of political opponents. An interim government was set up, comprised entirely of members of the *Akazu* and other extremists. Théoneste Bagosora, a Hutu Power extremist at the center of the *Akazu*, emerged as the central power-holder in the government; he declared the politically meek Theodore Sindikubwabo interim President. Bagosora first aimed to eliminate all domestic opposition to his consolidation of power and commanded the Presidential Guard to spread out across Kigali (Guichaoau 2010: 255; Verwimp 2013: 151). The Presidential Guard began by callously killing opposition politicians, starting with Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, who was constitutionally the next in line to the presidency. They continued rounding up the leaders of the other opposition political parties and their

families, brutally murdering them under the guise of “restoring order” (Dallaire 2004; Straus 2006: 47).

Within 36 hours of the President’s assassination, Bagosora established a “Crisis Committee” of extremists within the government that began to consolidate control. Their actions during the first 24 hours after Habyarimana’s assassination were designed to scare the UN—and particularly its Belgian forces—into withdrawing. The “Crisis Committee” made a political calculation that if several UN peacekeepers were killed early on in the violence, the international involvement in Rwanda would proceed like it had in Somalia and Bosnia: forces would swiftly withdraw. To this end, the militias murdered 10 Belgian peacekeepers assigned to protect the Prime Minister. As planned, the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) reduced the number of peacekeepers on the ground from 2,500 to just 270 blue-helmets. On April 7th, widespread slaughter of civilians began across the country.

The killings mobilized the RPF, which still had 600 troops stationed in Kigali. RPF troops attacked Presidential Guard stations and command centers and attempted to establish a safe zone around their encampment. They also endeavored to defend the houses of RPF supporters living in Kigali. Clashes between RPF troops and government forces caused Hutu and Tutsi residents to flee the city (Umutesi 2000: 50). In her memoir as a Hutu survivor of the violence, Beatrice Umutesi captured how everyone in Kigali was petrified with fear, regardless of whether they were Tutsi or Hutu. She recalled:

Each group suspected the presence of armed elements in the other group. The Hutu thought that there were members of the RPF among the Tutsi, who in turn believed that there were militia among the Hutu who came from Kigali. The Tutsi provoked panic in the whole camp by running away when a vehicle carrying militia or soldiers passed by on a road. The Hutu caused everyone to run when they claimed they had seen young men

armed with clubs and grenades in the areas occupied by Tutsi. At each alarm, people began to run in every direction, without really knowing what was going on (2000: 51).

On the northern front, RPF forces also launched a full attack beginning on April 8th. They advanced quickly. By late April, the RPF controlled the majority of north central and eastern Rwanda (Straus 2006: 50). When they came into contact with MRND political leaders or other extremists, the RPF was aggressive militarily. During their invasion they are estimated to have killed between 25,000 and 60,000 civilians (both Hutu and Tutsi)—although this number is the subject of heated debate (see Des Forges 1999; Straus also cites these numbers. Prunier 2009 cites the Gersony report estimates of 25,000-45,000). Many more FAR soldiers were killed in battle. Because of hate propaganda and rumors of RPF attacks, all Tutsis in the county were soon seen as the “fifth column” of the RPF. That made all Tutsi legitimate targets in the eyes of the *génocidaires* (Straus 2006).

The international community debated intervening in the violence. Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire, the chief of the UN Mission in Rwanda, pleaded with U.S. and UN officials for additional forces, which he believed could curb the violence. His requests were in vain, as world powers exercised restraint in the aftermath of U.S. troop losses in Somalia. France was the exception: in June 1994 it sent 2,500 troops to Rwanda in order to establish a safe haven for fleeing Hutu civilians as part of *Operation Turquoise* (Prunier 1995; Dallaire 2005; Power 2003). The mission was motivated by Habyarimana’s long relationship with French President Mitterrand, and French leadership suspected that Habyarimana had been the victim of a Tutsi-led coup d’état. Thus instead of stopping the genocidal militias, French troops were sent to protect Hutu civilians from the RPF invasion.

NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENOCIDAL VIOLENCE

The violence in Rwanda, as in Bosnia, unfolded with different speeds and intensities in different parts of the country. Here I outline some overarching characteristics of the violence, before delving into the specifics of violence in Kigali and the two regions examined most closely in this project. The perpetrators of genocidal violence can roughly be grouped in four categories: (1) racist, anti-Tutsi extremists, most notably the *Akazu* and CDR leadership; (2) those who wanted to maintain the gains of the 1959 Social Revolution and ensure continued Hutu access to land; (3) Hutus who were not ideologically committed to genocide but nonetheless went along with orders to kill or otherwise participate in the process; and (4) opportunists who turned against Tutsi to gain wealth, settle scores, or assume power (Verwimp 2013: 162). Specifying these categories of perpetrators is helpful for understanding the different dynamics of violence that unfolded over the next few months.

Racist Hutu extremists (category 1) used radio and other propaganda channels to rally ordinary Rwandans to join in the fight against Tutsi. Radio broadcasts encouraged citizens to avenge the death of the President and eventually called explicitly for blood (Prunier 1995: 224). A broadcast by the Ministry of Defense declared that the RPF was comprised of those “who [want] to reinstate the formal feudal monarchy” and encouraged Rwandans to destroy the enemy and any who might assist them (Straus 2006: 50). Radio programs sometimes used dehumanizing language that referred to Tutsis as “cockroaches” (*inyenzi*)⁴⁴ or “snakes.” Most critically, hardliners emphasized that Tutsi were the enemy (*umwanzi*) or were accomplices (*ibiyitso*) of the RPF who must be killed before they could launch their own attack (Straus 2006: 158).

Mobs of militias (often mobilized from categories 3 or 4) carried out attacks against Tutsi civilians around the country, usually under the control of an organized and trained military unit. Many of these genocide perpetrators were “marauding bands of violent, opportunistic, and often drunken thugs” (Mueller 2000: 62). Many were motivated less by pure ethnic hatred than by fear, a strong sense of ethnic justice, and the potential for material gain. Looting was pervasive, and killing squads or local militias profited from the violence by stealing livestock, possessions, or even building materials from the homes of those who were killed. Many of these ordinary citizens turned from looters into killers because they feared the RPF onslaught. There was a “kill or be killed” mentality, and many perpetrators feared sanctions from Hutu leaders if they failed to comply (Des Forges 1999; Straus 2006: 155; Mann 2006; Verwimp 2013: 182). Many Hutus did not see any way to resist without being considered traitors (Verwimp 2013: 182).

Perpetrators used different killing strategies and techniques. Militias went door-to-door to known Tutsi houses, killing anyone known to be Tutsi or even those who looked like a Tutsi. Perpetrators targeted the elite and highly educated, regardless of their ethnicity (Des Forges 1999). Militias also set up roadblocks that prevented people from escaping their neighborhoods by car or on foot (Dallaire 2004: 253). Those who tried to pass the roadblocks were asked for their ID cards; if they were Tutsi or if their name was found on a wanted list, they were killed on the spot. Desperate to survive, many Tutsis fled to Rwanda’s swamps and hid for weeks, often partially submerged in water and mud (Interviews; Gisozi Testimony Archive; Des Forges 1999). Others were able to hide in the homes of sympathetic Hutus, and there are reports that some were able to hide in

Kigali's few mosques, protected by the Imams who were viewed as non-ethnic (Kubai 2010). Tutsis also took shelter in churches, schools, and other large institutions, hoping for safety in numbers, only to discover that these institutions made them easy targets for mass murder. Prefects in some sectors even directed Tutsi to large stadiums, assuring their safety if they complied. This made it easier to use grenades, guns, and rudimentary weapons like machetes and knives to carry out the killing (Des Forges 1999).⁴⁵

As noted, Hutus were also targeted during the genocide. Des Forges and Straus estimated that the FAR and other Hutu militias killed approximately 10,000 Hutus during the violence (Straus 2006: 51). Initially, most of these victims were members of the political opposition, or were known for their passive support of the RPF. Others simply looked like Tutsis, or were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some were married to Tutsis. Still others had valuables—including land and cattle—that militias coveted (André and Platteau 1996; Umutesi 2000: 60-61). In certain parts of the country (particularly in Kigali and Northern Province), Hutus from the south were also killed, as they were suspected of supporting opposition parties (Prunier 1995: 249). Beyond being targeted, many Hutus were beaten and coerced to kill; some youth, in particular, were told they would be killed or their mothers raped if they declined to participate. Rwandans with mixed ethnic backgrounds (e.g., a Hutu father and Tutsi mother) were at particular risk of violent coercion to ensure their participation (field notes and interviews).

Sexualized Violence

Beyond killing, sexualized violence was widespread. Like in Bosnia, war rape was not an extension of interpersonal violence or one of the spoils of war; rather, perpetrators employed rape as a deliberate strategy of violence. It had both ethnic and

gendered dimensions. In many cases, rape was used to destroy the ethnic “other” by eliminating its source: women’s biological capacity to reproduce. In patrilineal societies like Rwanda, women are considered the property of their male relatives; their value is in their ability to bear children that carry on the man’s lineage. Thus, perpetrators used rape to emasculate and humiliate Tutsi men by abusing their property. Rape became a political act designed to carry out an officially orchestrated policy (Buss 2009).

But it is also critical to note that sexual violence often occurred outside of the problematic dyad of Hutu/perpetrator and Tutsi/victim; extremist militias raped many Hutu women and girls as the rule of law broke down, and RPF soldiers coerced women into sexual relationships in areas under their control (Burnet 2012: 98). Sexual violence took multiple forms, including sexual slavery, forced “marriage,” gang rape, sexual torture, and sexual exchange (Norwojee 1996; African Rights 2004). These forms of abuse did not follow the “genocide script” promoted by the post-war RPF regime, in which only Tutsis were victims during the genocide. Instead, these varied types of sexualized violence during war show that an array of factors shaped individual experiences (Buss 2009).

Many sources cite the estimate that 250,000 women were raped during approximately three months after April 6, 1994 (this figure comes from a Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights 1996).⁴⁶ Some, such as Bijleveld et. al. (2009), suggest that the number may be as great as 350,000. However, these figures are likely inflated—later estimates are in the tens of thousands (Des Forges 1999; Sharlach 1999; African Rights 2004; Amnesty International 2004). Sexualized violence was sometimes part of the process of killing. *Génocidaires* raped women of all ages with

objects like machetes and knives, killing most of them in the process (African Rights 2004). One estimate is that only 20,000 to 50,000 women actually survived rape (Turshen 2002; Zraly and Nyirazinyoye 2010). While sexual violence against men was less common, it did occur (Thomson 2013).

Human Rights Watch described these assaults in agonizing detail in its report “Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath” (Nowrojee 1996). Rape was often just one component of wholesale humiliation. One witness interviewed by Human Rights Watch researchers described how militias took her with 200 other women after a massacre. According to the witness, the *génocidaires* first forced the women to bury their husbands. Then they were savagely beaten and many were raped. After, they were forced to walk “naked like a group of cattle” for ten miles. While marching, the women were required to sing the songs of the militia. By nightfall when the group was allowed to stop marching, only about 30 women had survived the ordeal (Nowrojee 1996: 32).

Mass rape in Rwanda left similar legacies to mass rapes that occurred during war in Bosnia. Sexualized assaults left a physical legacy that included permanent damage to reproductive organs, bodily disfigurement, pregnancies, fistula, and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (Nowrojee 1996; Amnesty International 2004; Zraly, Rubin-Smith, and Betancourt 2010). Sexualized violence also caused high rates of psychological trauma among survivors, including post-traumatic stress syndrome, anxiety, suicidal thoughts or behaviors, and persistent depression (Amnesty International 2004; Zraly et. al. 2010). To complicate these physical and psychological legacies, rape survivors faced stigma from their communities, and perpetrators sometimes threatened to

kill rape survivors because of their status as a living witness to genocide crimes (Zraly et. al. 2010: 259). Because of this marginalization, women who survived sexual violence were particularly likely to live in extreme poverty and face constant hunger and housing instability in the aftermath (Cohen et. al. 2005; Zraly et. al. 2010).

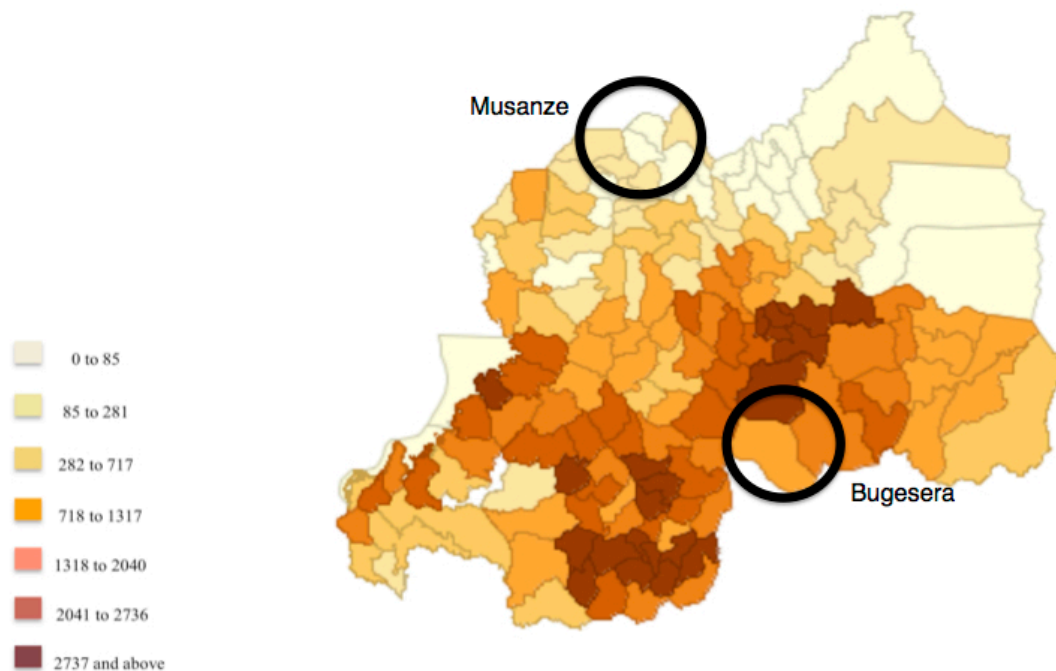
The mass rape in Rwanda (and in Bosnia) also left a political legacy. Prior to the violence in both countries, rape had broadly been understood as an unfortunate byproduct of war. In the wake of both cases—and particularly in the wake of crimes in Bosnia—there was a movement to re-define rape as a systematic weapon of war that could be prosecuted more broadly. Women’s groups and feminist organizations worked to legally define rape as a war crime and establish a precedent for command responsibility (Hansen 2000; Mertus 2004; Engle 2005). In *The Prosecutor v. Jean Paul Akayesu* (ICTR-96-4-T, 1998), prosecuted at the ICTR, rape was found to be an integral part of the process of genocide and as a crime against humanity. This ruling, and subsequent legal cases like *The Prosecutor v. Anto Furundžija* at the ICTY (IT-95-17/1, 1998), defined rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence and legally recognized rape as some of the most serious offenses of war. Later, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defined rape as a war crime and a crime against humanity (Article 8),⁴⁷ and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 established that crimes of sexual violence must be excluded from amnesty provisions (Amnesty International 2009). While such legal cases were victories for the women’s movement, they also codified distinctions between victims and perpetrators, as according to the ICTR only Tutsi women could be victims of genocidal rape (Buss 2009).

REGIONAL VARIATION

The violence in Rwanda ranged in intensity and timing around the country. Many scholars have conducted studies of various regions in an attempt to understand how the genocidal dynamics emergence and played out in a particular area (see Verwimp 2005; Verpoorten 2005; Straus 2006; Fujii 2009; Guichaoua 2010; Mulinda 2010). Indeed the number of people killed in a given commune ranged from 71 to upwards of 54,700 (Nyseth Brehm 2014; Davenport and Stam, unpublished).⁴⁸ The average number of deaths in a commune was just over 7,000. Violence began at different times across the country and often took on local logics. The areas of the country with the strongest support for Habyarimana's MRND—Gisenyi and Ruhengeri in the north, and Kigali—were the first to see violence, as party members were well organized and particularly motivated by revenge (Straus 2006: 60). In other parts of the country the violence did not break out for several weeks. In Butare, for example, the local prefect opposed the killing and continually refused orders from national authorities to eliminate Tutsis. In order for killings to move forward, the interim government removed the prefect from his post and replaced him with an extremist (Prunier 1995: 244; Des Forges 1999).

As discussed in Chapter 1, the focus of the analysis in this project is on current residents of Kigali, with additional areas of focus in Musanze (formerly Ruhengeri) and Bugesera (formerly Kigali Ngali).⁴⁹ These areas were selected to capture different dynamics and levels of violence. As such, I give brief descriptions of the backgrounds of all three sites here.

Figure 4. Rates of Killing by Commune in Rwanda with Focus Regions Circled



Map courtesy of Nyseth Brehm (2014)

Kigali

Prior to the outbreak of violence, Kigali was Rwanda's primary urban center. In 1991 it had a population of about 235,000, with 81.4 percent of the population Hutu, and 17.9 percent Tutsi (Republic of Rwanda [1991] 2003). Kigali was the site of the initial violent fervor. As described above, within hours of the President's assassination, roadblocks were set up across the city and political opponents were assassinated. Extremists began to unearth stockpiles of weapons that had been buried around the city (Des Forges 1999; Dallaire 2004). Over the next few weeks, Kigali witnessed the most concentrated violence in the country. The Presidential Guard and FAR elements began

going house-to-house, looking for political opponents or RPF sympathizers. Donatelle Lorch, a journalist reporting for the New York Times, recalled the tumultuous state of the city a few days after the plane crash:

Food had run out, drinking water was scarce and the streets of this capital city, empty of residents, was a terrifying obstacle course today of drunken soldiers and marauding gangs of looters dressed in a patchwork of uniforms, armed with machetes, spears, bows and arrows and automatic weapons. Children carried hand grenades, and open-back trucks, loaded with angry men waving weapons at passing cars, sped through the city. As night fell, screams could be heard coming from a church compound where more than 2,000 Rwandans had taken refuge. A short time later, after the sound of machine-gun fire, the screaming stopped (New York Times, 4/14/1994).

During the first day of killing, the Presidential Guard and other extremist forces killed the Prime Minister, the President of the Constitutional Court, the head of the PSD political party, the former Foreign Minister, the Information Minister, the Minister of Agriculture, and several prominent journalists and priests (Prunier 1995: 230; Des Forges 1999). There was also fighting between factions of the FAR and the Presidential Guard, as some wanted to stop the slaughter, while other hardliners wanted to expand it (Prunier 1995: 229). Further, there was fighting between the 600 RPF forces stationed in Kigali and government forces, creating confusion and chaos among civilians regardless of their ethnicity.

After the initial phase of targeted political killings, the widespread killing of Tutsi civilians happened rapidly. The killings in Kigali were particularly centralized, with the Presidential Guard carrying out much of the initial terror. In order to leave the city, people had to show an ID card at multiple roadblocks. Thousands of Tutsi civilians therefore became stuck, and many took shelter in Sainte-Famille and Saint-Paul churches,

in addition to Amahoro stadium. Tutsis in these locations fared better than most, defended by a priest and UNAMIR troops who used all available resources to prevent the *interahamwe* from entering (Prunier 1995: 254; African Rights 2002: 110-119). Others were able to survive in the Hotel Milles Collines, made famous by the movie *Hotel Rwanda*. While some UN peacekeepers remained in the city and provided a modicum of protection in these places, they ultimately had little ability to defend citizens as they lacked the authority to use lethal force. As a result, tens of thousands of the city's residents fled. By July 24, 1994 the NY Times reported that in Kigali, "the dead and the missing outnumber the living."

The RPF secured control of Kigali in early July. It then proceeded to rebuild the city's infrastructure and develop new buildings to accommodate an influx of people—civilians and "old caseload" refugees—who came to the city in search of security amidst ongoing violence in the region. Commercial activities started in Kigali quickly after the violence, facilitated in large part by of the influx of humanitarian aid organizations. These humanitarian organizations built new roads and repaired communication infrastructure. Within the next decade, Kigali became a "showroom" for the progress of the country under Kagame and the RPF (Mann and Berry 2015). By 2002 the city had swelled to over 600,000 residents, and by 2012 it had over one million.

Musanze/Ruhengeri

Musanze, formerly known as Ruhengeri, is a district located in Northern Province bordering the DRC. Musanze is also the name of the district's capital city. The district is Rwanda's most mountainous; to get there from Kigali, one drives for two hours along winding mountain roads, avoiding the steep cliffs that drop off just beyond the pavement.

The region has rough terrain with elevated volcanic peaks and barrier lakes. Virunga National Park, home of Rwanda's famous mountain gorillas, is nearby.

Ruhengeri was the scene of many of the early battles between the RPF and the FAR from 1990 – 1993. During the genocide, however, it was relatively devoid of massacres, as only 0.5 percent of the district's population was Tutsi (Republic of Rwanda [1991] 2003; Straus 2006: 55; Verwimp 2013: 56).⁵⁰ However, the region experienced massive insecurity during the refugee exodus and influx after the genocide. It also witnessed violence again between 1996 and 1998, as militias from Congo waged periodic attacks across the border and Congo National Army (ADLF) and Rwandan forces attempted to clear the nearby refugee camps. This counterinsurgency continued for several years between the RPF and its proxy militias in Congo, the ADLF, and remnants of the *interhamwe* militias that fled Rwanda after the genocide. Ruhengeri even saw battles as late as 1999 (Justino and Verwimp 2008). Because of these high rates of violence over the period of several years and widespread displacement in the area, Ruhengeri's economy suffered enormously.

As a whole, Ruhengeri province had the highest population of all provinces in Rwanda before the genocide at 750,000. Its population increased to 894,000 by 2002 because of the influx of refugees (Republic of Rwanda 2003). It remains one of the most densely populated provinces, with 540 people per square kilometer (the national average is 322 people per square kilometer). Before the war and genocide the sex ratio in Ruhengeri was 91.4 men for every 100 women. In 2002, the ratio had dropped to 87.7 men per 100 women. By the 2012 the sex ratio had dropped even further, to 84.7 men per

100 women. In 2012, women headed 32.4 percent of all households (Republic of Rwanda 2011: 45-46).

Bugesera/Kigali Ngali

The Bugesera is a district in Eastern Province approximately 40 kilometers south of Kigali. Most of the district was formally part of rural Kigali or Kigali Ngali Province before administrative redistricting in 2006. The climate in the Bugesera is hotter and drier than in other parts of Rwanda, making it less desirable for agriculture. It also contains vast areas of swampland, home to the tsetse fly and malaria-carrying mosquitos. As a result, disease levels are higher in Bugesera than in the rest of the country. In 1991 the region was 90.8 percent Hutu and 8.8 percent Tutsi (Republic of Rwanda [1991] 2003).

Violence against Tutsis began early in Bugasera. In March 1992, local authorities massacred several hundred Tutsis. In an attempt to rally Hutus, local authorities announced that some Tutsis had fled across the border into Uganda to join the RPF (Des Forges 1999: 108). The editor of an extremist newspaper, *Kangura*, also visited the area in order to spread rumors about pending “*inyenzi*” attacks (Des Forges 1999: 89). Hutus were encouraged to protect themselves against the enemy. An Italian nun at the Nyamata parish warned of these early massacres and was murdered as a result (field notes 2009; Verwimp 2013: 132). This early violence was a precursor to genocidal violence in 1994, as it conditioned local authority structures and gave youth *interehamwe* militias experience with killing.

As the genocide began in Kigali, violence quickly spread to Bugesera. Many Tutsis fled to churches at Nyamata and Ntarama where they hoped for safety in numbers. These churches were the sites of some of the most gruesome massacres of the genocide.

Massacres of remaining Tutsi in the region unfolded quickly and brutally. Some Tutsi in the Bugesera survived by hiding in the swamps for weeks. The RPF took control of Bugesera by mid-June, sending droves of Hutu civilians to the south of the country near Butare. Others fled into Tanzania, fearing retributive killings by the RPF. Throughout the 1990s, thousands of people were resettled in the region because of its low population density (Justino and Verwimp 2008). Despite these resettlement programs in the late 1990s, Bugesera's overall population dropped from just over 914,000 in 1991 to 792,500 in 2002.⁵¹ Today it has one of the lowest population densities in the country, with 285 people per square kilometer (Republic of Rwanda 2011: 21). In almost all of Bugesera's sectors, women outnumber men. The overall sex ratio in Kigali Ngali in 2002 was 88.9 men per 100 women. By 2012, the sex imbalance had recovered somewhat to 94.3 men per 100 women (Republic of Rwanda 2011). Despite this, even in 2012, women headed 29.8 percent of all households in the district.

A TENTATIVE PEACE: RPF VICTORY

By the end of May 1994, the RPF had captured the airport in Kigali and overtaken FAR's adjacent military camp. By June it had secured most of eastern Rwanda. By July it announced control of Kigali. It established control over the remaining parts of the country in the following months, although periodic attacks, massacres, and other forms of violence persisted through the end of the year. During this period, the leaders of the FAR, the *interahamwe*, and members of the Habyarimana government fled the country. Many ordinary Hutu civilians also fled because they feared RPF reprisals. By July 1994, at least 500,000 people were dead. Scholars have vigorously debated the death toll of the entire period, with estimates ranging from 500,000 (Des Forges 1999) to 1.36 million (Kapiteni

1996). The Government of Rwanda maintains the number of 1.074 million (Republic of Rwanda 2004), but it has political reasons for inflating the numbers. At this point, most experts agree that the number of 800,000 is probably the best estimate, including both genocide and civil war deaths (Prunier 1995; Straus 2006; Verwimp 2013).⁵²

One of the defining features of the end to the violence was the massive exodus of millions of members of the “perpetrator” group (i.e., Hutus). They fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaire) and Tanzania, and former regime elites took all of the money in the national bank with them. France’s *Operation Turquoise* provided safe-passage to these refugees (Prunier 1995: 295-299, 312-313). Once across the border, they congregated in hastily constructed refugee camps, which were overseen by international humanitarian NGOs. Some extremists reassembled militias, aiming to reengage in fighting as soon as possible. Conditions in the camps were atrocious; cholera broke out and the food supply was inadequate (Amnesty International 1996).

The RPF established the “Government of National Unity” shortly after it took control of the country. This interim government largely followed the provisions laid out in the Arusha Accords and aimed to split power between Tutsi and Hutu, as well as between native Rwandans and returnees from abroad. Pasteur Bizimungu, a moderate Hutu, was appointed President. General Paul Kagame became the Vice President and the Minister of Defense. Government ministries were rebuilt, and members of the former opposition parties (MDR, PSD, Liberals) were appointed alongside the RPF to various positions. Aloysia Inyumba, one of the highest-ranking women in the RPF, was appointed the Minister for Social and Women Affairs.

Despite the ostensibly multi-party government, it soon became clear that Kagame and a small group of Tutsi RPF military officers were the true power holders. Any Hutus within the government were looked on as potential traitors and were frequently placed under surveillance (Prunier 2009: 45). The regime elite tightened its grip on the country. The pace of civilian arrests escalated; by 1995 government forces were arresting approximately 1,500 civilians per week (Human Rights Watch 1995). In April 1995, the new regime orchestrated massacres of several thousand people in a displaced persons camp in Kibeho (Amnesty International 1995c; Des Forges 1999). This led to an unraveling of the political coalition, as people within the government—most notably Seth Sendashonga, a well-respected Hutu member of the RPF—were furious at the RPF’s complicity in these atrocities. Faustin Twagiramungu resigned his post of Prime Minister shortly thereafter and went into exile. The RPF rounded up many former members of government and executed them on the spot, often without any form of judicial process (Des Forges 1999: 709). The RPF also killed civilians—Hutu and Tutsi alike—in a series of massacres in eastern, central, and southern Rwanda that were likely motivated by a mix of revenge and desire to coerce the population’s acceptance of their rule (Des Forges 1999: 705).

In addition to RPF-led violence against civilians, other forms of violence and insecurity continued. Genocide survivors were sometimes murdered if they had witnessed killings and could identify perpetrators in courts. Returning refugees were also vulnerable to similar anti-Tutsi attacks. *Génocidaires* hiding amidst refugees in Congo waged periodic attacks across Rwanda’s border, particularly in the regions around Gisenyi and Ruhengeri in Northern Province. Dozens of people were killed during these attacks

(Amnesty International 1995a, 1996a, 1996b). In Congo, the influx of Rwandan refugees triggered massive insecurity and violence. Rwandan troops entered Congo in 1996 to clear *interahamwe* militias from the refugee camps; they eventually overthrew President Mobutu Sese Seko with the assistance of several other regional powers (Prunier 2009: 67-72). A power vacuum resulted, fomenting a chaotic and bloody war that drew involvement from perhaps a dozen other nations, including Zimbabwe, Angola, and Uganda (see Lemarchand 2009; Prunier 2009; Reyntjens 2009). Under the reign of President Laurent Kabila, security in Eastern Congo further deteriorated. Proxy militias backed by the RPF-controlled government of Rwanda battled against civilians, local militias (*mai mai*), and Congolese army forces. Fighting reached a peak in the late 1990s, but continues to this day. All told, the ensuing violence and instability has taken millions lives. Thus, the violence linked to the Rwandan genocide and civil war continued long after 1994, albeit in different forms.

CONCLUSION

In the following chapter, I discuss this legacy of violence as it pertains to women in Rwanda. Each wave and form of violence had different repercussions for women living in Rwanda at the time. Beginning with the civil war in 1990, the political and economic structures of the state began to shift, ushering in a period of massive turmoil. Certain demographic, economic, and cultural shifts precipitated by these different waves of violence shaped the way in which women engaged politically in their households, communities, and as citizens of the Rwandan nation. I then explain how the violence opened up unexpected opportunities for women's increased presence in informal and

formal political spaces, before suggesting how such transformations were ultimately only temporary and limited to elite women with close ties to the RPF.

CHAPTER 3: War and Structural Shifts in Rwanda

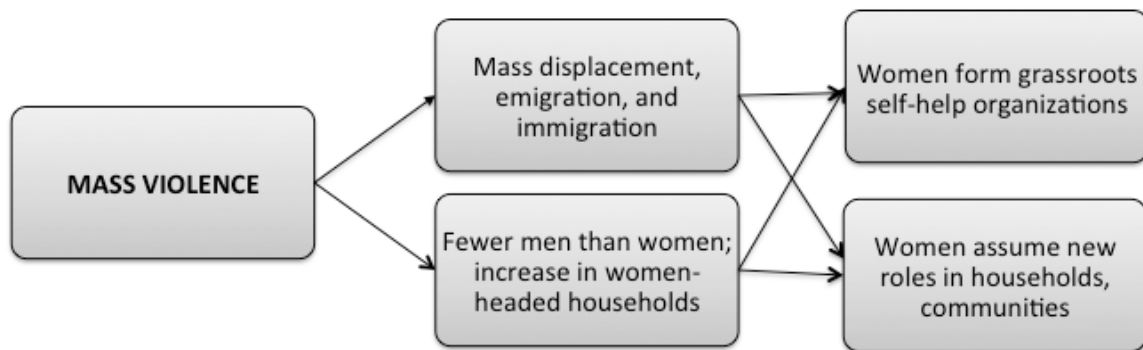
The violence in Rwanda began in 1990, lasted into the late 1990s, and continues in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to this day in a different form. Still, the most extreme turmoil occurred between April and July 1994. That period of violence encompassed the most deliberate attempt to eliminate an entire ethnic group since the Nazi Holocaust. It also unleashed a series of structural changes that had lasting implications for the role of women in Rwandan society. In this chapter, I outline the demographic, economic, and cultural shifts precipitated by the violence. In the following chapter I then examine the impact of these shifts on women's political engagement.

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

In July 1994, after approximately 100 days of widespread killing, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) secured tentative control over Rwanda and (mostly) ended the genocide and civil war. The country was in ruins: one out of every ten Rwandans was dead, 2.1 million had fled across over the border into neighboring countries, and 120,000 were in overcrowded prisons (UNHRC 1994; Prunier 1995; Republic of Rwanda 2005a). Of the post-genocide population of seven million people, as many as two million were displaced internally, squatting in households left empty after the slaughter of their owners, or in IDP camps (Newbury and Baldwin 2000; Gervais 2003). Beyond the obvious effects of massive population loss, these demographic shifts had two major components: the violence led to extensive population displacement, which included an exodus of refugees, an influx of former refugees, and the internal displacement of

millions of Rwandans. In addition, the violence and resulting displacement led to a shift in the sex ratio, which led to an increase in women-headed households (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Demographic shifts after Mass Violence in Rwanda



Displacement and Population Movement

Three processes characterized population displacement during and after the violence. First, there was an enormous exodus of primarily Hutu Rwandans into neighboring countries towards the end of the genocidal portion of the violence. Second, there was a massive influx of “old caseload” refugees who returned to Rwanda from exile in neighboring countries in the years following the violence. Third, there was widespread displacement within Rwanda, which altered social networks, family structures, and reordered the way in which millions of Rwandans lived their lives. All three processes had social and political consequences for the Rwandan population, particularly given endemic competition for land in the country.



Emigration

Approximately two million Rwandans fled across the border to the DRC (then Zaire) and Tanzania during the peak of the violence, because they feared retaliation from the RPF. They crossed the border at astounding rates, some days at a rate of 10,000 an hour (NYTimes 7/14/1994; Amnesty International 1996b). The largest number of refugees crossed the border through Gisenyi, the last FAR stronghold and the seat of Habyarimana’s remaining government leadership. These “new caseload” refugees

congregated in camps along the DRC's border with Rwanda near Lake Kivu. The largest camps, Katale and Kibumba, hosted as many as 200,000 refugees in each (Amnesty International 1996b). Reports from the camps indicated that most refugees feared certain death if they had remained in Rwanda, despite the fact that only an estimated 30,000 – 50,000 were members of genocidal militias such as the *interahamwe* (Newbury 1998: 8). Others had certainly participated in the genocide in some way, but were not central to its organization or execution.

There were many women and children in the camps. Some reports estimate that in the Goma area, 80 percent of refugees in the camps were women and children (Newbury 1998: 8-9). Other camps, however, were comprised primarily of men. For example, Mugunga, a camp located in Goma, contained an estimated 20,000 ex-FAR militants and their families (Pottier 1996: 413). Many of these refugees had left quickly from their homes, taking only those possessions they could carry. Raymond Bonner, writing in the *New York Times*, illustrated this displacement:

The lines go on for mile after mile after mile, a river of people fleeing the war in Rwanda into neighboring Zaire. Men, women and children—barefoot and dirty, with bundles of firewood, rolled-up mattresses and suitcases balanced on their heads—walking, walking, walking. They lead goats on leashes, carry chickens by their legs and rabbits by their ears, and cradle baby goats. People, and longhorn cattle, and cars. (7/16/1994)

Humanitarian agencies were totally overwhelmed by the sheer volume of refugees. Cholera broke out, as most camps in the DRC lacked adequate water purification systems and their sanitation capabilities were overwhelmed. Between July and August 1993, approximately 50,000 refugees in Goma died as a result of cholera, dysentery, dehydration and violence (Eriksson 1996: 25). Fearing disease, some refugees felt like

they were “caught between two deaths”—if they stayed in the camps they would likely die of disease, and if they returned to Rwanda they feared they would be killed by the RPF (Bonner 7/27/1994).

Hundreds of thousands of refugees also fled into Tanzania from western Rwanda. On May 30th 1994, a “slow-moving column of refugees from Rwanda trudged into a remote area of Tanzania... stretching across 10 miles of roads and fanning out over the hills of elephant grass” (Lorch 5/30/1994). Their departure left villages empty of both people and animals. Unlike in Congo, the refugees in Tanzania were met by a relatively well-organized aid response, which settled them into a large open plain near the city of Rusumo. Tutsis who fled *génocidaires* also ended up in Tanzania, but they established separate refugee camps at a safe distance from those occupied by Hutus.⁵³

Humanitarian relief for these refugees came in different forms. France led the initial efforts as an extension of *Operation Turquoise*. The U.S. also sent troops and aid and set up food distribution centers along the major roads between Kigali and the DRC border. Humanitarian aid agencies poured in, establishing a virtual “aidland” (Apthorpe 2005) awash with funding. They concentrated first on the crisis in the DRC as it was the most severe and posed the greatest danger to human lives, especially as the cholera outbreak threatened to reach epidemic proportions. This focus on the crisis in the DRC, however, angered many members of the RPF, who accused the international aid industry of aiding *génocidaires*. While some refugees were certainly guilty of genocide crimes, the vast majority were innocent civilians. Nevertheless, the RPF’s critique served to cast all Hutu as guilty.

By 1995, the international aid community—led by the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)—was strongly encouraging the return of refugees to Rwanda in order to lessen the strain on the already unstable eastern DRC region. Rumors about RPF-coordinated revenge killings and massacres abounded in the camps, generating fears among many refugees that they would be persecuted or killed if they returned to Rwanda. Such fears were largely unfounded, as the RPF was desperately trying to reassure the population that they could govern and was not engaging in a widespread killing campaign. International aid agencies, however, had little credibility to dispel the rumors. Instead, organizations tried to tempt people back to Rwanda with promises of food or other goods. Women and the elderly were most likely to take advantage of these opportunities (Amnesty International 1996b). Within a few years, many were returning: UNHCR estimated that 1.3 million returned to Rwanda in 1996 alone. By that point, these returning “new caseload” refugees were spurred by worsening conditions in the camps and by increasing violence in the Kivu region of the DRC. As the Rwandan government aimed to dismantle the camps, militia activity increased, which presented a major threat to stability in the region (see Lemarchand 2009; Prunier 2009).

Immigration

The second wave of demographic population shifts occurred in the months following the end of the genocide, as approximately 700,000 of “old caseload” refugees returned to Rwanda from neighboring countries, Europe, and North America (Amnesty International 1996b: 8). These refugees were predominantly Tutsis, although a few were Hutu who had fallen out with previous regimes. Most had fled during previous episodes of anti-Tutsi violence. Many of these returnees were better educated than ordinary

Rwandans and brought with them skills, technical knowledge, and linguistic capacities that differentiated them from both Hutus and Tutsis who had grown up in Rwanda (Kinzer 2008). They also brought with them an estimated one million heads of cattle (Prunier 2009: 5). Some of these returning refugees did not speak Kinyarwanda well, and they had learned English, rather than French, in schools, or had grown up speaking Swahili or other languages. What separated these refugees from the rest of the population the most, of course, was that they had not experienced the genocide. While many had lost extended family members, they suffered fewer psychological ailments than those who had witnessed or participated in killings.

Many within this group of refugees had been in exile for decades; therefore, they did not have land or homes to return to. The Arusha Accords mandated that only repatriates who had left the country within the last ten years had the right to claim their former property (Pottier 2006: 517). As a result, many of these “old caseload” returnees took up residence in abandoned homes that were left empty after the emigration or death of previous residents (Pruner 1995). Some spent weeks in transit camps before the new postwar government organized their resettlement in areas near Byumba and Kibungo, which had been established as resettlement areas for predominantly Tutsi returnees (Amnesty International 1996b: 8). Adjusting to a rural, agricultural life presented serious challenges for many of these “old caseload” refugees, who had lived urban lives in exile. The wealthy returnees congregated in the capital; it was these returnees who often had close ties to the ruling RPF regime. There they monopolized quality housing and wage jobs, which increased tensions between these returnees and “native” Rwandans.

In order to accommodate these new returnees, the new regime began to re-settle people into pre-planned villages (or *imidugudu*). These villages typically consisted of 200 houses grouped together with centralized amenities like a well. While this “villigization” policy was initially developed as a way to group Tutsi returnees and survivors of genocide together for their security and protection, it was later expanded to encompass the entire population (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 2000; Isaksson 2013). Drawing inspiration from other (failed) social engineering schemes (see Scott 1998), the government aimed to resettle the entire rural population in order to promote security, increase agricultural production, and facilitate a wholesale transformation of the Rwandan countryside (van Leeuwen 2001). Eventually, the government planned to install roads, water systems, and other basic infrastructure in order to ensure the viability of these villages. Proponents of the policy argued that it would alleviate the land and housing disputes that stemmed from massive population shifts after the genocide. Critics at the time, however, warned that similar programs—such as in Tanzania—failed with disastrous consequences. Regardless, returning refugees were in dire need of places to live.⁵⁴

Internal Displacement

In addition to emigration and immigration, many Rwandans were displaced within the country’s borders. As the genocide ended, an estimated 500,000 people were living in IDP camps in southern Rwanda, where they had fled to find protection in the *Zone Turquoise* established by French troops. The camp at Kibeho—which I briefly discussed in Chapter 2—was the largest IDP camp, hosting 100,000 people in 1995. It contained tens of thousands of civilian IDPs in addition to several extremist Hutu militias

(Pottier 2002: 76). Another 500,000 Rwandans were living in other displaced persons camps or abandoned houses across the country. Some were still displaced from the early days of the civil war with the RPF, during which hundreds of thousands of people had been displaced from northern Rwanda around the RPF-controlled zones. According to Gerard Prunier (2009), only about 3.6 million people—or 45 percent of the prewar population—were living in the same place as before the war.

For the displaced, conditions of life were often excruciating. They frequently lacked access to shelter, adequate food and water, or sanitation facilities. Umutesi (2000) and Dallaire's (2003) memoirs both describe the stench that emanated from the camps in northern Rwanda, as IDPs were forced to relieve themselves in the open fields. The ill and dying were often abandoned so that desperate camp residents could loot their remaining food and possessions. Social and family networks that existed before the violence were fractured as relatives and friends lost track of each other.

Families sometimes experienced two or more processes of displacement at the same time. Scores of Tutsi families gave their young children away to Hutu friends in an effort to protect them from *génocidaires*. Then, as they became displaced from their homes or forced into hiding, they lost track of their children's caretakers, who had often been forced to flee as part of the massive outmigration described above. One member of parliament (MP) described to me how she "gave [her children] away—because they are Tutsi. So for their own safety, I didn't know where they were." This MP continued to describe how she learned that they were in Congo. As she put it, "in that period I was very stranded. I had no hope. But I heard that they were there, so I was hopeful that I would find them. It was sad but then it gave me more hope and energy and motivation to

go ahead and do something” (Interview #19, 7/27/2012). This woman’s experience was not uncommon. While life was extremely challenging during displacement, many women I interviewed reported that they met new people and connected with international humanitarian agencies. These connections inspired them to work harder to make sure their children had enough to survive while displaced from their homes. A few lucky women found jobs with these humanitarian NGOs, which significantly improved their economic situation.

Demographic shifts lead to sex imbalance

In addition to the massive population displacement, men constituted 56 percent of the dead during the violence in Rwanda. This was primarily because of the ongoing civil war in which men were the majority of the combatants (De Walque and Verwimp 2010). In addition, particularly at the beginning of the genocide, “mercy” was occasionally shown to Tutsi women—although frequently at the price of rape rather than death (Nowrojee 1996; El-Bushra 2000). While demographic data is of poor quality immediately after the violence, this, combined with the sex imbalance in the displaced population, created a demographic vacuum of men in Rwanda. In some urban districts, the sex ratio dropped from about 1.15 men per women in 1991, to 0.898 men per woman a decade later (Republic of Rwanda [1985, 1991] 2002). And in some rural areas, where women had already been the majority prior to the violence, the sex ratio dropped from 0.77 men per woman in 1991 to 0.592 a decade later. In 2002, the overall sex ratio stood at 0.91, while just 0.87 for people over 17 years of age (Republic of Rwanda 2002: 42; Republic of Rwanda 2011). This meant that across the country, 36 percent of households had no adult males present—up from 21 percent prior to the violence. In five of

Rwanda's 12 prefectures, the percentage of women-headed households was higher than 60 percent (Republic of Rwanda 1999: 2; Newbury and Baldwin 2000: 7). This demographic shift created a practical need for many women to continue their daily activities without their husbands, brothers, or fathers present (Powley 2004; Women for Women 2004).

In addition to many widows, there were also many women-headed households where men were in exile, in jail or other detention facilities, or in military service with the RPF. Although still alive, the absence of these men from the home presented similar challenges, and women assumed an identity as a sort-of *de facto* widow. While official arrest data from this period do not exist, reports indicate that the arrest rate among men in certain parts of the country—in all likelihood areas with the strongest links to the former regime—was extremely high. For example, in 1995 Human Rights Watch reported that in one sector of Musambira commune, “virtually all the young men have been detained” (1995: 3). The prison population peaked at 130,000 in 1998 (Human Rights Watch 2004: 10). In the popular mindset, being arrested was equated with being guilty; as such, women with jailed husbands faced the additional challenge of being viewed with suspicion by their neighbors (Prunier 2009: 11).

Prisons in Rwanda were grossly overcrowded and conditions were abysmal. Informal prisons (*cachots*) in police stations or administrative offices were often even worse (Des Forges 1999; Amnesty International 1995a). While in prison, men were unable to contribute to household income or agriculture. Nevertheless, they continued to drain household resources as family members had to give them food while in jail (Human Rights Watch 2004: 10).⁵⁵ Once released, many men suffered physical disabilities and

disfigurement as a result of their time in prison (Bouka 2013: 250). Others suffered from diseases contracted or left untreated while incarcerated. These health issues impacted men's ability to work and contribute to household subsistence after their release and increased women's domestic burden.⁵⁶

This permanent or temporary absence of men from the household precipitated shifts in women's roles at the household and community level—indeed “survivors, particularly women, found that ‘traditional’ ways of life were no longer possible” (Burnet 2008: 384). Women of different class and ethnic backgrounds shouldered a multitude of new responsibilities. Jeanette, a genocide widow and current head of an NGO from Eastern Province in Rwanda, said that

In the Rwandan custom, [as] a women, even if you're educated, you were still looked after by your husband. Because before [the violence], I looked [to] my husband for everything. I might have been educated but the only thing I would think of is my kids. I would come from school after teaching and just look after my kids. So it was very hard to adjust for that to being the head of my family. (Interview #25, 7/24/2012)

As Jeanette notes, prior to genocide, women's activities were typically confined to the household sphere and centered on childcare and the production of food. As I discussed in the previous chapter, women legally needed their husband's permission to open a bank account, engage in profit-making activities, or enter into any formal agreement. Men typically controlled any cash income in the family unit (Sharlach 1999; Burnet 2008). Further, women were not legally eligible to inherit land from husbands or male relatives.

Contrast this to after the violence: hundreds of thousands of women now had to milk cows, re-plant fallow gardens, make bricks, re-roof their houses, and sell anything

they could to generate an income (Newbury and Baldwin 2000; Burnet 2008, 2012; Uwineza and Pearson 2009; Interviews 2009-2012). As one parliamentarian put it,

In my region...there were some activities that were done by men, and others done by women. Like cutting down a bush; women were not supposed to do that. Or hard stone farming; the men had to go do that. But for a widow, since she had no husband, she would have to go to that for herself. (Interview #21, 7/19/2012)

These new responsibilities eradicated the separation between “men’s work” and “women’s work”—at least temporarily. But they also deepened the poverty and isolation of many women. Jacqueline, a 46-year old genocide widow and mother of four, described her frustration with this new division of labor:

Even just survival at home is also another hassle. It is like you become a father and a mother, so you get all of the man’s responsibilities as well as the woman’s responsibilities...My agreement with my husband was him taking care of me and my kids—buying food, knowing that the kids have all of the materials that they need to go to school. This is not what we agreed on. It’s not me. If the roof is off, because it was blown off by the wind, that should not have been me, it should be him. You can imagine. Now it is all my responsibility. (Interview #77, 2/13/2013)

As Jacqueline described, widows faced tremendous challenges assuming these new roles. The overwhelming burden of these new activities forced women to seek basic economic, emotional, and legal support from others in their communities.

This absence of men was particularly challenging when it came to land and property rights. Traditionally, women in Rwanda only had rights to land through their husbands or fathers. Widows were only able to access land if they had an adult male child. Because of this, an enormous land crisis ensued after the genocide, as *de facto* and *de jure* widows faced pressure from neighbors and extended family members to

relinquish the land they lived on. These land ownership debates forced many women to join together—often with a someone who was more educated or wealthy—to petition local government officials for official property rights (Interview #25, Jeanette 7/24/12). As a result of this land pressure and the urgent needs faced by millions of women across Rwanda, thousands of small, informal self-help groups began forming across the country (Newbury and Baldwin 2000). As I discuss in more depth in the following chapter, the demographic shifts caused by violence—including massive population displacement and shifts in the sex ratio—catalyzed the formation of these grassroots organizations, which eventually served a critical role in facilitating women’s increased participation in public, political life.

ECONOMIC SHIFTS

The violence in Rwanda also led to a shift in the economic needs of the population. This stemmed from the massive collapse of infrastructure, soaring inflation, the disruption of internal and foreign trade, and the corresponding emergence of critical needs for food, water, health care, and shelter. Rwanda’s plummeting economy prior to and during the violence also facilitated this shift. GDP dropped from \$2 billion USD to \$750 million between 1993 and the end of 1994. GDP per capita dropped from \$330 per year before the genocide to just under \$170 in 1995 (World Bank Data 2012). Of the \$598 million in bilateral aid that was pledged to Rwanda in January 1995, donors had only disbursed \$94.5 million by June (Prunier 2009: 37).⁵⁷ As a result, the Rwandan economy was in shambles.

In addition to macro-economic devastation, the violence ruined Rwanda’s usually rich agricultural sector and destroyed infrastructure—including over 150,000 homes

(Prunier 2009: 5). Roads were not well established before the genocide and were not sufficient to ensure the smooth distribution of aid across the country in the aftermath. Electricity was erratic. Crops rotted, as there was no one to tend to them. Together, this meant that food, water, shelter, and other basic necessities of life were hard to come by.

In the mid-1990s, ten percent of households were at extreme risk of severe malnutrition or starvation. The remainder of the population struggled to find sufficient food (UNICEF Report 2007, cited in Newbury and Baldwin 2000). One study estimated that in the aggregate, the daily available calories were only a little more than one third of what was needed to meet the minimum caloric requirements of the population (Newbury and Baldwin 2000: 12). Women-headed households were particularly vulnerable, as they were more likely to be in extreme poverty than households with adult men (Republic of Rwanda 2006; Justino and Verwimp 2008: 40; Finnof 2010). Diseases—ranging from malaria to diarrhea to—also plagued the population, overwhelming the already devastated health care system.

In addition, without any state-sponsored system of childcare, hundreds of thousands of orphans became the wards of anyone who would take them in (Prunier 1995, 2009). Jeanette described how,

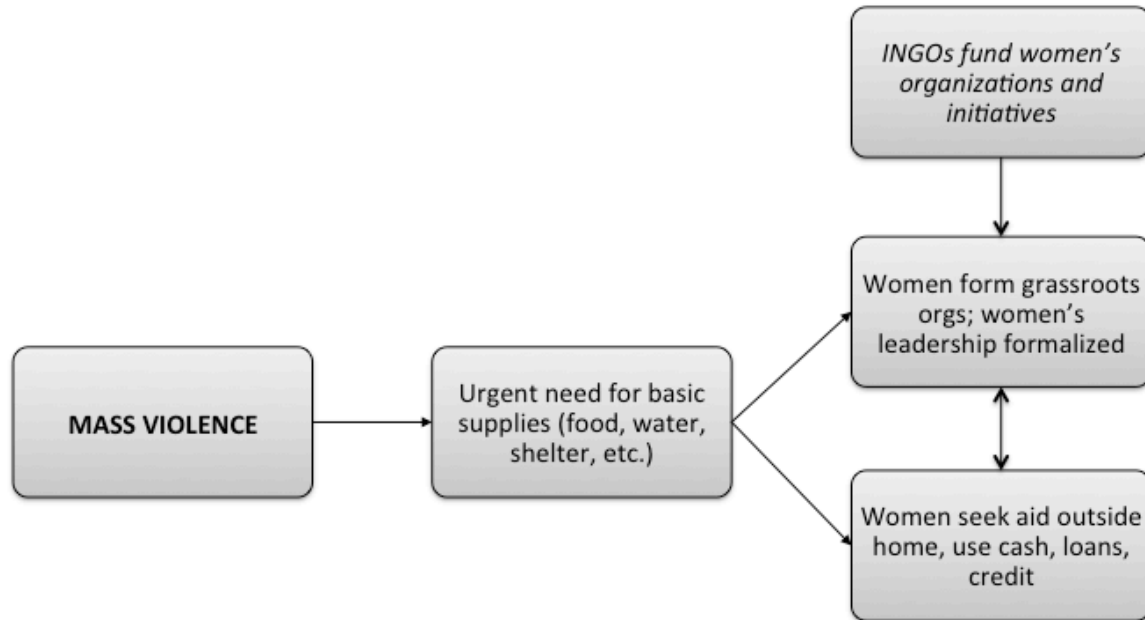
Life changed totally. Because there were 10 of us [in my family], and only three survived...all of the kids of my brothers and sisters, they all came to my home. Everybody was in my home. Even the kids of the neighborhood, they didn't know anyone else so I was like their mom...I can't imagine how we survived. (Interview #25, 7/24/2012)

As Jeanette suggests, the burden of caring for orphans fell to women, and there were an estimated 770,000 orphans under 15 years of age in the country (Rwandan Ministry for Local Government [MINALOC] and USAID 2002). As a result, women-headed

households averaged between 6 and 7 young dependents each (Republic of Rwanda 1999: 2).

Urgent needs heightened women's economic vulnerability. Women held traditional caregiving roles in Rwanda; they were responsible for finding and cooking their family's food, caring for children, and aiding the elderly and disabled. But unlike in the past when the majority of women grew their own food on their own plots of land, women now found themselves getting food through humanitarian NGOs or with cash provided by a relief organization at a commercial market. Thus while performing traditional caregiving roles were *not* new, the need to go into public spaces to perform them *was*. In the process of securing their family's basic needs, women began expanding their social networks and interacting with foreign and local actors. This had two major effects. First, these economic needs led to a mushrooming of informal, grassroots self-help organizations across the country. Second, women's care responsibilities outside of the home led to their use of cash, credit, and loans, often for the first time. Both of these shifts are discussed below (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Economic Shifts After Mass Violence in Rwanda



Massive population displacement and new economic needs sent a large number of women into public spaces to receive aid or assistance from neighbors, humanitarian aid distribution centers, newly forming NGOs, or government programs. Civil society organizations or NGOs were virtually non-existent in Rwanda prior to the violence; however, as women were forced to seek basic material goods, they inadvertently expanded their social networks and interacted with government or aid agencies. Soon, women formed thousands of informal self-help groups across the country in order to help women find food, cultivate fields, rebuild their homes, or locate other basic goods (Interviews with CBO founders; El- Bushra 2000: 74; Gervais 2003: 544; Smith 2010). These organizations allowed for certain burdens women shared to be distributed among the membership. Humanitarian organizations began to provide funding and organizational support to these grassroots organizations, commencing an eclectic process

of organizational formalization. I describe this process in greater depth in the following chapter.

Further, as time passed, many of these informal self-help organizations facilitated women's increased use of cash and credit. Prior to the genocide it had been virtually impossible for women to get bank loans, although a few women had opened accounts at *Duterimbere*, the first women's micro-credit association in the country (Newbury and Baldwin 2000; Interview #29, 2/5/2013). While individual accounts at major commercial banks had been looted during the violence, women's accounts at *Duterimbere* remained intact (Burnet 2008: 373). This put some women in a position to start or re-start small businesses that had been destroyed. In the wake of the violence, humanitarian aid organizations aimed to expand this access to credit and loans to more women across the country. In partnership with the postwar government, these INGOs implemented programs teaching women how to apply for loans or design a small-business plan (Republic of Rwanda 1999). Interviewees described how INGOs and affiliated government agencies also distributed small grants to women to rebuild their homes, buy school supplies for their children, or pay for medication or other essentials. These small cash payments gave some women control over surplus income for the first time.

The genocide and war wreaked widespread destruction on the country, ushering in a period of massive insecurity. This devastation forced women into new social roles, and pushed them to seek aid from organizations and others in their communities. Women formed groups to meet their emotional and material needs. Before long, these grassroots organizations began to formalize, particularly as they interacted with international organizations and more formal domestic NGOs that were deepening their reach into the

rural parts of the country. By giving small loans and grants and encouraging women to engage in profit-making activities, these organizations helped facilitate a shift in the way women controlled surplus income. As a result, these emergent grassroots organizations changed the way that economic power was distributed in society, and additionally provided an institutional blueprint for women's leadership at the local level.

CULTURAL SHIFTS

"We have suffered. The men made war, and the women suffer."—Anonymous (quoted in Kumar 2000: 28)

After the violence, women's participation in community organizations and political life became increasingly normalized. As I discuss in the following chapter, women took on leadership roles in their local communities, and some eventually ran for regional and national political office. In the first post-war election in 2003, citizens voted to approve a new national constitution that mandated women hold 30 percent of all decision-making positions. During the same election, the population elected women to 48 percent of the seats in Rwanda's national parliament—the highest percentage in the world. This reflected an extensive shift in cultural attitudes towards women from before the violence, when the political sphere was considered "a male domain. It was like their personal bedroom where no one else could go in" (Interview #10, MP, 7/17/2009). What explains this shift?

During my fieldwork I heard dozens of women insist that the war would not have happened had women been in charge of the country. This sentiment was part of a powerful new "frame" (Goffman 1974; Benford and Snow 2000; Saguy 2013) that presented women as peaceful actors capable of helping the country move forward.

Women in Bosnia produced a similar discourse, as I discuss in Chapter 6. In short, there was a cultural reconceptualization of women as legitimate political actors after the violence, which stemmed from the fact that women were less culpable for atrocities that had occurred. In addition, women had proven their capabilities through their ability to provide care for their dependents amidst unfathomable atrocity. As the key interlocutors between various state agencies, INGOs, and the population, women were well positioned to assume new public roles (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Cultural Shifts After Mass Violence in Rwanda



This cultural shift was made possible by a process through which women’s “more peaceful” nature was juxtaposed with men’s propensity for war. Across the board, elite and non-elite women I interviewed agreed that it was important to have women in political positions because they were more peaceful than men. One woman Senator put it simply, “Women are peace-actors; they are the ones who carry out peace” (Interview #4, 7/17/2009). Such characterizations of women were tied up in nationalist representations. When the state media, officials, and government documents referenced the RPF, they portrayed them as strong, violent, powerful, and virile. In contrast, they depicted

Rwandan women as “mothers of the nation” and as caregivers essential for the nation’s future. While women had an important national responsibility, it was not on the battlefield; rather it was as the biological producers of men who could eventually serve as soldiers for the nation and carry on its bloodlines.

Thinking counterfactually, one might question whether Rwandan women would have employed this framing if the genocide had not occurred. Were there other alternative discourses that women might have used in order to justify their engagement in Rwandan political life? Why not depict themselves as “Iron Ladies,” as in West Africa, or as gun-toting guerrilla fighters, as in El Salvador? Why did the framing of women as “peaceful mothers” make women’s presence in the political sphere palatable to the broader public? Thinking critically about the origins of such a narrative brings several historical processes and constraints to mind.

Rwanda has historically had a powerful female figure: the Queen Mother. During the monarchy, Queen Mothers wielded considerable power over the state as they ruled in conjunction with their son, the king. This indigenous tradition established motherhood as a political status. However, the legacy of Kanjogera left a bitter taste for many Rwandans, as she became infamous for her ruthless savagery.⁵⁸ Moreover, she was Tutsi, and thereby for many represented Hutu oppression and servitude. Thus, for the majority of Rwandans, the Queen Mother was not a sufficiently compelling inspiration for the adoption of this “peaceful mother” frame.

Instead, the violence was key. During the peak of the violence in 1994, all Rwandans perceived they were at risk. Hutus feared attacks from their Tutsi neighbors who were rumored to be collaborating with the RPF, and Tutsis feared *génocidaires*. As a

result, the violence became *illegitimate* for masses of ordinary Rwandans. The perpetrators of the violence were not heroes; rather, those who planned the genocide became despised by all but the most racist extremists. It was in this context—and *because* of this context—that the idea of women as more peaceful than men became politically salient.

Further, frames are constrained and made possible by the facts at hand: in Rwanda, women were able to represent themselves as peaceful because in reality, few women participated in killing. While some studies have highlighted exceptions (see African Rights 1995; Sharlach 1999), in general men overwhelmingly perpetrated the violence. This is perhaps most clearly evidenced by the fact that less than 9 percent of those tried for genocide have been women, and the majority of these crimes were property-theft related (Nyseth Brehm, Uggen and Gasanabo, unpublished; Verwimp 2005: 306). Merely 1.4 percent of women in Verwimp’s sample were involved with killing (2005: 306). As Rwandan women survived the war, many began pointing to their status as mothers or as more peaceful than men in order to justify their increased presence in various public realms. They presented themselves as morally uncompromised by war and as those who “suffered the most” in the violence (Interview #15, MP, 7/10/2009; Powley 2004). As such, they were more easily viewed as morally acceptable political actors who could assist the new RPF-led government’s mission to create “good politics” and secure peace (Berry 2015a).

A final process was at play as well. As discussed in the previous section, Rwanda suffered from massive economic devastation during and after the genocide. As the primary care providers for their families, women found themselves taking on new roles in

order to secure everyday essentials for themselves and their families. As women succeeded in seeking aid or small loans from humanitarian NGOs or government projects, they gained value in the post-war social context. Women's value as political actors therefore emerged from the nexus between the population's immediate social needs and a pressing national need for a new, less-violent type of political actor. As mothers they would provide; as peacemakers they would secure stability. Such a narrative allowed for the feminization of Rwandan political space.

Women employed this frame to justify their involvement in community organizations as well as in politics. One organization director explained how women promoted their role as mothers in order to announce to the country at large, "We are not responsible for our history, but we have just inherited a country that has been destroyed, and we need to rebuild it, because we are mothers, and we are doing it for our children!" She continued to explain, "When you are a mother, you don't want your child to be a refugee. You do not want your child to suffer. You do not want them being in jail. So [women said], 'let's get together and fix this together'" (Interview #5, 7/9/2009).

Women I interviewed frequently told me stories about women's "more peaceful" orientation as evidence for why women should be involved in politics and the country's recovery. One story came up several times during my interviews. Most retellings highlighted the same general narrative: in the years after the genocide, militias in the DRC kept crossing the border in northern Rwanda in order to "finish the job" of killing Tutsis and to destabilize the new regime.⁵⁹ The wives and mothers of these men were the first to protest the violence and eventually put a stop to it. As one parliamentarian told it,

These women said, "You people. You have failed in the war—you cannot win. Please come out of the bush. If this is not the case, we shall never

shelter you anymore. When you come out we shall put you out and never give you food.” And women did it that way—and those women started reporting even their own sons....they’d say, “This one is a rebel!” Soon, many fighters deserted the militias and entered rehabilitation centers, where they were disarmed and demobilized. Women took credit for this accomplishment, saying they had stopped the war without using the bullet and the gun! (Interview #11, MP, 7/20/2009)

Stories like this one were repeated to me by many women in politics as a way of strategically using this idea of women as “peacemakers” to justify their presence.

According to another woman in parliament,

The shift [in women’s roles] happened after the genocide, because one, women were the ones that were bearing most of the burden of the genocide. Everybody suffered but women suffered the most...And they all got together and said, you know, now there are new doors open to us. [Men] are now recognizing that we are capable. We need to take advantage of this, we need to be determined, and we need to have the will and the strength to make this happen for us...(Interview #15, MP, 7/10/2009)

This quote reflects another pattern that emerged in my data, which makes it clear that the use of this framing was at times explicitly tactical: emerging women leaders recognized the benefits of casting themselves as peacemakers who were helping to rebuild the country, in order to juxtapose themselves to the men who had been responsible for the “bad politics” that led to the genocide in the first place. Such a tactic required embracing the gendered hierarchies in society in which women were charged with bearing children and preserving life, but in the process also stimulated women’s increasing participation in local and national politics. Elsewhere around the world, groups of women—such as Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, the Mothers’ Front in Sri Lanka, and the Mothers of Srebrenica in Bosnia—have used similar arguments to justify their increased presence in political spaces.

This framing of women as different and “more peaceful” than men is at odds with feminist work that emphasizes women’s sameness with men (Lorber 1994; Epstein 1997, 2007).⁶⁰ Moreover, as discussed in the introduction, such “affirmative” or “strategic” essentializations can be depoliticizing, as they reinforce the male/public and female/private divide. Yet scholars of Africa have complicated this feminist literature, challenging that in Africa, politicians often draw on kinship ties (e.g., family or clan networks) to claim political power. While such materialist roles are deemed apolitical by much Western scholarship, Oyewumi (1997) and others have shown that African women have used the idea of a powerful mother for centuries to protect their interests and children (see Moran 2012 for a discussion).

The current government of Rwanda has picked up on the cultural salience of this idea of women as peacemakers and has frequently published reports or policy briefs that articulate the importance of including women in leadership positions. According to the government’s logic, the entire Rwandan nation should endeavor to promote women in order to prevent a return to violence in the future. For example, one report describes women as

...bearers of life [who] can offer a special perspective and experience which will help to overcome prevailing life-destroying methods of dealing with human problems and conflicts.⁶¹ Since military conflicts and diplomacy, which have traditionally been exclusively orchestrated by men, have failed to be a reliable system to safeguard peace, the inclusion of women in all stages of the peace process becomes imperative. (Republic of Rwanda, 2005b)

The government’s attitude is infamously self-serving; its promotion of women has distracted attention from the regime’s domination by a small group of Anglophone Tutsi elite that actively suppresses any form of dissent (see Reyntjens 2004, 2011; Prunier

2009; Straus and Waldorf 2011; Thomson 2013). Nevertheless, average Rwandans have become accustomed to the idea of women as legitimate political actors, which reflects a significant evolution from the pre-genocide era.

CONCLUSION

These demographic, economic, and cultural shifts had profound implications for gendered power relations in Rwanda. Each helps to illustrate the particular ways that war can be transformative for women. While each shift emerged from the devastation of large-scale war, they also reveal how war violence can be more than simply destructive—it can also be transformative for institutions and structures in society. This takes us to the next chapter, which describes the impact of these shifts on women’s political engagement in the years following the violence. As I make clear, these shifts “set in motion change and the construction of the new” (Cramer 2006: 279).

CHAPTER 4: Women's Political Mobilization in Rwanda

“So, I think it was a sort of choice: to be part of the solution or to be part of the problem. And my option was to be part of the solution.” – Judith Kanakuze (Interview #13, MP, 6/29/2009)

Noémie⁶² was born in the south of Rwanda in the early 1960s (Interview #18, 7/15/2009). She attended university at the National University of Rwanda and majored in sociology. She was married and became a teacher. But when the genocide broke out in 1994, her husband was killed. As she described it,

I was married to a successful man. [I thought] he will give me anything, do everything for me. But after the genocide it was different because my husband was dead. And I was the head of the house. So I had to do everything that was the same for the kids as when their dad was around. They must have [the same things] when only I am around.

Noémie recounted how she joined a widows' organization in the aftermath. For three years she worked really hard for that organization, and as she put it, “people were really getting to know me.” Soon, people in her community approached her and encouraged her to join politics. She described how she “used to really hate politics, because I thought politics was just a bunch of lies.” But after the death of her husband, she felt motivated to make a difference:

So I thought about it and was like, alright! Why can't I join politics and even help out my country? So I joined politics and was appointed to be the [Mayor of a Sector]. So by that time I was the Mayor for three years...And then I went to elections for the Mayor...I was the Mayor for three years, and then I left the Mayorship to join this house [Chamber of Deputies].

Noémie's transition from being a teacher to a member of parliament exemplifies the way that war can serve as a period of rapid transformation in ordinary women's lives. With her level of education and status as a widow, Noémie was biographically well positioned to take a leadership role in a grassroots organization; from there, she had the network and visibility necessary to run for political office.

While Noémie ended up in Rwanda's highest legislative body, hundreds of thousands of other Rwandan women also experienced shifts in their political engagement during and after the violence that manifested in less formal political spaces. In what follows, I examine the impact of the violence in Rwanda on women's informal and formal political participation. As explained in the introductory chapter, I conceptualize informal political participation as happening in neighborhoods and communities, through non-hierarchical forms of organization and without substantial resources. Women's informal political activities often revolve around practical gender interests and everyday struggles. While not political actions in and of themselves, as more women engage in such activities they can accumulate, leading to the formation of community organizations that can eventually have a political impact. In contrast, the formal political realm is centralized, highly institutionalized, and resource-intensive; it consists of interactions with the state and its appendages. The boundaries between the two realms are not always clear, however, as informal political participation can culminate in formal political change. Therefore here I analyze both—and the intersections between them.

The violence in Rwanda brought about women's mobilization in many social arenas, from the grassroots to the national political realm. Before long, women's ordinary activities in new social roles reflected a "politics of practice" whereby women's everyday

efforts to establish normalcy in conditions of chaos ultimately manifested in political change. I understand these new activities as political because they represent the first stage in the broader process of political engagement. For Noémie, these everyday efforts included that she “had to do everything that was the same for the kids as when their dad was around.” As I show below, millions of Rwandan women found themselves taking on new roles in an attempt to improve their lives, breaking cultural taboos in the process. This paralleled Bosnian women’s experiences. Testifying in local or international courts about rape of sexual violence experienced during the violence was also part of this shift. These everyday actions challenged the gendered division of labor and social expectations about women’s place in Rwandan society.

Next, I describe how these shifts facilitated the rapid formation of grassroots community-based organizations (CBOs) in the country. Women took the lead in establishing and running these organizations. While many organizations were “feminine” in nature and concerned primarily with advancing practical gender interests associated with day-to-day life, they also catalyzed women’s increased participation in public spaces and represented a new space for women’s collective action. For Noémie, participating in a grassroots widows’ organization gave her the network and visibility she needed to run for political office. Soon, many of these groups shifted from working on emergency relief to advocating for women’s legal and political rights. As international NGOs and government institutions attempted to reach Rwandans, they partnered with these grassroots organizations to implement programs, disperse funds, and mobilize citizens. This initiated a process of “institutional isomorphism” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) whereby fledgling CBOs mimicked the set-up and structure of the larger and more formal

NGOs and INGOs they sought funding from—a process that also occurred in Bosnia, as I discuss in Chapter 7. As their missions’ expanded, these organizations institutionalized a system of female leadership at the local level and eventually provided a platform for some women to launch careers in formal politics.

Finally, I conclude this case study by illustrating how the violence precipitated women’s participation in formal political capacities. Unlike Bosnia, Rwanda experienced a wholesale political transformation after the war and genocide. The regime responsible for perpetrating the most egregious forms of violence was on the run, which left thousands of political offices vacant at all levels of power. The new political elite, led by Paul Kagame and the Rwanda Patriotic Front, welcomed women into the political fold. Women who came to lead community organizations and NGOs increasingly interacted with more formal institutions of power, and some—like Noémie—eventually ran for political office. Others entered formal political realms because of their close ties to the RPF party. As I described in the previous chapter, the government was supportive of women’s inclusion in the political process in part because women represented a neutral, less violent type of political actor. As I explain below, this frame helped facilitate the ascent of Rwandan women in formal political roles.

A “POLITICS OF PRACTICE”: EVERYDAY POLITICS

As we have seen, women took on new roles in their households and communities as a result of displacement, the loss or absence of their husbands, and the economic devastation of the violence. With approximately 36 percent of households lacking an adult male, women assumed tasks that were previously considered “men’s work”—which ranged from milking cows to repairing houses. They maintained traditional caregiving

roles—such as finding food, caring for children, carrying water, and gathering fuel—but now had to venture outside of their homes to care for their dependents since many could no longer subsist on their own plots of land. If only a few women had assumed these new roles, such activities would not in themselves have been part of a broader political transformation. Rather, power was in the numbers: as hundreds of thousands of women assumed new roles and challenged conventional gender norms, their activities accumulated.

Before long, such activities shifted conventional social expectations for women and showed men that “women can perform” (Interview #11, MP, 7/20/2009). Rose Kabuye, who served as Mayor of Kigali immediately after the genocide, gave one example of how this process unfolded:

Construction is the biggest industry [in Rwanda]. Well at first the women were shy, and at first they even just did cleaning, sweeping, giving out something. But then they started climbing. And putting stone on, and doing painting, and I remember the President was surprised and he said, ‘the women, they put on shorts!’—when usually they wear, you know, the skirts. So that is how it started. And then later they started going into business, they took over the tiny businesses...I mean genocide, yes, but the women became hardened, and they wanted to live, and so they have survived. And they took over roles they never had done. They became managers, they became builders, they cut grass, they did everything. (Interview #30, 2/12/2013)

Rose describes how women took on men’s roles, made cash income, and even shifted their type of dress away from traditional cultural expectations. The significance of women wearing shorts or pants came up in many of my interviews; by wearing pants, women were able to climb, which allowed them to repair their houses and roofs (see also Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children Report 1997: 8). Before long,

some women owned and managed their own businesses, leading many observers to understand them as capable.

Other political elites I interviewed also suggested that women's participation in tasks previously considered "men's work" eventually culminated in political shifts. One parliamentarian described how,

During this reconstruction process, women themselves got very much involved. In the reconstruction process, physically, socially, they were there everywhere. So that's when I think men came to realize that also women can perform! ...Because formerly it was believed that the man would head the family; but after this, women came in and they did even jobs which we formerly believed were jobs for men. (Interview #11, MP, 7/20/2009)

This excerpt reveals the significance of women participating in "men's roles." Since housing was a primary concern for millions of Rwandans, women's involvement in rebuilding houses meant that they were directly participating in the country's recovery and rebuilding project. This parliamentarian continued:

[People] had to participate themselves, to contribute, maybe making bricks, providing labor. So women got involved, and you would see a woman starting to construct a house! You know? They had never done it before. And I think when the people were involved in the government, when they saw that also women can do it, that's when they said, also these women should have a share. (Interview #11, 7/20/2009)

As she described, ordinary activities like making bricks or repairing a house reflected an initial step in transforming social expectations about women's status in society. Women went from being farmers and housewives to being perceived by the state and the population as a whole as crucial for the country's recovery. As hundreds of thousands of women participated in such activities, other forms of political action began to materialize.

NEW ACTIVITIES THROUGH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS⁶³

“Civil society itself was just a band of women who organized themselves. No one gave them the positions; it was just women who showed up” – Organization director (Interview #29, 2/5/2013).

Many women began to form informal self-help groups that could help distribute the burden of these new responsibilities. Despite restrictions on political space in the aftermath of the violence,⁶⁴ the organization sector in Rwanda grew rapidly as widespread demographic and economic shifts created urgent needs among the population. These needs were particularly acute for women, who often found themselves assuming new roles, caring for expanded families, and controlling household income for the first time in the absence of their spouses. Organizations ranged broadly in structure and mission. Some were small, informal groups of women, without funding or an articulated mission that helped women meet their basic material needs. Other more formal organizations eventually helped women lobby local officials for land rights or trained women to run for political office.

Before the civil war began, merely a handful of organizations existed in Rwanda. Most were tightly linked to the Habyarimana regime. By 1997, women had formed an estimated 15,400 new organizations across the country (Newbury and Baldwin 2000; Powley 2003). By 1999, a study by *Réseau des Femmes* found 120 women’s organizations operating at the prefectural level, 1,540 at the level of the commune, 11,560 at the sector level, and 86,290 at the cell level (USAID 2000: 19). As a report put it at the time, these “grassroots civil society associations tend to be small, locally based with few ties to national-level organizations, and formed by neighbors and kin living on the same *colline* (hill) who know each other” (USAID 2000). These informal

organizations changed the way that women participated in their communities and in political activities. In what follows, I describe some of the different types of organizations women formed.

Support groups

Linda (Interview #48, 7/23/2012) grew up in a rural part of Rwanda, but moved to Kigali in 1988 with her husband. She was 31 when the genocide broke out. Because she was Tutsi, Linda fled the city in an attempt to survive. Her husband—also Tutsi—was killed. Trying to survive, Linda stayed in the bushes for several weeks. There her muscles atrophied and she became too weak to walk. *Génocidaires* killed her family and many of her friends and neighbors. She survived but suffers from serious physical disabilities. She found herself alone after the violence. As she put it, “...when you lose hope, and lose all your loved ones, you have no one to talk to.” But she began to notice people in her area—mostly widows—who “came together to console themselves.” As she got a bit stronger, she began to join them, “so [she] could have people to talk to, friends.” These groups were incredibly important for Linda and they helped her emotionally and financially recover. Today Linda is a member an income and loan saving cooperative, in addition to several larger survivor organizations. She credits all of them with helping her survive and reclaim her life after the violence.

Linda’s experience suggest that organizations for emotional support brought women out of the private, domestic sphere and into a more public one, eventually linking individual women with larger social networks and structures of support. Many emotional support groups formed organically as women met in line to get food from a humanitarian organization, or in IDP or refugee camps. Women with some education or skills often

took the lead and helped others in their communities to take care of their kids, find food, repair or build homes, and find schools and medical care. Like I discuss in Chapter 7 in Bosnia, having tangible, immediate goals allowed women to organize around concrete problems affecting their lives. Without the social networks they had before the violence, women used organizations to make connections. In short, organizations formed because women “all had the same problem” (Interview #25, Jeanette 7/24/2012)—and they needed to survive and improve their lives.

Avega-Agahozo, Rwanda’s largest widows’ association, exemplified an organization that formed simply to provide women emotional support. The director of Avega described how after the genocide a group of widows from Kigali would run into other women and say, “‘Oh, you survived too!’ So they took an opportunity to meet...Women came together just to cry” (Interview #23, 7/9/2012). According to a former director of the organization,

The first thing that we wanted to take care of and “repair” was ourselves, because everything had been destroyed. We had lost our families. We ourselves were torn apart, so we needed to take care of each other, so that was the first priority, to be able to take care of each other. The first need was emergency relief; then it was taking care of people’s rights, especially the rights of women with inheritance. (Interview #40, 7/13/2009)

Over the next few years, as this woman suggests, the mission expanded; the founding widows decided to help other women and children in their community obtain access to health care, trauma counseling, and eventually legal resources to secure their property. As the group secured funding from donor organizations, it grew rapidly. By 1999, over 1,500 women had turned to Avega for emotional and social support.

Avega, like the majority of grassroots self-help organizations in Rwanda, is a *feminine*, not *feminist*, organization. Such groups cultivated a form of “emotion culture” that prioritized open displays of grief and empathy, confining them to an essentialized feminine logic (Taylor 1999: 20; Taylor and Rupp 1993). Such organizations also reflect Temma Kaplan’s (1982) distinction between “womanist” and “feminist” organizations. Feminine or womanist organizations do not explicitly aim to challenge traditional patriarchal society; instead, they often essentialize women’s roles as nurturers or as peacemakers because they are rooted in the understanding that women’s primary responsibility is to preserve life (Stephen 1997). Regardless, these organizations reflected an emerging “female consciousness” (Kaplan 1982) centered on the shared sense of struggle to survive in the aftermath of atrocity. Further, they offered a space for the development of collective solidarity. Many women that participated in emotional support groups reported that they started to realize that their own suffering paled in comparison to the suffering of others in the group. Because of this, many indicated they were inspired to help other women, children, and their country move forward.

Income generating groups

Chantal (Interview #45, 7/16/2012) grew up as a member of Rwanda’s diaspora in Congo. She was poor and had little access to education while in Congo. She returned to Rwanda in 1996 after the war and did not know many people beyond her husband, who worked as a primary school teacher. She described how she would just stay at home all day with no friends. Soon, however, she noticed small groups of women meeting regularly in her area. Chantal decided to join them. By joining she described how she regained her faith in God, since she heard stories from survivors about what they had

lived through during the genocide and war. She was so relieved that she had not experienced such suffering herself and became motivated to make a new life in Rwanda. The group soon began to collect small amounts of money from members each week in order to loan larger chunks of money to members for various projects. Soon the group loaned Chantal enough money to buy an assortment of fabrics. Chantal enjoyed selling the fabric, so she started a business. After several additional loans from the organization, Chantal had a reasonably successful fabric business in place. Combined with her husbands' income, she has been able to send all six of her children to primary school, and most of them to secondary school when money allows. Chantal is extremely proud of this, especially since she had little formal education herself. Her experience reveals how participating in a community organization allowed women engage in wage labor outside of the domestic realm. It also illustrates how savings cooperatives gave women control of surplus income for the first time.

Organizations that were initially “for discussing...[women’s] sadness, [the] hard situation they were facing after losing their husbands,” soon transitioned into income generating groups (Interview #35, MP, 2/12/2013). INGOs frequently funded micro-credit projects, which encouraged some women’s groups to shift from self-help and emotional support to vocational-training and profit-marking activities. Women soon realized that by joining together with other women in their community and establishing a formal organization, they would become eligible to receive economic benefits from INGOs, larger domestic NGOs, or the government. For women to receive small grants they usually had to be members of a grassroots organization; and, for a grassroots organization to be given funds, it needed to register with local authorities and put a

leadership structure in place. This required members to elect a President and Vice-President, draft a mission statement, prepare a budget, and so on. Like in Bosnia, this process of “institutional isomorphism” led emergent grassroots organizations to mimic the structure of the larger NGOs they sought funding from (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

From grassroots organizations to local politics

Cherise was 27 and living in Western Province when violence erupted in 1994 (Interview #6, 6/2009). Right before the genocide she had gotten married and had a child. During the violence, however, her husband, parents, and most of her siblings were killed. She found herself caring for 14 children, only one of which was biologically hers. Most were the children of her siblings who had been killed. With a degree from the National University of Rwanda obtained before the violence, Cherise found herself in a better position than many other widows. As she saw it, all women were facing difficult circumstances after the war, and they “found themselves in the same situation of having to fulfill responsibilities that they never thought that they would have.” Cherise used her education and social network to bring a group of other widows together. Some of these women had lost husbands in the genocide, while others “found themselves alone because their husbands had participated in the genocide and found themselves in jail.” Others still had husbands who were off fighting with the RPF. They began meeting regularly. Cherise described how

The first activity was to help those who were sick. In the beginning, when we first started to organize ourselves, we were immediately needed on an emergency level to help...and so there was emergency relief, but also trying to reunite families together, mothers and children. Those were our first activities.

Cherise mentioned helping reunite families, a task that put her in direct contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNHCR. Through these activities, her social network expanded. The group of women she worked with also grew and they began working with other women's organizations to "organize around the rights of women" and eventually to fight for the reform of the legal code that prevented women from inheriting land. Before long, Cherise described how women in her community realized "we have more in common than we had differences, and we were facing the same challenges, and we needed to get together to move forward." Working for the women's organization helped Cherise build her confidence and motivated her to seek influence on a broader level. In 1995 she started working full-time at Pro Femmes, an umbrella organization for women's organizations. She attended several trainings put on by INGOs that aimed to teach women about their political rights and how to run for political office. Several years later Cherise was elected mayor of a large district. As she put it,

For every bad thing that happens, there can always be one good consequence. One of the positive effects of the genocide was that we could not see what was happening and just stay there, so we were faced with an incredible choice, and we had to make the decision to do something...I entered politics, because I wanted to do something to help women...

Cherise continued describing how women were uniquely victimized during the violence, as they had watched their loved ones be killed in front of them. As she put it, "we found ourselves with the heaviest burden." This motivated her to do something to help women, because, "when you help a woman, you also help a family, because most times women are less selfish than men...I believe that I can make a difference."

Cherise's experience reveals the impact of several of the shifts discussed in the previous chapter. She found herself as the sole income-earner in her household, which now contained 14 orphans. The suffering she saw around her motivated her to help others. Moreover, she saw women as suffering in a unique way due to their status as mothers and as caretakers of their family. Her early actions in community organizations connected her to larger and more well-connected organizations and INGOs. Eventually, she successfully pursued a career in government.

Who joined? Who led? Why?

While no comprehensive data exists that can shed light on which women founded and led these organizations, my data suggest that most were Tutsi with some secondary or university education. Women with some education or skills (e.g., ability to read and write, nursing, weaving) were particularly important in helping to establish and formalize income-generating organizations (Zraly, Rubin-Smith and Betancourt 2011: 260). At the membership level, however, organizations included women of a wide range of backgrounds—including Hutu and Twa women. At any level, participating in these newly forming institutions brought women into public and community spaces and linked many with new social networks, government officials, and even international actors. The women who led these organizations became well known; one study found that 50 percent of the members of two large widows associations held leadership positions in their communities (Zraly and Nyirazinyoye 2010). Women's participation in these organizations reflected a feminization of public spaces.

International organizations arrive, grassroots organizations formalize

Women from various backgrounds joined grassroots organizations for a variety of reasons after the violence. The earliest organizations were informal and provided solidarity and support to anyone affected by the genocide; some then shifted to income-generating activities, and before long, some began to focus on advocacy issues at the local, regional, or national level (Gervais 2003). Land rights were the most urgent issue at hand. This more overtly political type of organization was often developed in consultation with larger organizations, international NGOs, or humanitarian organizations, which provided a vocabulary and framework for speaking about women's empowerment and gender rights. For example, INGOs often referenced the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, which established an agenda for women's empowerment globally.⁶⁵ In my interviews, Rwandan women who had founded grassroots organizations referred to these international legal frameworks as “tools” they could point to when attempting to justify their activities to spouses or community members.

As grassroots organizations began to apply for funding from the government and from international NGOs, some gradually formalized. This meant that women who were formally peasants or teachers or housewives found themselves with official titles—like President or Secretary. These formal leadership positions had profound implications for their community status, self-esteem, and ability to enter politics. For example, Marie Rose, a genocide widow, was living in Eastern Province after the genocide. She “saw so much need...widows were really suffering; they needed houses, food, health care.” So in 1995, she organized a group of several other widows from her area who had lost their homes during the genocide. Together they approached a representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and requested iron sheets (roofing material)

that would allow them to rebuild their homes. The representatives at UNDP listened and eventually provided them with the requested materials. Encouraged by their success, Marie Rose and the group of women decided to officially form their own organization and apply for additional funding from international sources (Interview #23, 7/9/2012). They named their organization, wrote out a mission statement, and elected Marie Rose the President. The title of “President” granted Marie Rose a formal leadership position in her community and gave her a credential she eventually used to join a prominent national NGO.

In sum, many women realized that in order to fully benefit from the humanitarian aid that was pouring into the country, they needed to be members of an organization. As I discuss in Chapter 7, a similar process occurred in Bosnia. Foreign funding helped women formalize local organizations and gain a voice in public spaces and leadership. INGOs prioritized housing, health care, and income-generating projects for widows and orphans (Newbury and Baldwin 2000: 4; Gervais 2003: 544). They also organized “trainings” and paid locals to participate. Through this process, many ordinary Rwandan women served as interlocutors between their communities, local government, and international funding organizations.

From informal organizations to overt political action

Like in other countries around the globe, organizations became the primary mechanism through which women could stake political claims and participate in public life. There are many examples of how organizations facilitated formal political action. Here I highlight the work of Pro Femmes/Twese Hamwe, a prominent umbrella

organization for an array of women's groups, as it serves as the foremost example of an organization that bridged informal and formal political spaces.

A group of women formed Pro Femmes in 1992 in reaction to the civil war, because they felt that they were "...caught in the tide of the war, and we realized that the primary burden of it was laying on our shoulders, because it was our children who would go to war. It was our husbands who were going to war, and it was us who were left to care and deal with the consequences of that war" (Interview #5, Pro Femmes founder, 7/9/2009). Drawing inspiration from other women's peace movements around the world, Pro Femmes' leadership attempted to organize a public march for peace in Kigali in 1992. However, the Habyarimana government shut them down, fearing the march would add to the ongoing insecurity in the country. Not to be deterred, the organizers cut out pieces of paper shaped like feet to symbolize women marching. They wrote, "We want Peace—We want this to end" on the paper "feet," and posted them all over the city (Interview, Pro Femmes founder, 7/9/2009).

This early example of women asserting their political voice through the structure of an organization suggests the powerful ability of war to mobilize women's interests. Unlike Avega, which was primarily focused on social support, Pro Femmes was focused on changing women's legal rights and substantive presence in government. In the aftermath of the genocide, Pro Femmes expanded rapidly, growing from 13 member organizations in 1992 to more than 40 several years later (Powley 2004: 157). As it grew, Pro Femmes gained funding from international agencies and it frequently hosted consultants from UNHCR, UN Women, and other international organizations that provided inspiration and technical trainings to the organization's membership (Burnet

2008; Republic of Rwanda 1999; Interview #5, 7/9/2009). This allowed Pro Femmes to serve as a broker between large international entities and rural Rwandan women's associations that were in its network. Through the coordinated efforts of local women's associations and well-connected NGOs like Pro Femmes, locally initiated campaigns to increase literacy, develop leadership skills, and practice family planning techniques were implemented across the country, all of which were shaped by the priorities of the international community.

Pro Femmes re-launched its Campaign for Peace in 1996. As the explicit project of the burgeoning women's movement in Rwanda, the Campaign aimed to promote a culture of peace in the country amidst ongoing instability (USAID 2000: 20; Burnet 2008: 374). In doing so, the Campaign reflected a shift among women's groups from emergency relief to a political agenda. The late Judith Kanakuze, one of the women involved with this effort, described how the campaign "was a novel program in which we were discussing how to rebuild society, how to rehabilitate our nation, what is the role of women, and what capacity [do] women need to be part of the solution" (Interview, 6/29/2009). The program aimed to insert women's voices into national conversations about housing, refugees, and justice (USAID 2000: 20). Through the Campaign for Peace, Pro Femmes began working closely with the few women in the transitional government, as well as with the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development in the Executive Branch. While the campaign re-enforced the association of women with peace, it also serves as an example of the way women leveraged their "peaceful" identity to serve political ends.

Many of the organizations within the Pro Femmes network next turned their efforts towards land rights. As we know, without legal rights to land or a formalized system of land certification, disputes about ownership were pervasive after the violence. Disputes escalated as hundreds of thousands of old and new caseload refugees returned from neighboring countries in the mid-1990s (Ali et. al. 2011; Prunier 1995: 264). With over 90 percent of Rwandans dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, access to land was of vital importance (Gervais 2003: 546; Ansoms 2008: 2). This compelled many returning “old caseload” refugees and landless women—both of whom were predominantly Tutsi—to petition local authorities for access to communal land, land abandoned by its owner, or less-desirable marshland that was still considered part of the commons (Gervais 2003).

According to many women I interviewed, lobbying local officials through the institutional structure of an organization became one of the only ways women could gain formal access to land (see also Gervais 2003: 547). Centralized “umbrella” organizations like Pro Femmes helped coordinate many of these efforts: it convened meetings with grassroots women’s organizations in order assess women’s needs and concerns in different parts of the country, and it also worked with the newly formed Forum for Female Parliamentarians (FFRP) and Ministry of Gender to make sure women’s concerns were heard by policy makers. Women’s efforts to obtain land rights eventually manifested in a campaign run by Hagaruka, the legal advocacy organization within the Pro Femmes network. In conjunction with women in government, Hagaruka, Pro Femmes, and other civil society organizations lobbied to amend the legal code to allow

women to inherit land from deceased family members, as well as to change laws on divorce, property rights, and gender-based violence.

One of the key achievements of these efforts was a detailed report recommending that the Government of Rwanda include specific provisions protecting women in the constitutional referendum (Powley 2004: 157-158). In 1999, the Organic Land Law and Succession Law were passed, granting women the right to inherit land and property for the first time (Republic of Rwanda 1999).⁶⁶ This was a major accomplishment of women's mobilization in Rwanda and set the stage for subsequent legislation that established children's rights and protected against gender-based violence (Powley 2006; Powley and Pearson 2007).⁶⁷

For individual women, involvement in these NGO campaigns for peace, land rights, or other goals gave them access to government actors or institutions that expanded their social networks, granted them the connections to the new regime elite, and equipped them with the vocabulary necessary to speak about gender-specific issues. Some that emerged as leaders in these organizations—like Noémie and Cherise—were actively encouraged to run for political office. Others were hired by INGOs to run various development programs.⁶⁸ Indeed participating in informal and formal civil society organizations was the most common “pathway to power” among the 40 elite women in government that I interviewed. Of these women, 77.5 percent were involved in a grassroots organization before entering politics and 65 percent worked with a more formal NGO or INGO. Many MPs credited their exposure to certain social issues while working in these organizations as motivation to influence people at a higher level through government service.

National Women's Council

The postwar government was also involved in this process of women's mobilization. For example, the regime initiated the National Women's Council (NWC), a system of government-affiliated women's groups at all levels of government (Interview #2, Inyumba, 7/14/2009). Led by the late Aloisea Inyumba, the NWC was designed as a "pipeline" through which women's voices at the base would be heard by the political leadership at the top. Inyumba dispatched a network of party officials to meet with representatives from women's organizations in each district in the country. These party officials encouraged women to organize into neighborhood councils. Each neighborhood council was then asked to elect representatives to the sector level, where further elections were held to send representatives to the district, provincial, and eventually national level.

The structure of the NWC was a response to the bottom-up organizing efforts that were happening across the country. Eventually it served as another mechanism for connecting ordinary women to the national governing structure. At the same time, the NWC was modeled after the hierarchically structured Rwandan state—and thereby served as a way of embedding the state into ordinary citizens' lives. Women elected to NWC leadership positions gained a formal credential, which they could eventually leverage to launch a political career. For example, after the war a member of parliament got involved with *Réseau des Femmes Ouvrant pour le Développement Rural* (Network of Women Working for Rural Development) and several small organizations in the Pro Femme network. Through her involvement in these organizations, she decided to participate in the NWC. She described the importance of the NWC to her subsequent activities:

I started at the most local level [of the NWC]; I started at the cell and then I went to the sector, then I went to the district, then I went to the Parliament and so I came here. I was still living in the rural area, so when I joined the National Council of Women it pushed me to move up. (Interview #16, MP, 7/15/2009)

This MP's experience captures how women's participation in community organizations gave them the network and credentials needed to later run for leadership positions.

FORMAL POLITICS

While the mobilization of women in the informal capacities discussed above was primarily initiated by the war and genocide, another factor enabled this informal political mobilization to translate into formal political capacities. In short, Rwanda experienced total regime change after violence. Unlike in Bosnia, there was a complete dismantling of the old political elite and an overhaul of existing laws and institutions. This created both personnel and policy vacancies at all levels of power, which ushered new political actors into formal political offices. During the nine-year period of transition between 1994 and 2003, the Rwandan government—and specifically the Ministry of Gender and the Forum for Female Rwandan Parliamentarians—worked with civil society leaders to find ways to best incorporate women in politics. At the forefront of this effort was a quota, enshrined in the 2003 Constitution, mandating that women hold 30 percent of all decision making positions. Before long, the regime was looking to leaders in communities across the country to fill vacant offices at all levels.

But why was the government of Rwanda so supportive of including women in leadership positions? The reasons for this are debated, but a few are particularly plausible (see Berry 2015a). Most critically, despite the RPF's success at bringing the genocide to an end, in 1994 it was still considered the enemy and distrusted by the majority of

Rwandans. This is because it was dominated by anglophone Tutsis who had grown up in Uganda and was rumored to have killed civilians while securing the country. Many Rwandan Hutus feared RPF revenge attacks, even if they had not participated in genocide crimes. Thus, as the RPF attempted to secure and legitimize its control, women emerged as a large political constituency that the party could safely mobilize in their ranks (see Longman 2006; Straus and Waldorf 2011; Thomson 2013). Women were widely seen as less complicit in the genocide and therefore less “ethnic”; thus the RPF could appoint both Hutu and Tutsi women to leadership roles. It was in this political context that Kagame and the RPF began to vocally encourage women to join politics, targeting the women who were emerging as leaders of local grassroots organizations.

While this promotion of women in government certainly was—and is—part of a broader strategy of consolidating political control, it also reflects the valued place that women held in the RPF movement since its origins in the mid-1980s in Uganda (Interviews, Rose Kabuye, 2/12/2013; Aloesia Inyumba 7/14/2009). President Kagame in particular has been a vocal champion of women’s rights, describing how “the politics of women’s empowerment is part of the politics of liberation more generally” (Kagame 2014). This “political will” is widely cited by politicians today as a reason for the advancement of Rwandan women in leadership positions.

For these reasons, many Rwandan women had opportunities to participate in political capacities that would not have been feasible before the violence. These women tended to be more educated than average and were disproportionately Tutsi. Of the 40 women political elites I interviewed for this project, I estimate that 29 were Tutsi (both survivors and returning refugees), while only 11 made no mention of their victimization

during the genocide, and thus were likely Hutu. As I mentioned above, these figures are estimates because ethnicity is illegal to discuss in Rwanda today, and therefore I was unable to directly ask my interviewees about it.

NGOs played a critical role in facilitating this process of incorporating women in formal political positions. For example, one MP survived the genocide and lost most of her family in the process. In the aftermath, she was desperate to join the RPF, which she saw as saving her and her older sister from a gruesome fate. This MP attended several trainings hosted by Pro Femmes. These trainings taught her how to run for office, how to be confident, and how “to know that you are able and you can do whatever you want to do, when you want to do, it as a woman.” She soon ran for a position at the local government level, and won. Motivated by her success, she then described how “when I reached that position I was like I need to go higher up, to where I am now” (Interview #12, MP, 7/15/2009).

Other pathways to power

Vacancies at the top administrative level of the country also allowed women who had close ties to the RPF to assume positions of power; for example, Lt. General Rose Kabuye became the Mayor of Kigali City and the late Aloesia Inyumba became the Minister of Gender. As I discussed in previous chapters, both women had held prominent roles in the military and fundraising arm of the RPF during its early days and served as visible examples of women’s legitimate presence in politics. Connie Bwiza Sekemana (Interview #9, MP, 7/13/2009) was another early member of the RPF who grew up in Uganda as a refugee. In the early stages of the RPF she was responsible for working with unaccompanied children and others who were displaced. When the RPF took power, she

rose in the party ranks and became a key part of the transition team. Through her position with the party, she worked with multinational organizations like UNICEF on reunifying families after the violence. Eventually, her work with UNICEF was integrated into a government ministry charged with reunification and resettlement—and eventually this position was folded into the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In the late 1990s she was transferred again to the Ministry of Land and then in 1999 was nominated by the RPF to join the transitional parliament. Her experience, like many other women in Parliament, suggests that closeness to the regime is an additional asset in linking individual women to formal political roles.

Several other women in government got involved after holding high-level positions in women's organizations. The late Judith Kanakuze, for example, was a pioneer of women's issues even before the genocide and became one of the first women to transition from civil society into politics (Interview #13, MP, 6/29/2009). She was an early member of the transitional government and represented the NGO sector as one of three women on the Constitutional Commission. There she lobbied for the government to incorporate the platform established at the 1995 Beijing Conference into its domestic political framework. Kanakuze became a well-respected "gender advisor" to several government ministries and her work to "mainstream" gender-sensitive protocols was key in advocating for the adoption of the reserved-seat gender quota for women in Parliament.

Co-option of the civil sector

The transition of some women—like Judith Kanakuze—from the civil sector to government, however, was not necessarily motivated by the regime’s desire to empower women. Rather, it appears that it was part of a broader political strategy to undermine the strongest voices outside of politics—what Jennie Burnet (2008: 378) calls an effort to “emasculate” the burgeoning women’s movement. Without a strong civil society—the regime reasoned—there would be little opposition to continued RPF control, and the vibrant women’s movement was among the regime’s first “targets” (Rombouts 2006; field notes 2012). For example, the leadership of Réseau des Femmes, one of the oldest and strongest women’s organizations in Rwanda, resigned their positions in the organization after 2003 and joined the government. This left the organization poorly managed and eventually it went deep into debt (Burnet 2008: 379).

The regime’s strategy of co-opting civil society reflects its desire to deeply embed its power infrastructure and ensure its continued control over the country (Mann and Berry 2015). Moreover, it reflects the growing gulf between the RPF, which is mostly comprised of returnee Tutsis (i.e., those that had grown up in Uganda), and Rwandan Tutsis (i.e., those that had grown up in Rwanda). Rwandan Tutsis were the founders and members of survivors associations, which dominated the civil sector. The regime’s repression of these associations—and of the civic sector more generally—increased after 2000. Human Rights Watch reported several assassinations of leaders of survivor associations, which they suspected were politically motivated (Human Rights Watch 2000, 2007).⁶⁹ The government has also shut down the most independent organizations in civil society, often accusing them of “genocide ideology.” Outspoken activities and champions of human rights, including many women who were early leaders in the

“women’s movement,” have fled into exile. In short, the rapid formation of community associations and NGOs in Rwanda did not manifest in a robust civil society that could serve as an effective counterweight to the power of the state.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I illustrated the variety of ways that women engaged in new political roles in the aftermath of violence in Rwanda. Women became involved in various forms of “everyday politics” as they took on new roles and responsibilities in their households and communities. Such ordinary actions began to accumulate, shifting expectations about women’s roles in Rwandan society. As a result of these new roles, community organizations proliferated. These organizations became an important space for women to engage with others in their communities and some soon launched explicitly political campaigns. In doing so, these organizations instituted a system of female leadership at the local level and furthermore connected ordinary Rwandan women with more formal NGOs, foreign donors, and government institutions. Many women who came to lead these organizations found themselves well positioned to run for political office. For these reasons and more, today Rwanda has the highest level of women in parliament of any country in the world.

Yet a key question remains: was women’s increased participation in informal and formal politics sustained? Moreover, have the strides women have made at the national political level fundamentally transformed ordinary women’s lives? While the political-class of elite women has seen rapid wealth accumulation and the extension of myriad rights, “ordinary” Rwandan women’s stories illustrate a depressing paradox: despite the world’s highest percentage of women in parliament, some of the strongest state-led

efforts to promote women, and an entire government apparatus designed with gender equality in mind, profound impediments to women's equality are deeply entrenched and appear unlikely to dissipate any time soon (Berry 2015b). As I explain in Chapter 8, many of the gains women have made are being undermined by the authoritarian nature of the state, in addition to the problematic implementation strategies of foreign NGOs. Further, as suggested above, while women have made important strides in many areas, wealthy, foreign-born Tutsi women have disproportionately ascended the national political ladder. As such, new forms of inequality are developing in Rwanda, setting back much of the impressive progress women made in the immediate aftermath of the violence.

CHAPTER 5: Historical Causes of Mass Violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina





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War broke out in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s as the central power structure crumbled and its constituent states declared their independence. What followed was the bloodiest conflict in Europe since World War II. By 1995, over two million people (out of a population of 4.3 million) were internally displaced or seeking refuge in neighboring countries, over 100,000 people were dead, and between 20,000 and 50,000 women had been raped (Silber and Little 1997; Enloe 2000; Bosnian Book of the Dead 2007). In this chapter I provide an overview of recent Bosnian history in the lead up to the violence, with a particular focus on the status of women. In providing this historical overview, I aim to provide enough background information for non-area specialists to understand the emergence of the war in the early 1990s and the status of women in the aftermath.

Scholars have debated the causes of war in Bosnia. Susan Woodward (1995) emphasized the critical role played by international economic policies and political pressures, as well as the breakdown of political and civil order during the collapse of the Yugoslavia state. V.P. Gagnon (1994) highlighted the role played by the nationalist political parties within Yugoslavia as they attempted to concentrate their political power. Lenard Cohen (1993) suggested that Serbs have utilized a victim mentality to foster a culture of violence, fomented by elites, while Viktor Meier (2005) underlined the role of Slobodan Milošević as a charismatic leader driving the violence. Warren Zimmermann (2006), the last U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia before its collapse, placed blame on Slovenia for instigating the violence by leaving the Yugoslavia federation at a volatile time, and villainized nationalist political leaders. Other scholars, like Burg and Shoup (1999), note that Germany's diplomatic recognition of Croatia and Slovenia played a

crucial role in igniting violence. Michael Pugh and Neil Cooper (2004) emphasize the preceding economic crisis and struggles for economic control. Norman Cigar (1995), Laura Silber and Allan Little (1997), Michael Mann (2006), and Sabrina Ramet (1992; 2006) place the majority blame on the historical unworkability of the Yugoslav state, economic decline, and Serb territorial ambitions. These scholars agree that “ancient ethnic hatreds” did not drive the war and that such depictions simplify and distort the actual origins of the conflict.

Bosnia sits at a geopolitical crossroads. Looking west, it is a short boat ride across the Adriatic Sea to Italy. Looking east, Bosnia is a gateway to the southern Slavic states, and beyond that, to Turkey and the countries bordering the Black Sea. A visitor to Sarajevo today cannot help but notice the two distinct cultural traditions in the city. As one walks east down Maršala Tita, the main pedestrian road through the heart of the city, Austro-Hungarian style buildings stand next to modern shops, cafés, and commercial infrastructure. Bosnians of all ages pack cafés, regardless of the day of the week (perhaps a result of the high unemployment rates in the country today). An Orthodox cathedral, built in the mid-19th century, towers over an open courtyard, periodically filled with street fairs or groups of men playing chess on a large, open-air chessboard. Popular European clothing chains advertise the latest fashions with bold signs and blaring pop music.

The smooth pavement across most of downtown soon turns to cobblestone and upon entering Baščaršija—the Ottoman heart of the city and the former bazaar district—the atmosphere changes. The Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque stands proudly in the center of the neighborhood as Bosnia’s most important Islamic structure and a fine example of Ottoman architecture. The mosque was built in 1531 by Acem Esir Ali “Alaüddin,” a

prominent Ottoman architect, who built similar mosques in Aleppo, Syria and Istanbul, Turkey. Just yards from the mosque is Sebilj, a wooden fountain built in 1753 that serves as a convenient meeting place in the center of Baščaršija. While Ottoman architecture dominates this area, Catholic cathedrals and Jewish synagogues evidence the historical religious diversity of the neighborhood. Bazaars and shops selling trinkets—many from Turkey—abound. Cafés serve Bosnian coffee. Made similarly to the Turkish tradition, Bosnian coffee consists of finely ground beans that are cooked in a copper pot with a long handle until the coffee rises and nearly overflows from the pot, creating a thick foam. It is then stirred and poured into a small cup, served with sugar cubes, a glass of water, and a side of *rahatloukoum* (Turkish delight). Around Baščaršija, men smoke *shisha* (hookah) and restaurants offer house-made *rakija* (a popular fruit brandy).

These dualities, the feeling of east meeting west, help explain much of Bosnia's turbulent history. The Ottoman Empire, an expansionary Sunni Islamic State based out of western Anatolia, took control of Bosnia in 1463. For the next four centuries of Ottoman rule, Bosnia underwent a series of population shifts. While religious tolerance characterized Ottoman policy, the Empire actively championed Islam and approximately two-fifths of the native Slavic population—previously Orthodox Christians or Catholics—converted. Anyone who aspired to state service, military service, or regional trade had a pragmatic reason to convert (Malcolm 1996: 51-69; Udovički 1997: 22; Lampe 2000: 23).⁷⁰ The proportion of Orthodox Serbs in Bosnia also continued to rise due to migration, and by the late 1860s, Serbs comprised over one-third of the population. The Ottoman millet system allowed non-Muslim religious communities in the Balkans a degree of religious and juridical autonomy from the state and thereby permitted

Serb, Jewish, and Croat communities' room to maintain their cultural differences. By the mid-19th century, the population of current-day Bosnia was roughly divided between Bosnian Muslims at 44 percent, Orthodox Christians (Serbs) at 31 percent, and Catholics (Croats) at 17 percent. These groups all spoke the same South Slavic language, variously referred to as Bosnian, Serbian, or Croatian depending on the region it was being spoken in. Neighboring territories of Serbia and Croatia were more religiously homogenous; as such, Bosnia emerged as the most ethnically diverse entity in the Balkans. Regardless of religious or national identity, traditional Balkan society was patrilineal and patriarchal. Men were the head of the household and women's primary status emerged from their role as a link between fathers and sons. Only by giving birth to a son could a woman gain status in her family and community (Milićević 2006: 269).

Orthodox Serbian resistance to Ottoman rule grew in the 19th century, in part because Serbs within Bosnia occupied a low position in the agricultural hierarchy vis-à-vis Muslim landholders. Croatian Catholics, residing both in current day Croatia and throughout the region, were also disenfranchised under Ottoman rule, and joined Serbs and other minorities to protest. Peasant revolts became common throughout the 19th century, and Serb and Croat elites began to articulate visions of "Greater Serbia" or "Greater Croatia" and thereby announce their ambitions for greater territorial control. In 1875, Serb and Croat peasants instigated a massive revolt in Herzegovina (a region of southern Bosnia) to protest increasing repression and rapidly expanding tax burdens imposed by the Ottoman-backed Bosnian Muslim elite. Ottoman and Bosnian forces brutally squelched the uprising. All told, an estimated 150,000 people were killed or

forced to flee during the violence (Malcolm 1996: 132; Lampe 2000: 66). But the Ottoman Empire was weakening and its control over the Balkans was slowly fading.

The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 ushered in political sea changes, as European countries placed Bosnia under the control of the predominantly Christian Austro-Hungarian Empire as an “occupied Ottoman territory.” As a result, Orthodox and Muslim antagonisms were heightened, and several hundred thousand Bosnian Muslims fled to areas still under control of the Ottoman Empire (mostly in modern-day Turkey), rendering Orthodox Serbs a plurality in the state (Lampe 2000: 6). Bosnian Muslims who remained were now under Austro-Hungarian control and were therefore compelled to strengthen their cultural and religious autonomy, as they became religious minorities within the Empire (Malcolm 1996: 136-155). The Austro-Hungarian Empire implemented aggressive policies to further agricultural and industrial production in Bosnia. The agricultural project, however, was largely a disaster (Lampe 2000), and the predominantly Orthodox Serb peasantry was increasingly made up of landless sharecroppers (or *kmetovi*) and occupied disproportionately few positions of wage employment in the urban areas. Bosnian Muslims made up just 37 percent of the rural population, yet accounted for 91 percent of the landlords. By contrast, Serbs comprised 42 percent of the rural population but 74 percent of the landless population (Lampe 2000: 82). As a result, Serbs became increasingly frustrated, particularly as rural education was neglected and much of the agrarian population remained illiterate. During this period, women’s roles in the patriarchal peasant society were generally limited to the household sphere. While leftist (Marxist) political parties emerged around the turn of the century, women’s involvement was minimal (Jancar-Webster 1990).

Amidst deepening antagonism between Serb leadership and the Austro-Hungarian power holders, in 1908 the Empire decided to formally annex the province of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The annexation was motivated by the Empire's fear that the Young Turk revolution in Turkey (the remnants of the Ottoman Empire) would instigate a movement to reclaim Bosnia for Turkey. Nationalist tensions between Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims were amplified, as Serbs felt that Bosnian territory had been stolen from them (Malcolm 1996: 150). Mass protests erupted in Belgrade, culminating in the bloody First Balkan War from 1912-1913, and swiftly followed by the Second Balkan war in 1913. Serbia emerged victorious, effectively doubling the size of its territory and merging Serbia's long-standing ideas about a "Greater Serbia" with the idea of a large Yugoslav state (Cigar 1995; Lampe 2000). As the war ended, tensions between ethnic groups within Bosnia were at a peak, and Serb-Muslim relations were deteriorating. Muslim leaders renewed calls for the Austro-Hungarian Empire to deepen its presence in Bosnia to counter the growing strength of the neighboring Serbian state and Serbs within Bosnian territory. Serb groups opposed to the Habsburg Empire began to organize resistance. On June 28, 1914, Gavrilo Princip, a young Serb nationalist, assassinated Franz Ferdinand, the heir of the Habsburg Empire, during a visit to Sarajevo. Ferdinand's assassination ignited the outbreak of World War I.⁷¹ By the end of the war, between 750,000 and 800,000 Serbians and Montenegrins had died out of a population of around 4.5 million (Newman 2011: 47). This was in addition to the 300,000 Bosnians who were either killed or who fled to Turkey during the war (Malcolm 1996: 163).

INTERWAR PERIOD AND THE FIRST YUGOSLAVIA

The Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed during World War I. In its wake, there was movement for a unified federation of Southern Slavs, formally established as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and later known as the First Yugoslavia (Ramet 2006). The federation, led by King Aleksander Karađorđević, was comprised of six independent states: Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Macedonia. Each state reflected a South-Slavic *narod* or nation, with the exception of the multi-ethnic Bosnia; in other words, Macedonia was comprised of Macedonians, Serbia of Serbians, and so forth. Yet the federal political and economic framework was weak, and Serbia was, in many ways, at the core of the Kingdom (Djokić 2007: 41-42). As a result, Serbs were the numerical majority of the population and dominated government ministries and army leadership (Ramet 2006: 43-45). This created tensions and frustrations within factions of the “kingdom,” as Serb leaders increasingly championed the idea of a central Yugoslav state, while some Muslim⁷² leaders sought to maintain ties with Turkey. The strongest resistance to Serb dominance of the state came from a nationalist movement in Croatia (Jancar-Webster 1990: 14). Some Muslims, however, were sympathetic to the efforts to further organize a Yugoslav entity. In particular, by 1939, a large number of Muslim women began backing the pro-Yugoslav Social Democratic Party (Cornwall 2011: 40). Mehmed Spaho, a leading Bosnian politician of the interwar years, also claimed that the divisions between Muslims and other religious communities had been softened by the misery of World War I, and as a result that most Muslims of Bosnia now favored a Yugoslav state (Malcolm 1996: 161).

During the interwar years, Yugoslavians suffered from the global economic depression. Women were disadvantaged in many ways during this period. They lacked

the right to vote and in some parts of Yugoslavia—including Bosnia and Kosovo—women’s illiteracy was as high as 85-90 percent in 1931 (Jancar-Webster 1990: 27). Women were consistently paid less than men; for example, in the clothing industry and commercial services, women made a maximum of 50 percent of men’s wages (Jancar-Webster 1990: 17). In the countryside, traditional values confined women’s place within the home. Women were charged with household agricultural production in the *bašča*, a small patch of land or garden close to the family home (Bringa 1995: 53). Families were clustered in *zadruga*, a two or three generation family economic and social unit ruled by a patriarch.⁷³ *Zadruga* structured the organization of agriculture, women’s tasks, and the ownership of property (Jancar-Webster 1990: 27⁷⁴; Cockburn 1998: 156). This household model emphasized harmony within the family and the communality of material goods. Men in the household wielded power and controlled any economic surplus. According to Jancar-Webster,

Women were subordinated to men, working at their “women’s tasks” and ensuring the harmony and smooth-working of the households. Their work was considered a separate contribution to the home, of less significance than men’s. Daughters were sent out of the house at marriage, and the new bride immediately assumed the lowest status in her husband’s household. Her servant status improved to the degree that she bore male children (1990: 28).

If women left the *zadruga* in order to find wage employment, they found that their work was undervalued. Despite—or perhaps because of—women’s disadvantaged position in the labor market, some women began to actively organize public protests and strikes. While little data on strikes is available, historical accounts of the period indicate that women participated in great numbers. For example, women textile workers in Croatia

went on strike in 1927-28 to protest inflation and the high cost of living, and to demand a right to vote (Jancar-Webster 1990: 36).

As the global economic crisis deepened, many Serb women in the Balkans became increasingly involved in the Yugoslav Communist Party (KPJ) and the related Union of Communist Youth (SKOJ). By 1921, the KPJ was the strongest political party in the Kingdom (Jancar-Webster 1990: 21). Fearing the Party's growing strength, King Aleksander's regime outlawed it and forced to go underground, where the KPJ developed the strategic and personal networks that would eventually foster its transformation into an organized revolution combatting German occupation during World War II. In 1928, the KPJ noted the significant contributions of women and set up women's commissions at the regional and community levels (Jancar-Webster 1990: 220). As repression of the Party worsened as King Aleksander consolidated his power, these women's organizations soon served as the primary mechanisms by which the Communist Party could infiltrate legal trade unions or other organizations (Jancar-Webster 1990). Many in the core membership of these organizations were schoolteachers, students, or workers, and they became experienced in organizing during the interwar period. Women's clubs, societies of academic women, women's congresses, and other similar groups flourished during the 1930s (Slapšak 2001: 164). Because communism was outlawed, women did not talk about revolution but rather talked about women's rights (Jancar-Webster 1990: 25).

In 1928, an opposition politician shot five deputies in the Yugoslav legislature, triggering a political crisis (Ramet 2006: 73). Hopes of parliamentarianism or democracy began to fade. King Aleksander further tightened his grip on the country. In 1929 he redesigned the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

(or, the Kingdom of the South Slavic People). He simultaneously dismissed the parliament, abolished the constitution, and outlawed political parties. This “royal dictatorship” (Lampe 2000: 1963) encouraged people to think in terms of a Yugoslav identity, rather than nationalist ones; King Aleksander aspired to erase the old regional identities from the map and re-drew territorial divisions accordingly (Malcolm 1996: 169). Yet tensions did not ease, and in 1934 King Aleksander was assassinated. His successors, Prince Regent Paul and Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović, continued to tighten the dictatorship’s control and move towards a more unified Yugoslavia, with the motto “one state, one people, one king” (Lampe 2000: 176-8; Djokic 2007: 106-120).

WORLD WAR II⁷⁵

As World War II broke out in Europe in 1939, German Reich encroached upon Yugoslavia’s northern border. In light of this, Yugoslav politicians initially adopted a policy of appeasement. In April 1941, however, Hitler’s air force leveled Belgrade, and a ground invasion by German, Italian, Bulgarian and Hungarian forces followed (Malcolm 1996: 173). Yugoslavia capitulated just 11 days later, and the region became the site of multiple intersecting and overlapping conflicts for the remainder of the war. It became “a war of all against all” (Prpa-Jovanović 1997: 57). Factions within Yugoslavia led to the splintering of the state and the weakening of the Kingdom, which quickly fell apart. The initial Axis invasion caused the annexation of several parts of the territory. Several local Yugoslav resistance movements emerged during the war and also became embroiled in a war of resistance against Axis powers (Ramet 2006: 113-150). The largest of these movements, Josip “Tito” Broz’s Communist Partisans, aimed to battle the occupying powers, liberate the population, and create a multi-ethnic communist state within

Yugoslavia. Radical Serb Četniks, who collaborated with the Italian fascists, also waged a resistance campaign against the occupying powers and publicly called for a “homogenous Serbia” that would be “cleansed” of all non-Serb elements (Cigar 1995). Croatian fascists, or Ustaše, joined the Axis powers and waged murderous campaigns against Serbs and Communist partisans alike. Forces allied with the Axis powers deported and murdered Jews and Roma. These various overlapping conflicts eventually led to an estimated one million deaths (Ramet 2006: 114, 161).

Several weeks after Germany invaded Yugoslavia, it turned its attention to the Soviet Union. This prompted the Communist Party to enter the fray. Tito appealed to all Yugoslavians, regardless of nationality, by declaring,

Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians and others, the time has come to free yourselves from the unbearable and hated fascist slavery...The Communist Party of Yugoslavia is organizing and leading the partisan struggle in Serbia, in Montenegro, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the Vojvodina, in Croatia and Dalmatia, in Slovenia...The people of Yugoslavia must unite without consideration of politics or religious conceptions and in a united struggle throw out the hated occupiers from their country. (Proclamation of the KPJ Central Committee to the People of Yugoslavia, July 25, 1941).

Tito’s appeal resonated widely. For Yugoslavian women, the Communist Party offered women a chance to both defend their nation as fighters and to position themselves within a movement that articulated a firm commitment to equal economic and political rights for women—even if the Party’s slogan, “brotherhood and unity,” explicitly excluded them. Many women joined Tito’s Communist Partisans. Barbara Jancar-Webster (1990), who conducted the first study in English on women’s participation in the partisans, declared women’s involvement to be “one of the most significant events in modern history. In no

other country in the world have women played such a decisive part in the achievement of victory over an occupying enemy and the realization of a Communist state” (1990: 1).

Throughout the war, an estimated 5.7 million people were mobilized in Tito’s National Liberation Movement. Women were an estimated 2 million of these—approximately 12 percent of the pre-war female population. Approximately 70 percent of these women were younger than 20 years old. The majority of women participants were likely Serbs, followed by Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, and then Muslims and Macedonians (Ramet 2006: 153); however, no official statistics were collected. Within the military wing, the Partisans amassed a force of approximately 800,000 (Ramet 2006: 159). There were approximately 2,000 women officers within military wing. Of the total number of participants, over million (30 percent) died during the struggle.⁷⁶ By 1945, the partisans were known as the Yugoslav People’s Army (Jancar-Webster 1990: 46-48, 90).⁷⁷

Women were motivated to join Tito’s partisans for a variety of reasons. Some had been exposed to progressive political circles in the build-up to the war and were committed to advancing the socialist cause. Many were motivated by the movement’s goal to eliminate fascism. Others had joined for personal reasons, such as to avenge the death of a family member. Others had brothers, husbands, or fathers who had joined the movement and decided to join as well, particularly if their loved ones had been killed early in the struggle (Jancar-Webster 1990: 50, 159). The party-affiliated *Antifašistički Front Žena* (AFZ, or Antifascist Front of Women) helped organize women in the struggle by assigning them jobs teaching literacy to the rural population, or serving as recruiters for the socialist cause (Slapšak 2001: 167; Helms 2013: 49). The partisan life also

promised camaraderie and provided many new experiences to participants, including exposure to music, dancing, theater, and more. Because of this, thousands of women were eager to join. Women served in all capacities while in the movement, including as fighters, nurses and doctors, suppliers, and communication specialists.⁷⁸ Discipline was strict; partisans were expected to uphold a code of conduct that prevented them from acting as callously or barbarously as the occupying force. This code also prevented partisans from entering a village and asking for food, stealing, having illicit sexual relations, or other types of dishonorable conduct (Jancar-Webster 1990: 77, 78). Further, partisans were prohibited from killing civilians—they were instead required to disarm them and then release them. Life as a partisan was grueling, particularly during the freezing Bosnian winters when food was scarce. Yet Jancar-Webster cites a partisan woman, Saša Bozović, who stressed that the war “taught her that human beings are stronger than they realize, with an incredible capacity to endure” (1990: 81).

“BROTHERHOOD AND UNITY”

As the war came to a close, the partisans were victorious in the rural and mountainous regions of Yugoslavia. Tito emerged as the leader best poised to bring internal peace to the Balkans. He again consolidated six republics under the Yugoslav federal system. He banned Ustaša and Četniks extremist groups, declaring that all ethnicities in the region had a home in Yugoslavia. Although Tito was half-Croat and half-Slovene, he nevertheless situated the national governing structures in Belgrade, privileging the Serb faction within the country. Tito was staunchly communist and initially implemented a Stalinist model of the state. Agriculture was collectivized and industry was nationalized. Yet Stalin wanted Yugoslavia to become a Soviet satellite

state like the rest of the region, while Tito was adamant about maintaining Yugoslavia's independence. As a result of this (and several other reasons), Yugoslavia was expelled from Cominform in 1948, prompting Tito to distance his policies from those of other communist states and join the non-aligned movement (Malcolm 1996: 194; Ramet 2006: 175-179).⁷⁹

Tito's version of socialism followed a traditional Marxist model. Rather than state ownership of industry, Tito promoted a decentralized system of worker ownership of the factories and organizations in which they were employed (Jancar-Webster 1990: 163; Woodward 1995b). The Yugoslav state suppressed religion in order to prevent discrimination along religious grounds and to ostensibly give all citizens equal opportunity. It also forbade Muslim women from wearing the veil, outlawed religious schools, and abolished Islamic courts (Malcolm 1996: 195). Women in the AFZ were active in leading the campaign to ban religious dress that they believed marked women as subordinate (Helms 2013: 49). While many mosques had been destroyed in the war, Communist authorities converted many of those still standing into museums or warehouses (Malcolm 1996: 196). The state eventually loosened these restrictions on religious freedom in the 1950s, and the overall treatment of Muslims improved over the next few decades.

Questions about what it meant to be Muslim, Croat, or Serb remained after the war. Disagreements about whether it meant religion, ethnicity, or nationalism were persistent, even though Tito led the push for everyone to self-identify first and foremost as Yugoslav. By the census of 1953, citizens were allowed to register as "Yugoslav, nationality undeclared," which meant that Bosnian Muslims did not have to declare

themselves Muslim Serbs or Muslim Croatians. By the 1961 census, people could identify as “Muslim in the ethnic sense” (Malcolm 1996: 198). Slowly, policies towards non-Serbs began to relax, and a new Muslim elite emerged within the Communist Party. These elites were secularists and they led a push to recognize Muslims in Bosnia as a nation distinct from Serbs and Croats. Simultaneously, a separate movement emerged that pushed for revival of religious Islamism (Malcolm 1996). As a result of this movement, religious Muslims in Bosnia became increasingly connected with the rest of the Muslim world, and some began to study at Arab universities in the Middle East. The concept of Muslim nationhood began to emerge.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN TITO’S YUGOSLAVIA

The decades following World War II marked significant changes in women’s roles, primarily as a result of the socialist ideology in Yugoslavia that was favorable to women. Women were given the right to vote during the war, which was codified in the 1946 Constitution that guaranteed women’s political and economic equality (Jancar-Webster 1990: 16; Yugoslav Constitution, Article 24). The state legalized abortion in 1952 (Ramet 1999). Like other lower-developed countries in the Balkan region, average total births per woman began a rapid decline,⁸⁰ from 5.3 in 1953 to 3.9 in 1957 and then further to 1.9 in 1979 (Sardon and Confession 2004: 214).⁸¹ Partisan leadership fought to preserve women’s status within the state structure and implemented measures designed to ensure women’s political and legal rights (Massey, Hahn, and Sekulić 1995: 362). It also implemented a woman’s quota to ensure a minimum level of women in the national legislature. Male and female partners could jointly own property, the state mandated universal health and childcare, and mothers and fathers had joint authority over their

children. The state also implemented policies mandating equal educational opportunities for men and women, with the idea that upon graduation, men and women would be equally prepared for the same types of employment (Massey et. al. 1995: 363).

A key priority of Tito's leadership—and of Marxism more broadly—was to promote women's incorporation into the paid labor force. While women comprised approximately 27 percent of the industrial labor force in 1939, this participation increased to 47 percent in the years immediately after the war (Tomšić 1980). Like in the U.S., however, this dropped to around 25 percent in 1954 as preference was given to male veterans and women were once again relegated to the household sphere. In addition, women were perpetually underpaid in Yugoslavia, earning 80 percent of what men earned (although this is significantly better than women in the rest of the world). They were also the first to be laid off during periods of economic downturn (Ramet 1992: 114). Moreover, women held few positions of managerial or political authority—for example, only 17 percent of workers' council members and 6 percent of workers' council presiding officers were women (Morokvasic 1986; Cockburn 1998: 158). Tito, like other socialists, believed that inequality between men and women came entirely from women's exclusion from wage labor and saw work as the mechanism for obtaining women's emancipation.

Tito's aspirations of economic equality did not come to fruition; instead, women were concentrated in service and education fields, held jobs with less prestige and pay, had poorer working conditions, and experienced widespread gender segregation within various professions (Woodward 1985; Massey et. al. 1995: 375). In addition to labor inequality, women in Yugoslavia—like women in other socialist countries—faced the “triple burden” of paid employment, housework and childcare, and political and

community responsibilities (Massey et. al. 1995: 364). In particular, rural women and women from poorer families faced barriers to their integration into public life. Women tended to remain in their towns and villages, while men had more mobility and frequently traveled to larger cities for work (Bringa 1995). Bosnian culture valued women because of their essential contributions to the household, but the association of women with domestic responsibilities limited their participation in public social life. Thus while in many ways the entry of large numbers of women into paid employment represented a shift in women's roles from the private to the public realm, like elsewhere, it did not eradicate women's subordination (Einhorn 1993: 63; Gal and Kligman 2000). Moreover, women's "emancipation" was always part of the male-dominated Party's agenda for achieving a worker's state, rather than a project initiated by women themselves (Tomšić 1980; Jancar-Webster 1990). Socialism, and women's involvement in it, thus fell short of eradicating patriarchy or male privilege within Yugoslav society.

Mid-1970s: Feminist movement in Yugoslavia emerges

Women leaders in the partisan movement generally viewed women's struggles as indistinguishable from the struggles of workers and citizens as a whole. As dedicated Party members, many of these women believed that any "women's issues" had no independent existence and instead had to be seen as a necessary part of the process of establishing and growing a socialist state (Jancar-Webster 1990). Yet in the late-1970s, an academic feminist movement emerged in Yugoslavia—and elsewhere around the world—and insisted that "women's issues" deserved separate consideration. This movement began in Zagreb, Croatia, and soon spread to Belgrade, Serbia and Ljubljana, Slovenia (Slapšak 2001: 170). It had little strength in Bosnia, although as I discuss in

Chapter 7, this began to change during the war in the 1990s. The movement gained strength and direction by defining itself both through the unique contributions women partisans made during World War II, and also by building on Western feminist thought and networks that were gaining strength at that time. The movement was aligned with the workers movement, but also demanded its own unique identity. It began reframing women's role in the partisan struggle as one that was actually exploitative and designed to serve male military purposes. This nascent feminist movement demanded that women's wartime role be put in broader perspective (Jancar-Webster 1990: 178).

Emerging feminists in Yugoslavia had read Western feminists, including Betty Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Daly, and Carol Pateman (Jancar-Webster 1990: 178). Women with means were able to travel freely around Europe with a Yugoslavian passport, allowing them to network with like-minded women's groups in other countries. "Feminist libraries" began to emerge and small groups of women would assemble to read and discuss contemporary issues and feminist politics (Knezevic 1995; Cockburn 1998). It was largely an intellectual movement, and feminist critiques of Marxism emerged (see Jancar-Webster 1990 for a review). Members of the movement began to argue that the critical question for women was not stratification between classes—as classic Marxists would articulate—but rather a gendered stratification *within* classes, where men have historically subordinated women to their interests (Jancar-Webster 1990:178).

In the 1980s, this movement began to implement projects aimed at spreading these ideas more broadly. A key initiative was the establishment of SOS hotlines for victims of domestic violence in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana. Yugoslav feminists aspired for these hotlines to both assist individual victims of abuse and to raise awareness

about violence as a social problem that reflected women's subordinate status within society (Bagic 2004: 4). Lesbian groups also formed during this period. With the rising prominence of nationalist political leaders, however, many of these feminist initiatives began to experience sanctions and backlash.

BUILD UP TO THE WAR

By the 1960s, Bosnia was falling behind the rest of Yugoslavia economically. Bosnia's national income was 20 percent below the national (Yugoslav) average in 1947 and dropped to 38 percent below the national average by 1969. In the 1970s, with the exception of Kosovo, Bosnia had Yugoslavia's highest infant mortality rate, illiteracy rate, and the highest percentage of people whose only education consisted of three years of primary school (Malcolm 1996: 202; Kalyvas and Sambanis 2005). Many Orthodox Serbs left Bosnia in favor of the more cosmopolitan cities of Zagreb or Belgrade, slowly shifting the ethnic plurality of the country back towards Muslims (Lampe 2000: 335). The international oil crisis in the 1970s prompted a sharp increase in unemployment. The proportion of women who were unemployed steadily rose; by the 1980s, 55 percent of women were unemployed.

In part because of these economic challenges—in addition to a decentralizing trend throughout the country—nationalism was revived in the 1970s and 80s. As men lost the ability to provide for their families, many experienced a form of “economic emasculation,” prompting backlash against communist agendas and those that had benefited from them—including women (Milićević 2006). There was a corresponding resurgence of traditional values. Islam became more visible and popular, and Orthodox Serb nationalism experienced a revival.

Visions for a “Greater Serbia”

Tito died in 1980. From 1982 to 1986, former partisan Milka Planinc served as the first and only woman prime minister of Yugoslavia (and the first woman head of a communist country). As of the 1986 elections, women held 24 percent of the seats in Yugoslavia’s National Assembly and comprised 17 percent of municipal representatives, reflecting the communist party’s continued commitment to gender equality (Cockburn 2001: 22). In the decade that followed, the rising star of Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević fomented ethnic nationalism in Serbia (Woodward 1995; Gagnon 2004). In 1986, the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences published the “Serbian Memorandum,” which proclaimed the validity of Serbia’s quest for territorial integrity—in other words, it encouraged the establishment of a state in which all Serbs, and only Serbs, could reside. It argued that communists had deliberately drawn the borders of Yugoslavia’s various states to fragment Serbs from each other; only by redrawing the map and uniting Serbs on a common territory could Serbs thrive (Cigar 1995: 23). Milošević tapped into the genuine economic grievances of many of his countrymen, funneling their discontent to his own political ends. A “political ethno-kitsch” washed over Serbian popular culture during the late 1980s, and in newly popular “turbo-folk” music, soccer clubs, media, and other Serb-dominated spaces, a nationalist form of patriotism emerged that emphasized Serbs’ status as victims and their shared destiny as a nation (Udovički 1997; Milićević 2006).

Milošević’s approach was explicitly chauvinistic and the nascent Yugoslav feminist movement had an increasingly difficult time being heard in the midst of his new focus on “traditional values” (Ramet 1992: 115). Women’s identities and bodies were enlisted to serve nationalist ends; a woman “patriot” was someone who could regenerate

the nation through motherhood (Cockburn 1998: 161). Reproducing the nation became a prominent theme in the political rhetoric. This was particularly the case in Serbia, as higher fertility rates among (Muslim) Albanian women stoked fears that Muslims were taking over.⁸² To make matters worse, there was a moral panic in the late 1980s in Serbia about (Muslim) Albanian men raping Serbian women, which inspired nationalist rhetoric about women being the guarantors of an ethnically pure bloodline (Cockburn 1997: 162; Slapšak 2001: 174). Serb nationalists blamed urban, educated Yugoslav women for failing to produce large families that would further expand the Serb nation.

A speech by Milošević in 1989, commemorating the 600th anniversary of The Battle of Kosovo, rallied supporters and renewed attention to the possibility of establishing an independent Serb nation through force, if necessary.⁸³ Over the next few years, Milošević consolidated power, as “a wildfire of nationalism” swept Serbia (Ramet 2006: 363). Economic strife continued and inflation reached 800-900 percent (Ramet 2006: 363). In this context, the radical Serb Četnik movement was revived, using the old slogans, flags, uniforms, and dress from the World War II era. As the Soviet Union and other Communist regimes collapsed in Eastern Europe, independent political parties emerged in Yugoslavia and began to challenge the dominance of the Communist Party (Malcolm 1996: 215). Bosnia, Slovenia, and Croatia held multi-party elections in 1990, formally loosening the hold of Belgrade and the Yugoslav state over its constituent regions. The Communist Party across all Yugoslav countries suffered many setbacks in 1990, and a host of nationalist political parties emerged. In September 1991, the independent Belgrade weekly magazine *Vreme* published details of a Serb plan to annex portions of Bosnia (Ramet 2005: 11).

Women also experienced political setbacks with the disintegration of socialism. In the 1990 elections in Bosnia the women's quota was abandoned, and women were elected to merely 2.92 percent of the seats, and 5 percent in the municipal assemblies—down from 24 percent and 17 percent respectively from the 1986 elections (Cockburn 2001: 22). The proportion of women in the Serbian Parliament decreased from 23.5 percent to 1.6 percent (Milićević 2006: 271). This followed trends in the rest of the socialist world, as the fall of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries saw a massive decrease in the participation of women in politics (Gal and Kligman 2000).

One exception in this trend was Biljana Plavšić, the nationalist Serb representative in the tripartite Bosnian presidency before the war. In fact, Serb nationalist political parties often had women's branches, many of which grew in strength in the pre-war era. The Movement of Women for Yugoslavia, for example, was a militarist women's organization. The vast majority of members were women relatives of high-ranking men in the Yugoslav National Army (*Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija*, or JNA) or other Serbian forces. Sometimes called the “women in fur coats,” this group organized to rally people for war and demand the punishment of people who deserted the army. Biljana Plavšić led another pro-war women's organization, The Central Circle of Serbian Sisters (*Kolo Srpskih Sestara*). These women's organizations were pro-natalist, encouraging Serb women to replace any Serb men lost in the war with one hundred new ones (Zajović 2013: 80). Childbearing became a form of national defense.

WAR BEGINS

In June 1991, Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence from Yugoslavia, citing Serbia's territorial aggression. The morning after Slovenia's declaration, a column

of JNA tanks entered the country. Within a month, both countries were engaged in full-scale war against the JNA. The UN implemented an arms embargo in September 1991 in hopes of preventing the further spread of conflict. Instead, arms began pouring into Bosnia. Within Bosnia, Bosniaks (a new term for Bosnian Muslims), Serbs, and Croats each formed paramilitary groups and defense forces.

While the war in Croatia raged, Bosnia held a referendum on independence from Yugoslavia. Over 99 percent of those voting (63 percent of those eligible to vote) voted in favor of independence. Bosnian Serbs mostly boycotted the referendum.⁸⁴ On March 3, 1992, Bosnia officially declared its independence. Around this time, “Bosniak” became a new term to refer to Bosnian Muslims, whether they were religious or not. A large rally for peace was held in Sarajevo a few days later. Alija Izetbegović, the Bosniak leader of the nationalist Part of Democratic Action (SDA), aimed to appease Serbia by authorizing the “federal” Yugoslavian army (JNA) to confiscate the weaponry held by Bosnian territorial defense units (Human Rights Watch 1994a). This left much of Bosnian territory undefended from the onslaught that was about to begin. Despite various similar efforts that aimed to resolve Serbia’s territorial aims peacefully, it was clear that war was imminent. When the U.S. and the European community recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina as a sovereign state shortly thereafter, Serbian forces launched a coordinated assault. Their aims were simple: to reclaim much of Bosnian territory for Serbia, and expel all non-Serbs from the land.

The military attack on Bosnia was perpetrated by a series of different actors. Like in Rwanda, these actors included both the official state military, as well as paramilitary and irregular troops that were controlled by political elites. In Bosnia the Yugoslav

National Army (JNA), under control of President Milošević and the government in Belgrade, was primarily comprised of seasoned career military officials, mostly from Serbia, and a mix of conscripted soldiers from across the Balkans. Radovan Karadžić and his Serb Democratic Party (SDS) led the Bosnian Serb Army, which was based within Bosnia. A host of paramilitary forces and irregular militias also operated during the war, many of which were linked to criminal networks. Nearly every political party appears to have had a paramilitary group on its payroll (Woodward 1995: 254). Yet because Bosnia had been part of Yugoslavia, it did not have its own national army to defend its territorial integrity. Izetbegović and Bosniak officials therefore rapidly organized informal territorial defense units. The Bosniak political party also organized the Green Berets, a paramilitary group based out of Sarajevo (Woodward 1995: 254).

On April 6, 1992, Serb snipers opened fire on a peace demonstration in Sarajevo.⁸⁵ At the same time, the JNA, the Bosnian Serb army, and other paramilitary forces invaded Bosnia. Karadžić promised a swift victory, even stating that the war might be over in six days. To achieve that goal, a campaign of terror was launched across the country. Bombing started in several places, including in Banja Luka, Bosanski Brod, Foča, and Mostar (Malcolm 1996: 235). Paramilitary groups began to pillage villages, rape women, kill men, and terrorize the population. Many of their atrocities were fueled by alcohol and a masculine drinking culture. The strategy was designed to get Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) or Croats (Bosnian Catholics) to leave Serb-controlled parts of the country on their own. Arkan's "Tigers," a mafia-linked criminal organization commanded by Željko Ražnjatović, was particularly notorious for its brutality. Ražnjatović was a criminal who was wanted by Interpol for organizing surveillance and

assassinations of Yugoslav émigrés in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s (Ramet 1992, 261; Malcolm 1996: 266; Mann 2005: 404). His group of “Tigers” was comprised largely of soccer hooligans (Mueller 2000: 50). In northeastern Bosnia, the Tigers took control of cities like Bijelina and Banja Luka. They functioned essentially as mercenaries: Serb political parties employed them to wreak terror on the population by leaving dead bodies in the streets, cutting utility services, and roaming the city with rocket-propelled grenade launchers and other heavy weaponry (Malcolm 1996: 236; Mueller 2000). They targeted Muslim leaders, wealthy business owners, and intellectuals, summarily executing many of them in public, as they aimed eliminate threats to their control and instill fear in the non-Serb population (Silber and Little 1997). Other paramilitary groups—such as Jovic’s “White Eagles” and Seselk’s Četniks—waged similar campaigns terror on the non-Serb population. Within weeks, Serb forces controlled approximately 70 percent of Bosnia.

In Rwanda, paramilitary and irregular militias wreaked similar terror on the population, but ultimately aspired to kill all Tutsis within the country’s borders. In contrast, Serb paramilitary and irregular military units were primarily focused on driving non-Serbs from Serb-controlled land—it was not, strictly speaking, a genocidal strategy, but rather one of murderous ethnic cleansing designed to force Muslims and Croats to flee (Mann 2005: 395). A new word for “ethnic cleansing” emerged: *etničko čišćenje* (Petrović 1994; Silber and Little 1997: 244; Shaw 2007: 49). Ustaše fascists had used the word *čišćenje*, or cleansing, during World War II to describe the expulsion of Serbs from certain areas under their control (Shaw 2007: 49). To “cleanse” the land, Serb paramilitaries created panic and terror and destroyed markers of Muslim culture.

Nationalist politicians also employed these paramilitaries in order to convince Serb civilians in Bosnia that their Muslim neighbors posed a “threat” (Malcolm 1996: 237)—echoing the tactics of Hutu extremists in Rwanda. Politicians and extremist media sources used narratives harkening back to Serb persecution during the World War II, and Serb authorities even dug up mass graves from World War II as evidence of the persecution Serbs had faced at the hands of their Croat and Muslim neighbors in the recent past (Ramet 2005). In myriad social arenas—including sports, newspapers and radio, and even folk music—Serb leadership expressed the sentiment that they had been persecuted throughout history and were the “Jews of the Balkans” (Ramet 2005: 17). Media distortions of Serbs as victims were common. For instance, Serbian television aired video of Serbs killing Croats, but declared that the videos were instead of Ustaše atrocities against Serbs during World War II (Mann 2005: 400). Serb elites were vocal about their concerns of an Islamic jihad, and they disseminated the idea that Bosniak elites were marking non-Muslims for death. Rumors even circulated that Muslim Bosnians had drawn up “death lists” of Serb citizens, prompting many ordinary Serbs to support the brutal tactics used by paramilitaries (Mann 2005: 398).

The war throughout Bosnia took on local dynamics—strictly speaking, it was a series of distinct conflicts with featuring different alliances and actors (Moore 2013: 42). According to Michael Mann, “Those who were good at violence rose to the top in all the communities when ethnic war erupted” (2005: 418). This meant that some regions of the country experienced particularly heavy violence, while others were virtually undisturbed. Sarajevo, for example, was subjected to a low-intensity siege that lasted for years, while other parts of the country experienced rapid ethnic cleansing over the course of a few

days or weeks. Serb forces were covertly armed through trafficking networks within Yugoslavia; many of the weapons used in the violence were smuggled in from Belgrade despite the international arms embargo (Cigar 1995).

In addition to Sarajevo, two regions that experienced heavy violence serve as the focus of the research in subsequent parts of this project. In the northwest, the Krajina region around Banja Luka was home to many Muslims but was deemed an essential part of the territory linking Serb-controlled regions to Serbia. In the northeast, the Drina Valley region was also deemed politically important because it bordered Serbia. Both experienced high levels of violence during the war, with death tolls second only to Sarajevo (Moore 2013: 43). Non-Serbs who lived in these areas were subject to especially brutal treatment by Serb authorities. As the war broke out, they were fired from their jobs, harassed, profiled, and assaulted. Random episodes of violence frequently broke out. Military units and paramilitary groups—often drunk, loosely organized groups of opportunistic marauders—did the vast majority of the killing, although some civilians did occasionally join in (Mueller 2000). Fearing that Serb persecution would only worsen, hundreds of thousands of non-Serbs in these regions turned over their houses, money, and property in exchange for safe passage to Bosnian Army-controlled parts of the country, or to neighboring Croatia.⁸⁶

Siege of Sarajevo

The war in Sarajevo featured remarkably different dynamics than in other parts of the country. Before the war, Sarajevo boasted an educated, secular urban population of approximately 500,000. As many as forty percent of all marriages in the city were between couples of mixed nationality (Dizdarevic 1993: 6).⁸⁷ Many Americans had been

introduced to the city during the 1984 Winter Olympics, as they watched Katerina Witt and Scott Hamilton take home gold medals in figure skating for Germany and the U.S., respectively.

Most accounts of the war's beginnings in Sarajevo indicate that up until the shelling started, most citizens did not believe that war could ever occur in their multi-ethnic, secular city, where Serbs, Muslims, and Croats had lived together as neighbors for centuries. Radovan Karadžić, the President of the newly-established Bosnian Serb Republic, warned Sarajevans that if Bosnia were to declare independence, he would attack, adding that “the hell in Bosnia-Hercegovina will be one hundred times worse [than in Croatia] and will bring about the disappearance of the Muslim nation” (quoted in Udovički and Stitkovac 1997: 179). Nevertheless, many Sarajevans poked fun at Karadžić's provincial roots in Montenegro—he was seen as a backwards “*seljačina*” (a pejorative term for villagers or peasants unfamiliar with city ways)—and thereby did not take his threats seriously until the attacks began (Silber and Little 1997: 226). Alija Izetbegović, the Bosniak President, was certain that Karadžić and Milošević were just posturing, and that they would be satisfied with territories they could gain without bloodshed. As such, few defense systems for the city were initially put in place. The citizens of Sarajevo generally opposed the war. Residents frequently organized peace protests, where women and men chanted, “We want to live together” and carried pictures of Tito and banners displaying his “Brotherhood and Unity” slogan (Udovički and Štitkovac 1997: 182).

Nationalist Serb forces surrounded Sarajevo in April 1992 and began a siege of the city that would become the longest siege of a capital city in modern history, totaling

1,425 days. Located in a valley between steep mountains and hills, Sarajevo is in an extremely vulnerable geographic position. Serb forces dug into the mountains and foothills surrounding the city and the rugged terrain granted Serb attackers superior artillery positions (Andreas 2008). The siege was widely covered by journalists from all over the world, and Sarajevo had the infrastructure in place to accommodate foreign reporters. For instance, the famed Holiday Inn—located in the heart of what was to become known as “sniper’s ally”—became a hotbed of international journalism.

The siege began with six weeks of daily shelling. Izetbegović and other Bosniak political elites organized a new Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina with a Sarajevo Corps, in addition to the Green Beret paramilitary, which was comprised of ordinary men and local gang members. However, the UN arms embargo prevented these defense forces from accessing heavy weaponry. As a result, criminal gangs played a key role in the city’s defense, especially in the first few weeks of the siege (Burg and Shoup 1999: 138; Andreas 2008). Mušan “Caco” Topalović, a gangster and former rock musician, became the commander of the Bosnian Army’s 10th Mountain Brigade, which ruthlessly defended Sarajevo against Serb forces—while also engaging in smuggling, racketeering, rape, and murder (Mann 2005: 418). Serb forces fired thousands of shells and mortar rounds that fell indiscriminately on Sarajevo’s skyline—from historic buildings, to structures that had been specially constructed for the 1984 Olympics, to the towering apartment complexes built during the socialist era. No structure was spared. Food supplies and links to the outside world were soon cut off. Serb forces took control of the airport, preventing anyone from flying in or out. Prominent buildings like the library, the post office, the town hall, and the luxurious Hotel Europa were set ablaze. Shelling was seemingly at

random and designed to force the population's flight, although Bosnian forces refused to allow people to leave the city if they could feasibly assist in its defense. They feared that if they allowed free flight, nobody would remain to defend the city (Human Rights Watch 1994c). A black-market cabal sprung up, regulating food rations within the city and keeping prices high (Silber and Little 1997: 254). UNHCR directed relief operations in the city, which were far from sufficient. Sarajevo's residents found water at the Sarajevo Brewery, which happened to sit upon a large underground spring (field notes 2012; Burg and Shoup 1999). Residents walked to the Brewery from all across the Bosnian-controlled parts of the city—risking sniper fire—to get water. Residents eventually constructed a tunnel under the front line that allowed food to be transported in and outside of the city. This tunnel became the city's lifeline throughout the siege, as critical food and medical supplies were smuggled in underneath the Serb front line.

Destroy and Create

During the siege, there were many examples of resistance, previewing some of the war-caused shifts I discuss in the following chapters. When militaries erected barricades throughout the city, women set up “counter-barricades,” where they served traditional Bosnian food like čevapčići and burek as a way of rejecting the war (Udovički and Štitković 1997: 182). People of different ethnicities in neighborhoods like Dobrinje or Butmir that were on the front line of the conflict joined together to defend their homes. An underground art scene emerged, and theater performances—often poking fun at the absurdity of war—were popular. Artists created public art installations made from cars, buildings, and other machinery destroyed by aerial shelling (Sarajevo Survival Guide 1993). A vibrant nightclub scene flourished, reflecting an escapist attitude common

among Sarajevans—people would drink and dance all night until it seemed safer to go home in the light of morning (Gjelten 1995; multiple interviews).

One powerful example of arts as resistance during the war was in the staging of the musical “Hair” in Sarajevo’s Chamber Theater. Based on the hippie counterculture during the Vietnam War era, Hair made reference to the morbid repetition of war in this world. Sarajevans could see themselves as sharing a similar experience as those fighting conscription to fight in Vietnam (Maček 2000: 56). Humor also became a form of resistance to the war. A common joke went, “[H]ow does a smart Bosnian call a stupid one? From a phone abroad!” (Maček 2000: 52). This joke expressed the core dilemma that many Sarajevans faced about whether or not they should flee the city.

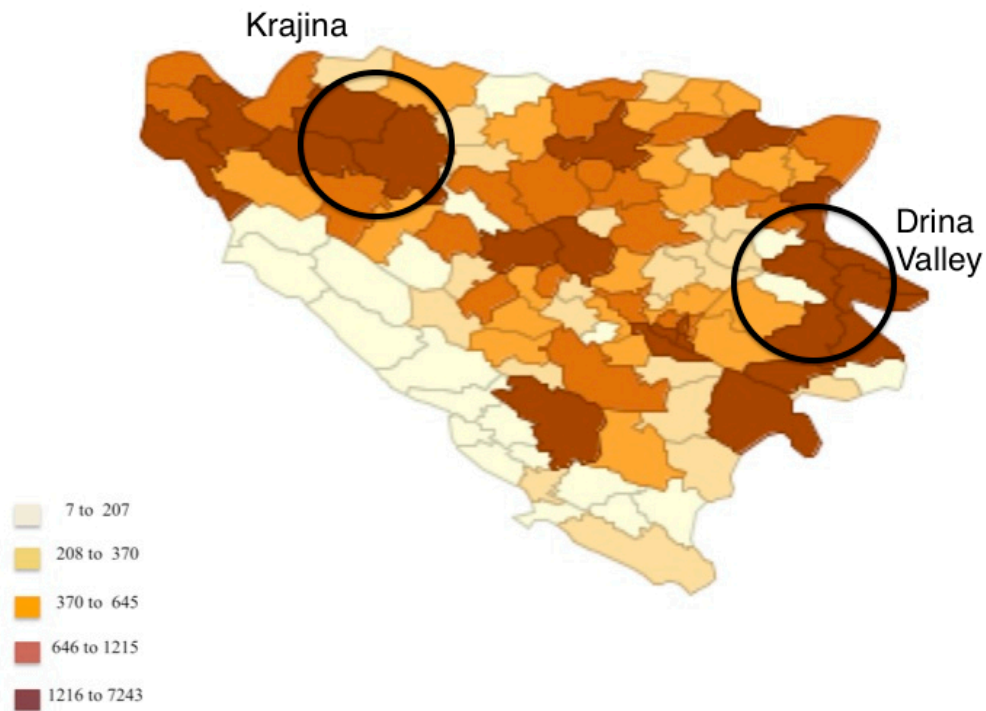
Further, a satirical “Sarajevo Survival Guide” was produced in 1993, which humorously captured the plight of the city’s residents. Written in the style of a Michelin travel guide, it purported to give readers tips on how to survive during the siege. The guide poked fun at the shortage of food in the city, noting, “Combined with rice, and well seasoned, everything becomes edible. Each person in Sarajevo is very close to [being] an ideal macrobiotician, a real role-model for the health-conscious, diet-troubled West.” The Survival Guide included a “Cookbook for War,” which featured recipes such as “Canned mackerel floating in humanitarian aid,” “Bread-crumbs pate” and “Grape Leaves (or some other tasty leaves) stuffed with rice.”⁸⁸ *Oslobodjenje* (“Liberation”), Sarajevo’s daily newspaper, also continued to publish during the war and decried the nationalist politics that had consumed the country. Its offices were eventually shelled to the point of collapse, forcing the paper to move its offices underground. Nevertheless, it managed to continue circulating a new edition every day. In doing so it provided a critical service, as

“it provided information in a city starved for it, and it survived as a relic of prewar life in a city desperate to remember normal times” (Gjelten 1995: 14).

On February 5, 1994, a mortar shell landed on a packed market in downtown Sarajevo. Sixty-nine people were killed—all civilians—and more than 200 were wounded. This event came at the close of a month in which shelling had been particularly destructive, as a school and a stadium of soccer fans had already been hit (Burg and Shoup 1999: 145). As a result, the U.S. began pushing hard for NATO to intervene. France followed suit. Before long, NATO issued Serb leadership an ultimatum: they had to implement a ceasefire and establish a buffer around the city where heavy weapons could not exist, or else risk air-strikes from NATO warplanes (Silber and Little: 313-15; Malcolm 1996: 255).

Despite this threat, another mortar attack on August 28, 1995 killed 37 people at a market in Sarajevo. The UN and NATO responded by demanding that the Serb army, led by Ratko Mladić, withdraw their artillery from the “exclusion zone.” Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary General, condemned the attack and called on military investigators to “investigate the attack and take appropriate action immediately” (quoted in Silber and Little 365). Izetbegović was thrilled, as he finally received the international involvement he had been calling for since the beginning of the war. When Mladić refused to comply, NATO began air strikes against Serb military installations (Malcolm 1996: 266). After two weeks of continuous bombardment, Mladić capitulated, and withdrew most of his heavy weaponry from the zone around Sarajevo. The longest siege in modern history was nearly over, although more than 11,500 people had perished.

Figure 8. Rates of Killing by District in Bosnia-Herzegovina with Focus Regions



Map courtesy of Nyseth Brehm (2014)

Bosanska Krajina

The dynamics of war outside Sarajevo were very different. As home to Banja Luka, second largest city in Bosnia, the Krajina region was essential to the Serb military strategy and was host to some of the bloodiest violence during the war. Prior to the war, the region was comprised of approximately 44 percent Serbs, 40 percent Bosniaks, 7 percent Croats, and 5 percent “Yugoslavs” (Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991). This translated to an estimated 550,000 Bosniak and Croat citizens. As the site of massive ethnic expulsions and killings during the war, by June 1994, fewer

than 50,000 of these non-Serbs remained (Human Rights Watch 1994d). By 1997, this number had decreased to fewer than 20,000 (Human Rights Watch 1997).

The organization of ethnic cleansing in the region was much more bureaucratic than in Rwanda. As Serb forces took control, every town or city opened a “Bureau for Population Exchange.” Non-Serbs were required to register their land and property at these offices, often surrendering all claims to their belongings as a prerequisite to submitting a request for permission to leave the area (Silber and Little 246). In general, Serb authorities only granted women and children permission to leave an occupied area (Human Rights Watch 1994d). Serb leadership often asked non-Serbs to sign an “oath of loyalty” to the Serb leadership. In towns like Prijedor, authorities required non-Serbs to wear a white armband in public and to hang white towels from their houses to signal that a Bosniak or Croat family lived there. Non-Serbs were also placed under a curfew and were forbidden to do things like gather in groups, drive cars, or congregate in public places (Power 2003: 250). Tabiha, who lived in a town near Prijedor, explained, “if you did not wear [a white armband], and you went outside, they would catch you. If you were not Serbian and you did not wear it, they would beat the hell out of you or kill you” (Interview #52 5/27/2013; see also Human Rights Watch 1992).

A campaign of terror throughout the region began in earnest in April 1992. Paramilitary groups went door-to-door and terrorized the population—several days of killing near Prijedor and the surrounding area left an estimated 5,000 people (almost all men) dead. Militias razed mosques and Catholic churches, attempting to symbolically purify the land for new Serb inhabitants. In May 1992, Serb forces killed hundreds—if not thousands—of people in Kozarac, a predominantly Bosniak town. One witness to this

massacre described how “blood ran red in the streets” (field notes from therapy group, Prijedor, 4/9/2013). Many Bosniaks and Croats—mostly women and children—did all they could to escape the region. Some left with no warning at all, grabbing their most valuable possessions and traveling on foot to Croatia or south to Travnik, a town controlled by the Bosnian army. Those granted formal permission to leave could travel by bus or train, if they had the financial resources to pay for exit tolls and tickets. Others decided to stay put, feeling that the risk of death was preferable to leaving their homes and property—although this often meant certain death. Croatia eventually shut the door to further refugees, trapping many non-Serbs in the Krajina region. Non-Serb men who remained were often sent to work in labor camps where they were effectively used as slave labor (Human Rights Watch 1994d). Others were sent to the concentration camps. Roy Gutman, the first journalist to document the existence of the camps during the war, revealed their horror to the world. Writing for *Newsday* on August 2, 1992, Gutman wrote that:

In one concentration camp, a former iron-mining complex at Omarska in northwest Bosnia, more than a thousand Muslim and Croat civilians were held in metal cages without sanitation, adequate food, exercise or access to the outside world... (Gutman 1993: 44-45).

Besides Omarska, several other detention camps gained notoriety—including Trnopolje and Manjaca, which were largely transit camps, and Keraterm, another concentration camp (Udovički and Štitković 1997). Serb forces set up many more small, temporary detention centers throughout the country. Some estimates put the number of camps in the country as high as 677, although most of these were small, temporary detainment facilities like schools or houses. Camps became the site of myriad atrocities, including

murder, torture, and the brutal rape of men and women. In many camps prisoners were starved and forced to wallow in their own excrement (Human Rights Watch 1992).

Unlike Nazi death camps, these camps were not designed to exterminate non-Serbs, although death was certainly possible. Rather, they were designed to dehumanize the population and prevent men of military age from picking up arms against Serb forces. Gutman's reports were instrumental in bringing international attention to the camps and later won him a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting. A British television crew and The Guardian's Ed Vulliamy were also able to capture images of emaciated prisoners in Trnopolje and Omarska, prompting widespread condemnation and shifting international opinions towards favoring military intervention (Power 2003: 276; Vulliamy 2012). The images of these camps led the UN Security Council to rally the international community against the war and to authorize military action, which ultimately compelled the Serb leadership to shut down the camps (Gutman 1993: 63; Power 2003: 270-72).

The violence in the Krajina region died down by 1994; by that point, the majority of non-Serbs had been expelled from the region. Many non-Serbs who were pushed out of cities like Prijedor and Banja Luka settled in territory controlled by the Bosnian-army, such as in Sanski Most or further south in Travnik.

War in the Drina Valley

The region around the Drina Valley in northeastern Bosnia also experienced intense violence during the war. The Drina River flows between Serbia and Bosnia and has provided a territorial border between the two states for a thousand years. Serbian nationalists and folklore, however, referred to it as the "backbone of the Serbian national body" (Bećirević 2014). The goal of "Greater Serbia" included expanding Serbian

territory across the river. The towns of Zvornik, Vlasenica, Bratunac, Foča, Višegrad, and Srebrenica are all in this region. While the Srebrenica massacre is well known, much of the violence that unfolded in this region was also brutal and severe.

The offensive in the Drina Valley began immediately after Bosnia's declaration of independence. Violence began as the JNA cut off travel on the major roads in the region. Non-Serbs were ordered to turn over their weapons. The violence then followed a predictable pattern. Paramilitary groups—including Arkan's Tigers, the White Eagles, and Serb Territorial Defense units—supported the JNA in attacking Zvornik. Bosnian army guerrilla forces retaliated, particularly in the Tuzla-Zvorik and Bratunac areas (Burg and Shoup 1999). Serb citizens were sheltered, while non-Serbs were targeted for looting and sporadic murder. Violence escalated as houses were burnt down and non-Serbs were killed indiscriminately. Arkan's snipers shot at people from the roof of tall buildings, generating fear and uncertainty (Bećirević 2014: 91). After Serb forces took control of a city, they installed a local government that discriminated against Bosniak (Muslim) residents, confiscating their property or forcing their expulsion. Similar patterns of violence occurred in other towns and cities in the region. Concentration camps in Foča, Sušica, and elsewhere replicated those in the Krajina region, as non-Serbs were detained in miserable conditions, subjected to serial rape, forced labor, torture and even death (Bećirević 1994: 122).

The Drina valley is infamous for the slaughter of 8,000 men and boys at Srebrenica in July 1995. As Serbian forces gained control of much of the territory in the Drina valley, Srebrenica and the towns of Žepa and Goražde became Muslim-controlled enclaves within Serb territory. Srebrenica is a small town built around a silver mine,

located approximately nine miles from the border of Serbia. In the beginning of the war, the town had been the site of an early Serb defeat at the hands of a local Bosniak militia, in which approximately 400 Serbs were killed (Burg and Shoup 1999: 133). As a result, the area had become a safe-haven for approximately 40,000 non-Serbs within ever-expanding Serb territory. Bosnian territorial defense units, led by Naser Orić, had periodically used the enclave for “hit-and-run” raids against Serb forces (Silber and Little 1997: 346; Burg and Shoup 1999: 140). In 1993 Philip Morillon, the UN Force Commander, visited Srebrenica and declared it a “UN Safe Zone,” although such safety could not be enforced militarily under the UN’s commitment to neutrality.⁸⁹ Serb forces surrounded Srebrenica for most of the war, and thus denizens of Srebrenica lived in a precarious state of hunger and violence. They depended on aid deliveries from UNHCR, although conditions deteriorated as the war continued.

Eventually, Serb commanders gave the UN an ultimatum: either force the Muslims in Srebrenica to surrender and evacuate the town, or prepare for a military onslaught. The UN decided to help evacuate an estimated 60,000 people in order to save them from Serb military assault. In June 1995, however, Orić and his small group of local defenders attacked a Serbian outpost, which provided the excuse Serb forces needed to launch an assault on the enclave to permanently secure the land (Silber and Little 1997: 346).

On July 6, 1995, Serb forces under the command of General Mladić began aggressively shelling Srebrenica. Reports from the attack detail how Serb forces took women from the crowd raped them in a nearby battery factory. The Dutch UN peacekeepers were put in an untenable position, as they were charged with protecting the

civilian population but were forbidden from engaging in force against the advancing Serb forces. There were also some reports that Dutch peacekeepers were guilty of raping women seeking their protection (Amnesty International 2009). After NATO refused to bomb the advancing Serb forces, the Dutch peacekeepers withdrew to the primary UN base at Potočari, a small town adjacent to Srebrenica. Tens of thousands of civilians—primarily women, children, and the elderly—went with them, seeking safety. Eventually many of these civilians were loaded onto busses and taken to Tuzla. Approximately 15,000 men abandoned the safe haven through the forest, fearing they would be killed when Serbs took control of the area. This group passed through minefields on the way to Tuzla where they hoped to find safety. But Serb forces began to hunt down those who had escaped. Between July 11th and 14th, Serb forces rounded up an estimated 7,000-8,000 of these men, loaded them on trucks, and then brought them to clearings in the forest where they were summarily executed (Silber and Little 1997: 345-50; Power 2003: 391-405). This massacre was the darkest point of the war and was ultimately revealed to be the largest massacre on European soil since World War II.

In an attempt to hide evidence of the massacre, Serb forces buried and then reburied many of the bodies, often moving mass graves with bulldozers and other heavy machinery. As a result, many dead bodies were decapitated or otherwise severed into multiple pieces after the initial burial (field notes 2013; meetings with ICMP officials). During my fieldwork I visited the ICMP identification facility in Tuzla, which contains the partial remains of dozens of those killed in massacres in the region. Some bodies have just a single bone; others are missing a skull or other parts. The postmortem decapitation of bodies posed significant challenges for identifying the dead and seeking justice in the

aftermath. The demographic losses in the region meant that a huge number of Bosnian women lost multiple male relatives—sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers. I discuss the impact of these demographic losses in Chapters 6 and 7.

Third Front

A third front of the war is also important to briefly mention, although it is not a focus of the analysis that follows. This front was not between Serbs and non-Serbs, but rather between Croat (Catholic) and Bosniak (Muslim) forces. Tudjman, the President of Croatia, conspired with Serbia's Milošević early in the war to divide Bosnia into Croat and Serb portions. The Croat part of the state, called Herceg-Bosna, encompassed much of Herzegovina and western Bosnia. There are debates in the scholarship about who was the aggressor of the violence in this region. Shrader (2003), for instance, argues that the Bosnian Army was the aggressor, while Silber and Little (1997) note that Croatian territorial ambitions in Bosnia motivated aggression on the part of Bosnian Croat forces (see Ramet 2005 for a discussion).

Everyone agrees that most of the fighting on this front occurred in the Lašva Valley (to the north and west of Sarajevo) and in the Neretva valley near Mostar. In this region, the Bosnian Croat Army (*Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane* or HVO) was controlled from Zagreb and dominated by the Croatian Army. Croat leaders claimed that much of the southern part of Bosnia (most of it in Herzegovina) belonged to Croatia, and Bosniaks were told to go to Iraq or Turkey (Mann 2005: 409; citing the Blaskic trial 9/26/1997). In Mostar, Croatian forces bombed the city in an attempt to partition it between Muslim and Croatian sides. The town's Turkish quarter was destroyed in the shelling, as was the

famous Old Bridge (Stari Most)—widely considered the most impressive and beautiful structure in the Balkans (Udovički and Šitkovic 1997: 194).

Croats and Bosniak forces both committed violence and looting during this phase of the conflict. Croat forces committed several large-scale massacres of Muslims, such as in the Ahmići massacre in April 1993, during which Croat forces killed an estimated 116 Bosniaks and destroyed Bosniak-owned houses and mosques (Silber and Little 1997: 329; Mann 2005: 413). In September 1993, Bosniak forces massacred an estimated 60 Croats in Uzdol and elsewhere in the area (Cigar 1995: 137). Overt hostilities between Muslims and Croats came to a close in 1994 when both sides signed a cease-fire agreement that put plans in place for a federation between the two parties.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Like in Rwanda, in all of the war's varied fronts, rape and sexualized violence were systematic. While women were particularly targeted for sexualized violence and received the bulk of the media attention devoted to the issue, many men were subjected to it as well (Žarkov 2001).⁹⁰ Sexual violence followed nationalist ideologies that saw the violation of female bodies as the ultimate defeat of the Muslim nation (Brownmiller 1994; Mostov 1995; Skjelsbaek 2006). Concentration camps or detention centers served as brothels for militants. Rapes were a formal military tactic, as soldiers were ordered to rape by their commanding officers (ICTY testimonies; Amnesty International 1993). Women of all ages were targeted, including pregnant women and some middle-aged women; however, attractive, young, wealthy, and educated women were the most frequent targets (Gutman 1993: 69; Mostov 1995). Militias forced men to rape their wives or mothers while the rest of their family watched as an attempt to emasculate their

male relatives, who were helpless to intervene. Forced pregnancies were another strategy, as non-Serb women were detained in rape camps, impregnated, and then released after their pregnancy had progressed to the point that abortion was no longer possible (Helms 2013: 58). Once released, these women were a living message to their communities—their attackers warned them that they would now be forced to give birth to a Četnik who would ultimately turn on her and her community (Helms 2013: 58).

This horrendous campaign was an essential part of the military strategy aimed at terrifying non-Serbs into leaving Serb-controlled parts of the country. As feminist author Catherine MacKinnon put it,

...mass rape is a tool, a tactic, a policy, a plan, a strategy, as well as a practice...rape to kill and to make you leave your home and never want to go back...it is rape to drive a wedge through a community, to shatter a society, to destroy a people. It is rape as genocide (1994: 8-9, 12).

Women are conceived of in nationalist imaginings as the bearers of the future of the nation (Mostov 1995). With these war rapes, Serb forces in particular aimed to damage women's future ability to serve as "mothers" of the Bosnian nation, as any children born of rape would be Serbs. One woman I interviewed described how she was raped after taunting a Serb soldier that she had two sons who were alive who had fled the country, so that he couldn't "get them" (Interview #25, Aida, 4/27/2013). As she put it, "I told my neighbor that he could rape and kill me but I had kids and they would eventually come back." Men were also victims of sexualized violence, which aimed to emasculate them. Serb militias often forced non-Serb men to rape each other.

The worst perpetrators of sexualized violence were Serb paramilitaries, who often wore long beards and dressed in the style of World War II Chetnik militias. They proudly displayed *kokarda* emblems on their clothes: the classic crest features a two-headed eagle

and four stylized “Cs” symbolizing the extremist slogan, “Only Unity Saves the Serbs” (*Samo Sloga Srbina Spasava*, or in Cyrillic, Само слога Србина спасава). Many accounts of rape reported by Human Rights Watch or during the ICTY hearings characterized these men as dirty—sometimes covered in blood—and intoxicated. Moreover, some women reported that rapists took small white pills before the rapes, supposedly to enhance their virility. Serb leaders like Milošević and Karadžić rejected reports that their militias were engaged in systematic rape of non-Serb women. They responded by blaming Muslim women for being temptresses who seduced men into their beds, and alleged that Muslims were selling Serb women to be slaves in the Middle East (Cigar 1995: 93).

The use of sexualized violence as a tactic in the Bosnian war had important implications for the treatment of women in the war’s aftermath, particularly as evidence about mass rapes in Rwanda emerged around the same time. International agencies and journalists who learned of the widespread rape of women began focusing extensive resources and attention to this issue (Slapšak 2001: 174-175). Roy Gutman, in particular, wrote dozens of stories in *Newsday* recounting graphic rapes that survivors had described to him. These stories were sometimes accompanied by an image of various “victims”—in other words, poor, displaced, crying Muslim women. Titles of these photographs reprinted in his book (Gutman 1993) included “Tuzle: Distraught, hurt, angry. Rape victims from Brezovo Polje” or simply “Rape Victim from Brezovo Polje.” Such depictions immediately brought an international gaze of pity to women in Bosnia. Pope John Paul II even chimed in, urging women who became pregnant from rape to accept their children, rather than seek an abortion (Nikolić-Ristanović 1998: 236). This

international involvement suggested that women were agency-less victims with no control over their situation. They were depicted as Bosniak victims needing to be saved, as people who had had their lives ruined by Serbs. International journalists were not alone in exploiting the image of raped women to sell newspapers. Bosnian politicians also made reference to widespread sexual violence in their appeals for international military assistance, and even the Bosnian Ambassador to the UN declared in 1993 that “Bosnia-Herzegovina is being gang-raped” (quoted in Helms 2013: 82).

Such depictions undoubtedly contain some truth. And yet as I show in Chapters 8, these depictions are not neutral; they were political—and ultimately depoliticizing—for women. Women who were identified as being raped were stigmatized, shunned, and effectively banned from their communities. “Rape victim” became their foremost identity in the eyes of the west and its humanitarian aid interlocutors (see Mertus 1994; Cockburn 2001). By 1998, raped women were eligible for financial support from the Bosnian government—and yet to receive the funds, they had to register as “rape victims” and meet several other requirements. Many of these women, however, articulated their experience not as victimization, but rather as surviving.⁹¹ Focusing on rape victims created a perverse hierarchy of victimhood in which women who had experienced sexualized violence were elevated above those who had not. Moreover, the global media depicted Bosniak women as the *most* victimized, while Serb and Croat victims of sexual violence were deemed *lesser* victims. This was due to the debate over genocide, in which rape was conceptualized as only directed against Muslims. In Chapter 8, I discuss various reasons that this focus on victims of sexual assault was problematic and shaped the way women were able to organize in the aftermath.

WAR COMES TO AN END

By the end of the war in 1995, fighting had left approximately 107,000 dead (Research and Documentation Center 2007). This amounted to around 2.5 percent of the pre-war population. Ninety percent of the dead were men, 80 percent were Bosniaks, and 45 percent were soldiers (Bougarel 2006). An estimated 1.2 million people emigrated to neighboring countries to seek refuge, and an additional one million people were displaced within Bosnia's borders. Monetary damages caused by the war were estimated to be between \$50-70 billion (World Bank 1997).

The war violence in Yugoslavia came to an end with the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (technically, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina) on November 21, 1995.⁹² The agreement provided a new constitution, guaranteed the safe return of refugees, and outlined a plan for the presence of international peacekeeping troops to oversee the peace (Malcolm 1996: 268; International Crisis Group 2000). It also made Bosnia a signatory to all major international human rights treaties, including CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) and moreover granted the international community the legal framework to intervene in Bosnia in response to certain crisis situations.

Most significantly, the accords established a consociational state in Bosnia that divided the country into two entities: 51 percent of the territory of Bosnia was included in a Muslim-Croat Federation, while the other 49 percent was codified as a semi-autonomous Serb Republic, called Republika Srpska. Sarajevo remained intact and was included in the Federation territory, although Serb-held parts of the city and several outlying suburbs were carved out as part of the Republika Srpska. Each entity was given its own parliament, executive branch, police force, army, and bureaucratic institutions.

Overseeing the union was a weak central state government, which consists of a rotating tripartite presidency with Serb, Croat, and Bosniak representatives. In addition, the agreement prescribed the central state a parliament and a council of ministers. The vast majority of laws and policies, however, would be determined within the two entities. Ultimately this created five levels of government in Bosnia: state, entity, canon, city, and municipality. Ethnic and regional quotas were implemented in state institutions at all levels of government. An “Office of the High Representative” (OHR), appointed by the European Union, would oversee the implementation of this new system. The OHR had few powers of enforcement, but was charged with monitoring and advising the implementation of the accords and mediating between the various nationalist parties.⁹³ The Accords also assigned sixty thousand international troops under NATO command to supervise the implementation of the peace agreement (Malcolm 1996: 270). During subsequent multilateral conferences, foreign countries pledged reconstruction and recovery assistance (Evans-Kent and Bleiker 2003).

Map 5. Dayton Divisions of Bosnia-Herzegovina



Ultimately, the entire structure of the Dayton Accords was premised on the false understanding that “ancient ethnic hatreds” had driven the war. As others have shown, this depiction simplifies and distorts the actual origins of the conflict (Woodward 1995; Silber and Little 1997; Lampe 2000). But by resting on this assumption, Dayton proposed that the solution to the conflict lay in the separation of different ethnic groups, effectively granting the Serb perpetrators of the war their goal of an ethnically pure “Greater Serbia.”⁹⁴ Dayton did not satisfy any party to the conflict and christened a political system that was virtually unworkable, as it required consensus between diametrically

opposed political groups. It also established that only Bosnia's three "constituent peoples"—Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks—can stand for election to the Presidency and the upper house of parliament (McMahon 2004; Bjorkdahl 2012). This definition excludes Roma and Jewish people who also live in Bosnia, and has thereby thwarted Bosnia's accession to the European Union in recent years.

The only truly "punitive" measure included in the Dayton Accords was that people indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) could not hold public office. Through 2014, however, the Tribunal only indicted 161 people. Moreover, the power granted to the OHR threatened to usurp the legitimacy and power of local political institutions (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007: 9; Moore 2013). Throughout the next decade, the OHR was an extremely important player in Bosnia's political landscape. As a result, the political system became overly bureaucratic and inept at raising taxes or rents from the population, as "grey economies" emerged and criminal and dysfunctional patrimonial economic structures persisted (Pugh 2002). The dysfunction allowed war entrepreneurs to capitalize on the chaos, and they secured their gains through the emphasis on privatization that accompanied the post-war era (Andreas 2004). Vertically integrated enterprises, controlled by political parties, link the welfare of supporters to economic empires that consist of hotels, casinos, restaurants, banks, tobacco, forestry, telecommunications, energy, and water companies and more. In short, Dayton codified a political system in which political elites control rents and government revenues for their own gain (Pugh 2002: 471).

Significantly, women were completely shut out from the negotiations in Dayton (Bjorkdahl 2012; Cockburn 2013). This was despite the fact that many women's

organizations emerged during the war, as I discuss in the following chapters. Dayton did not include any provisions to promote women or to secure their presence in post-war governing institutions. As such, "...the Dayton Peace Agreement did not diminish, but rather affirmed, patriarchal nationalism as a dominant ideology and social system in post-war [Bosnia]" (Cockburn 2013: 27). As I show in Chapter 8, this exclusion of women from the peace process came at an extraordinary cost to the possibility for long-term peace and security in Bosnia.

In the years since, Bosnia's political system has been mired in corruption, stagnation, and inefficiency. Nationalist leaders of Republika Srpska continue to antagonize the Bosniak population by using inflammatory nationalist rhetoric and hate speech, and persistently claim that they want to secede from Bosnia and join Serbia. Milorad Dodik, who came to power in 2006 as the President of Republika Srpska, has constantly sought to destabilize the state by undermining the Dayton system and provoking non-Serbs in the country. As I write this in 2015, Dodik just announced that the Republika Srpska will declare independence from Bosnia in 2018 if certain demands are not met.⁹⁵ Today, non-Serbs face unflinching discrimination within Serb-controlled areas.

The literature on post-war Bosnia is extensive, but as Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings (2007: 13) note, it has largely been dominated by analyses of Dayton and institutional and electoral issues. The separation of various nationalities into distinct territorial spaces has preoccupied scholars, producing studies of political quotas and the fraught political party system. There is considerably less research "from below" on the experiences of war and its legacy for ordinary Bosnians (see Clark 2010; Moore 2013;

and Helms 2013 for exceptions). To understand how the war impacted ordinary Bosnians—and particularly ordinary Bosnian women—it is essential to return to the specific shifts caused by the war itself. This is my goal in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: War and Structural Shifts in Bosnia-Herzegovina

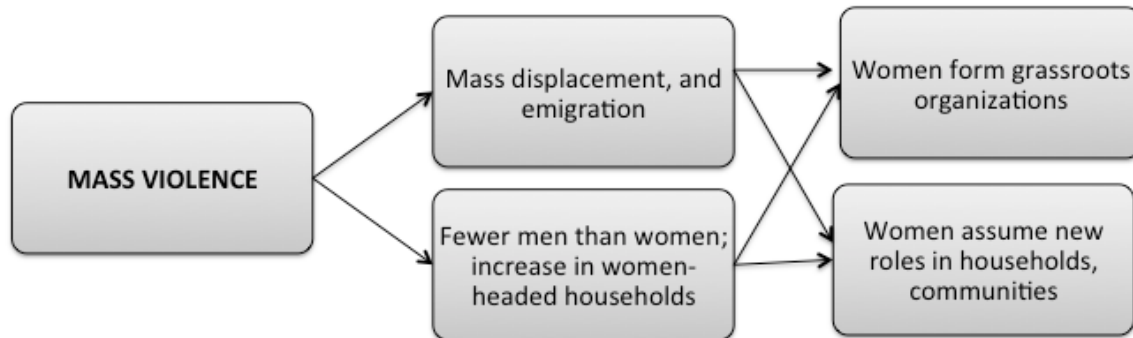
The war in Bosnia—and elsewhere in former Yugoslavia—represented a profound disjuncture with the past. It marked an end to the idea of Yugoslavia, a multi-ethnic state in which national identities were subsumed under a supranational one, and the beginning of massive structural and institutional destruction. Of course, the persistence of patriarchal values and nationalist political parties suggests there was also much continuity with the pre-war era. In this chapter, I outline three transformative shifts that resulted from the war as they related to the political engagement of women in the aftermath. In the next chapter I turn to the impact of those three shifts on women's political mobilization.

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

When the Dayton Accords brought the war in Bosnia to a close in 1995, approximately 107,000 were dead, one million had fled across the border, and another one million were displaced internally (UNHCR 1996; Research and Documentation Center 2007). This meant that approximately one-half of the pre-war population was displaced from their homes. The manifestations of this demographic shift were twofold: first, the war led to shift in the population distribution, based on the emigration and internal displacement of nearly half the population. Second, the disproportionate death, displacement, and conscription of men led to shifts in the gender composition of the population, which led to an increase in woman-headed households (see Figure 9). Like in Rwanda, these two population shifts led to massive changes in the demographic

composition of many parts of Bosnia. One difference from Rwanda, however, was that there was no influx of returning refugees from abroad.

Figure 9. Demographic Shifts After Mass Violence in Bosnia



Displacement and Population Movement

Emigration

During the war, over one million Bosnians (approximately 27 percent of the pre-war population) fled the country and sought refuge in neighboring states (UNHCR 1996). Bosniaks comprised the largest number of these refugees (610,000), followed by Bosnian Croats (307,000), Bosnian Serbs (253,000), and others (23,000) (International Crisis Group 1997: 10). The majority of these refugees initially fled to Croatia, before being granted temporary or permanent asylum in twenty-five different countries around the world. Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats often fled to Croatia first, while Bosnian Serbs were more likely to flee to Serbia or Montenegro, before traveling on to other destinations. The largest number of refugees fled during the first months of the war; by the end of October

1992, 650,000 Bosnians were already in Croatia (Croatian Agency for Refugees 1992; Kinzer, New York Times, 10/31/1992). The majority of these refugees were women, children, and men over 55 years of age (Meznaric and Zlatkovic Winter 1992: 4). To get to Croatia, they used whatever savings they had to catch busses and took with them whatever they could carry—valuables, food, and little else. While women and children were allowed to enter Croatia and claim refugee status, Bosnian authorities usually forced men of “fighting age” to return and fight for Bosnia (Kinzer 10/31/1992; Meznaric and Zlatkovic Winter 1992: 4).

As fighting escalated, Croatia established an Office for Refugees and Displaced Persons to handle the influx of refugees. This office required people entering Croatia to produce letters of sponsorship from relatives or friends abroad that guaranteed them a place to stay. In June 1992, Croatia closed its borders. After, Bosnians lacking this letter of sponsorship were turned away at the border (Meznaric and Zlatkovic Winter 1992). This meant that the wealthy were most able to flee, as they were more likely to have business or family abroad (field notes 2013). Some without letters crossed the border illegally.

While many refugees first fled to neighboring countries, they were eventually resettled through the UNHCR. Germany hosted the largest number of Bosnian refugees, followed by Croatia, Sweden, Canada, the U.S. and Australia (International Crisis Group 1997). This refugee resettlement process was lengthy and precarious. For many, it took several years before they had permanent status in any one place (Eastmond 2006). While the Dayton Agreement encouraged repatriation, government inefficiency and ongoing hostilities in Bosnia complicated and slowed down this process. As a result, many

refugees elected to stay abroad. By 1996, only about 88,000 refugees had returned to their homes within Bosnia (International Crisis Group 1997: 11).

While displaced, some refugees in Croatia began to organize health care, education, and various other activities within the camps. These organizations collected information about deceased and missing persons, organized the distribution of aid, coordinated lectures and other activities for refugees to attend, and orchestrated networks of communications between refugees and their families (Meznaric and Zlatkovic Winter 1992: 4; Mertus 2000). Women were at the forefront of these efforts, as they comprised the numerical majority in the camps and took on caregiving roles for those beyond their immediate family. Many of the informal organizations and networks that formed in these camps were eventually formalized as official organizations that continued to operate after their members had returned back home to Bosnia.

Internal Displacement

Once Croatia closed its borders, tens of thousands of refugees began congregating in Bosnian border towns like Capljina, Ljubuski, Posusje and Livno, swelling their numbers far beyond capacity. Some had survived treacherous journeys across Bosnia's mountainous regions in an effort to escape the violence, and were dismayed when they discovered they could not leave the country. Stuck, and often without travel documents or money, these people took shelter wherever possible. Writing in the Los Angeles times in November 1992, Carol Williams described the scene at these border towns:

Old women, children and furloughed fighters, exhausted by their dangerous exodus, sleep on the trampled grass. Desperate mothers rummage through cartons of donated clothing for their children; others cluster around aid workers doling out food. The ground is littered with empty cans and crushed containers. There is a pervasive stench of human

waste.... they spend their days wandering the town's few commercial streets to ogle goods they cannot buy, scurrying at the sound of each general alert siren to bomb shelters and to log lean-tos designed to stop shrapnel. At night they bed down on blankets and cardboard at hastily converted public buildings, like the day-care centers no longer needed because most industry has been shut down by the war. (11/12/1992)

This description echoes many others from the period. Although the general standard of living in Bosnia was far above that in Rwanda and there was little risk of starvation or widespread disease outbreaks,⁹⁶ the displaced were nevertheless subject to prolonged periods of insecurity, hunger, and homelessness. Bosnians driven from their homes found their way to IDP camps, or to refuge with friends or family members. Many of the displaced congregated in towns and cities, resulting in the increasing ethnic homogenization and urbanization of the population (UNHCR 1998). Conditions of life for the displaced were abysmal, and shelter was always in short supply (World Bank 1996; International Crisis Group 1997).

These processes of displacement had significant impacts on gendered social life. Before the war, social activity in Bosnia (particularly in rural areas) was largely gender-segregated. Women visited with neighbors and friends over coffee or after work, while men met over politics, in bars, or over sports (Bringa 1995; Helms 2013: 110). These forms of social activity were highly localized, as women's social networks were confined to their neighborhood or village. Within the household, women's roles were further constrained by social expectations that they would defer to their husbands and remain silent about physical abuse in the family. As millions of people were uprooted from their homes, these social networks and socially prescribed gender roles were disrupted. Women established new social networks with others in refugee camps, displaced persons centers, or simply with new neighbors as they found themselves re-located to different

regions of the country. Some women were able to access the internet and email, which allowed them to communicate and spread information via their networks (Slapšak 2001: 181). In these situations of displacement, women discovered that they faced common struggles with other women. IDP camps—which were often constructed in schools or other large municipal facilities—became a physical space for building solidarity, particularly among trauma survivors.

Dr. Branka Antić-Štauber, founder of the women's health NGO Snaga Žene (Power of Women), described how many women created new bonds of sisterhood and friendship while in the displaced persons camps:

Even in the refugee camps women do not want to separate because they bond very strong, they have this common problem that keeps them together and they really feel sad when some of them are leaving. They talk about it, they talk about they are sad because the government wants them to go to their places because they will separate at that time...It's extremely important in this group that they bonded, they share the same problems. They realize that they have strength as a group and now they don't want to be individuals, they want to act as a group. (Interview #78, 7/26/2010)

As Dr. Branka describes, women were reluctant to return to their homes after the war, where they feared psychological wounds and general insecurity. These new solidarity networks and friendship groups were critical in facilitating the formation of organizations discussed in the next chapter, and eventually reflected a form of political mobilizing unique to the post-war period.

Demographic shifts lead to sex imbalance

According to the 1991 census, Bosnia's population was 49.8 percent male (2,183,795) and 50.2 percent female (2,193,238). At least 93,000 men were killed during the war (representing 90 percent of the war dead; Research and Documentation Center

2007). The first census after the war was not conducted until 2013 because of the fraught political tensions within the country and the potential for census data to bolster or undermine various nationalist political strategies. Thus, official figures for the sex ratio immediately after the war do not exist; the best estimates are that there were 0.92 men/women (i.e., 92 men for every 100 women). The 2013 census, however, gives us some additional clues. The 2013 sex ratio across the country is estimated to be 0.95 men/woman. But it is particularly imbalanced among older generations—in other words, those who were in their mid-40s during the violence. Among Bosnians older than 65 years, the sex ratio is 0.63 men/women (Census Bureau of Bosnia-Herzegovina 2013).

The loss of men during the war in Bosnia compelled many women to engage in new roles in their families and communities in similar ways as in Rwanda. Women whose husbands, brothers, or fathers were killed, incarcerated, or displaced in various regional armies became temporary or permanent heads of their households (Mrvic-Petrović and Stevanović 2000). Being a temporary head of one's household was especially common, since between 400,000 and 500,000 Bosnian men were conscripted during the war (Bougarel 2006; Staveteig 2011). By 1996, between 200,000 and 400,000 of these men were still in the process of being demobilized (World Bank 1996: 12). Refugee families were especially likely to be incomplete, because women and men were often separated during campaigns of ethnic cleansing, and authorities often only permitted women to cross international borders. Even in areas of the country that remained under Bosnian control, men joined territorial defense units or regional armies to fight, or sometimes left the country or went into hiding to avoid military duty (field notes 2013). Some men also stayed behind to defend their property or houses from attacking

forces, while women left for the safety of nearby refugee camps or safe zones. In permanently incomplete families, men were killed (or died from other causes during the war). These widows faced additional challenges of locating their loved ones' bodies and fighting for justice, as will be discussed more in the next chapter.

The Institute for Pedagogical Research conducted one of the few studies on family incompleteness during the war. It found that 92 percent of all families had both a father and a mother prior to the war. After families were displaced, however, only 50 percent were complete. Of these, 80 percent were missing the father or "head of household" (Mrvic-Petrović and Stevanović 2000). Widowhood also increased: before the war only 2.3 percent of women between the ages of 35-39 were widows, while after this number jumped to 7.4 percent. The percentage increased further in the older age cohorts: among those aged 40-44, the percentage of widows jumped from 4.2 percent to 11.1 percent, and in the age group from 45-49, the percentage of widows increased from 7.3 percent to 13.1 percent in the war's aftermath (Staveteig 2011: 86).⁹⁷ Survey reports also indicate that this demographic sex imbalance was particularly pronounced in areas of the country that had seen high rates of killing of men, including the areas around Srebrenica and Prijedor. In these areas—and in the communities where the non-Serbs "cleansed" from these areas had settled—there were high numbers of woman-led families (UNICEF 2009).

Like in Rwanda, many of my interviewees also indicated that beyond a actual demographic loss of men, there was a more symbolic loss of men's capacity as well. This was because "men experienced a sort of collapse" (Interview #64, 6/10/2013)—they turned to alcohol, became depressed, and gradually retreated from communal or family

life after the violence (Wings of Hope Report 2010-2012). Psychologists and INGOs studied war's traumatic impact on various groups after the war, including on refugees, rape survivors, children, and ex-combatants. Overall, the best estimates suggest that between 18 to 38 percent of the population suffered from PTSD during or immediately after the violence (World Bank 1996: 13; Nelson 2003: 308).⁹⁸ At least six of the women I interviewed indicated that the war left their husbands or fathers physically or psychologically injured, and one widow indicated that she was unlikely to marry again given the mental instability of any available men.⁹⁹ Approximately 200,000 men were wounded during the war, which may have compounded war-related trauma (World Bank 1999; Walsh 2000). Several women I interviewed suggested that their husband's drinking made it difficult for him to work (see also Spahić Šiljak 2014). At least a dozen of my interviews suggested there was a high rate of prescription drug usage in Bosnia; one said that people take drugs "to kill all the emotions inside" (Interview #38, 5/10/2013). Another referred to the country as a "Prozac nation" (Interview #35, 5/9/2013). This symbolic loss of men's capacity also contributed to a sense in many families that women needed to take on new roles in order to help their families survive.

ECONOMIC SHIFTS

In addition to demographic shifts, Bosnia underwent massive economic shifts both before and during the war. In 1990, per capita income in Bosnia was \$2,365 (in current U.S. dollars). As Yugoslavia's political institutions fractured in the early 1990s, the regional economy also fell apart. The outbreak of violence in Croatia and Slovenia disrupted the flow of goods between states and eventually across the region. Serbia implemented a boycott of goods coming from countries that had declared independence.

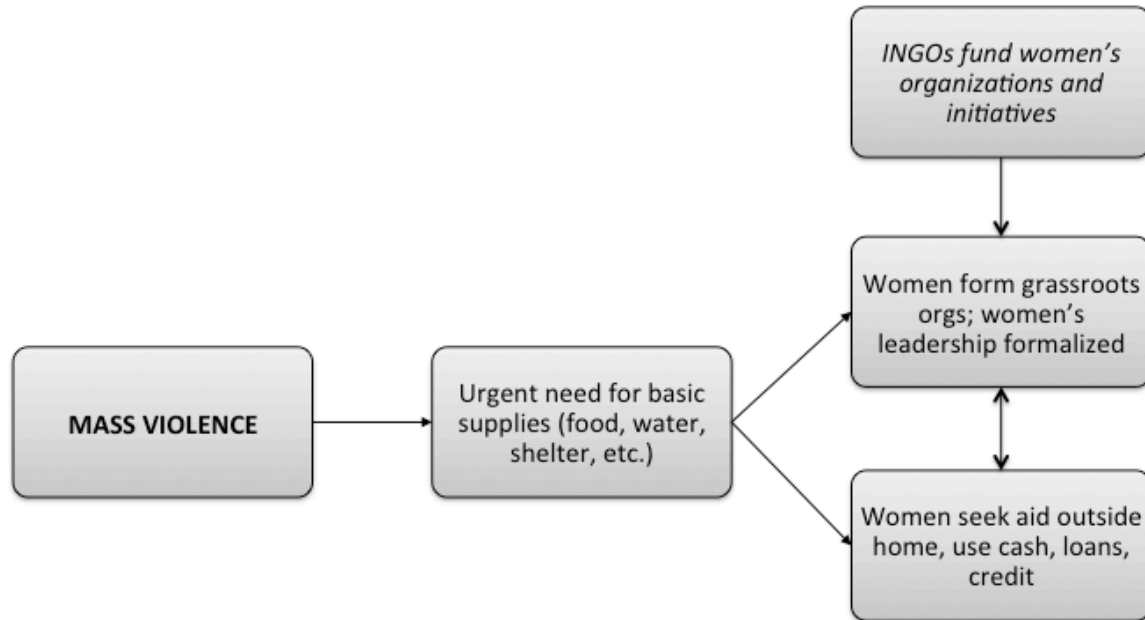
In 1991, Serbia and Croatia imposed an embargo on goods and foodstuffs going into Bosnia in order to destroy the Bosnian economy, force the country to capitulate, and partition its territory into Croat and Serbian parts (Woodward 1995: 264, 277). This was particularly devastating because the country depended on food imports. To counter this embargo, the Bosnian government prohibited Bosnian firms from selling a lengthy list of domestic products to Serbia or Croatia, including major exports like coal, iron, chemicals, lumber or poultry (Woodward 1995: 277). Bosnia's exports to Western markets also ceased (Cockburn 2001: 25). By 1991, 22.8 percent of Bosnians were unemployed (International Labor Organization 1991; Kalyvas and Sambanis 2005: 207). Women were particularly vulnerable during this time, and were more likely to be laid off from work than their male counterparts (Multiple interviews; Andjelković 1998; Cockburn 2001: 26).

During the war, the economic crisis deepened. GDP per capita dropped to \$378 in 1994—the most severe economic collapse of any country since World War II (World Bank [1994] 1997: 3). Unemployment jumped to 90 percent (Cockburn 2001: 25). Farm production fell to just one-third of the population's need, 70 percent of farm equipment was destroyed, and 15 percent of farmland became inaccessible due to landmines (World Bank 1999: 22, 24; World Bank 2001: 1). Fighting caused factories to close in many areas (Woodward 1995: 249), and the military occupation of certain cities and regions meant that some areas were completely cut off from supply routes. The fighting destroyed utilities, leaving many people without heat, food, and fuel. Moreover, fighting damaged or destroyed as many as 60 percent of houses (approximately 500,000), creating an

urgent housing shortage (World Bank 1996; International Crisis Group 1997; Cockburn 2001: 20; Hunt 2004: 120).¹⁰⁰

Widespread looting also occurred during the war. Nothing was off limits. Irregular forces and paramilitaries, including some “weekend warriors” from Serbia, would loot land, livestock, houses, televisions, cars, cash, jewelry, farm equipment, appliances and more. Major crime syndicates partnered with corrupt officials to traffic narcotics, weapons, fuel, and other goods (Pugh and Cooper 2004: 154). In some towns non-Serbs were given a chance to sell everything they owned, which they did in order to have enough cash to pay for transportation out of their besieged villages (Cigar 1995: 83). Soldiers set up roadblocks to confiscate goods being delivered or shipped around the country.¹⁰¹ War profiteers emerged, and protagonists of the war often collaborated to support trafficking opportunities that benefited both sides (Pugh and Cooper 2004). Black market economies sprung up as aid workers and people on all sides of the conflict collaborated for financial gain. Many women survived as small-scale traders in these underground economies, although men were much more likely to profit (Cockburn 2001: 27; Pugh 2002).

Figure 10. Economic Shifts After Mass Violence in Bosnia



Impact on women

Women's unequal status prior to the war soon paled in comparison to the degree of disadvantage they faced during the violence (Cockburn 2001: 26). Merima, the founder of a women's organization in the Krajina region, described how women "had to take care of both the whole family and other things. They had to pay bills, they had to contact the rest of the family that was outside of Bosnia. And they had to live with this fear that they may lose their father, their brother, or their son" (Interview #56, 5/28/2013). In Sarajevo, Bosnians faced a massive shortage of basic supplies like food and water. Residents relied on meager rations from UN-aid shipments, small windowsill gardens, and by scavenging edible wild plants. Transportation systems stopped working, electricity was intermittent, and fuel for cooking fires became increasingly scarce as citizens slowly cut down the city's trees. Social services—such as the system of pensions,

invalid insurance, childcare, schools, and other forms of social protection for vulnerable groups—ceased to exist (Cockburn 2001: 27).

With men of fighting age in charge of defending the city, many women found themselves responsible for finding food, shelter, and health care for themselves, children, and elderly who were now in their care (Cockburn 2001). Women took significant risks with their lives in order to fulfill these responsibilities, such as walking across town to get water or find firewood under the risk of being shot by a sniper or hit by a mortar shell. Ismeta Dervoz, a member of parliament, recounted how “Every day in Sarajevo so many people were killed—children—and we had four years without any essential needs for human life—without electricity, without heat, without food, without medical supplies, without anything (Interview #2, MP, 4/3/2013).” According to Ismeta, this pushed many women into new roles as the economic providers for their families. These new roles were often physically demanding; cutting firewood and slugging water across the city was physically exhausting. She described how this chore often fell to her mother:

I remember from my building, and it is 10 stories, just one man who was a doctor, and three women would go out every day for work. And every day you can see it is just the women who go out to try to find something to eat, to go for water. The women showed unbelievable strength in Bosnia-Herzegovina—courage. My mother was at the time 62 years old, and she went with the neighbors every night to one hill here in Sarajevo to try to find some wood for the fire to cook something during the day. 62 years old, she was! (Interview 4/3/2013).

This gendered division of labor—men fighting, women providing for their families—was typical of most Bosnian families during the war.

The satirical Sarajevo Survival Guide produced by residents in 1993 contained astute reflections of these gender dynamics. For instance, it described “The Modern Sarajevan Male”:

He has accreditation [ID], weapons, a good car, and a complete uniform. The owner of a bullet-proof vest is regarded with respect. One who doesn't wear a uniform has an ax in his right hand for cutting down trees, and a series of [water] canisters on his left shoulder. His image would be complete with a mask against poison gas.

This depiction captured the association of men with fighting and with the rugged military defense of the city. Contrast that was the description of “The Modern Sarajevan Female”:

She cuts wood, carries humanitarian aid, smaller canisters filled with water, does not visit a hairdresser nor a cosmetician. She is slim, and runs fast. Girls regularly visit the places where humanitarian aid is being distributed. They know the best aid-packages according to their numbers. They get up early to get water, visit cemeteries to collect wood, and greet new young refugees. Many wear golden and silver lilies as earrings, as pins, on necklaces.

While intended to be humorous, such depictions encapsulated the gendered division of labor during the siege. Women maintained their roles as caregivers, while men were charged with defending the city. While emotionally and physically difficult, this division of labor pushed women into new social roles that eventually became the basis for the formation of new forms of collective action. Moreover, many women I interviewed explained how fulfilling traditional caregiving roles during the devastating environment of war cultivated a moral sense of political conviction. They saw these previously mundane tasks of finding food and caring for others as now part of a personal rejection of the war, which they did not want and did not believe in.

Outside of Sarajevo, massive displacement and the disproportionate death and imprisonment of men left many rural women with the burden of caring for their families alone. Like in Rwanda, this meant that among the rural poor, women took control of household finances for the first time, as they had to “take all of the roles that men had” in order to adjust for the absence of their partners (Interview #67, 6/11/2013). In addition, many women needed to deal in cash on a daily basis, as they could no longer grow their own food. These women often lived on the margins of society, struggling economically and psychologically from the consequences of war.

The war affected a devastating financial toll for nearly all displaced people. People spent savings and valuables on the transportation required to leave the city, “exit tolls,” or food on the black market. Like in Rwanda, Bosnian women I interviewed described how they had to spend their savings on food, which they had previously been able to grow. Black markets became one of the few ways to get food—and particularly decent food. Medicine was also scarce, and much of it was only available through black market channels. This loss of savings on new expenses was one of the primary reasons people moved into collective shelters (Mrvic-Petrović and Stevanović 2000). Others were able to move in with family or friends, and those with more resources rented apartments in parts of the country where they were displaced.

Women form organizations

Civil society organizations or NGOs were virtually non-existent in Bosnia prior to the violence, in large part because the state provided most services (Walsh 2000). As the state fractured, women faced enormous pressure to assume new responsibilities and secure basic material supplies. Many began to collaborate with friends, neighbors, and

strangers to help each other in their time of collective need. Svetlana, a Serb who remained in Sarajevo during the war, hinted at how new economic responsibilities established solidarity among women:

Women were exposed to all sorts of new challenges. They had to find water, food, they had to find firewood outside, they had to do the washing. It created a sense of *survival solidarity*. And people who you wouldn't normally interact with or be friends with were all of a sudden your closest friends. Because it was a time with no lies. Everything was straight forward; nobody presented any false sense of themselves. (Interview #3, 4/5/2013)

As Svetlana mentioned, this “survival solidarity” bonded women together and led to the rapid formation of community organizations in order to respond to “the twin crises of destitution and trauma” (Cockburn 2001: 87). Dubbed “kitchen table” organizations, these loose organizational structures established a new model of social organization during crisis.

Approximately one-quarter of the women I interviewed in Bosnia were involved in founding small, informal groups in their communities which aimed to assist others in finding their loved ones, securing basic goods like food and clothing, accessing trauma counseling, or developing small income-generating activities.¹⁰² An individual woman with some training, resources, or contacts—or simply a particular vision—often initiated the organization's formation. Soon, many of the founders of these emergent organizations realized that they could receive funding from international humanitarian agencies and INGOs. To do so, they were encouraged to register with the local authorities. This process required them to collect 30 signatures and name their organization. Bosnians joked that anyone who could gather the signatures of 29 of their friends and relatives could become an NGO (Helms 2013: 90).

Foreign donors flooded Bosnia with development aid and humanitarian assistance. Donor support averaged \$1 billion per year for the first five years after the war. The World Bank lent \$860 million between 1996 and 2001. In order to distribute this aid, international donors used local organizations as implementing partners that could assist in the distribution of goods. They also saw the development of local organizations as a way to build civil society, and thereby democracy. In the aftermath of the Cold War, encouraging the growth of democratic institutions was paramount for many western donors. Donors saw civil society as a neutral “third sector” where the multi-ethnic state could flourish and potentially undermine the nationalist political leadership. Grassroots organizations were seen to promote ethnic tolerance and support for democratic reforms (Helms 2013). Community organizations soon became the primary service providers in the country.

Estimates of the number of organizations in Bosnia after the war vary widely, from 1,500 to upwards of 8,000 (Simmons 2007: 175; IDHI 2008). By 1997, international funding for these women’s initiatives began to dry up. In response, many organizations transitioned from being care-giving organizations to income-generating entities. This gave some women control over surplus income for the first time, particularly if their husbands were dead or unable to find employment after the war. Thus as women’s organizations continued providing essential services to the population, they additionally began to make profits of their own. This facilitated a shift in the way economic power was distributed in the country. I discuss this process of organizational growth and formalization more in the next chapter.

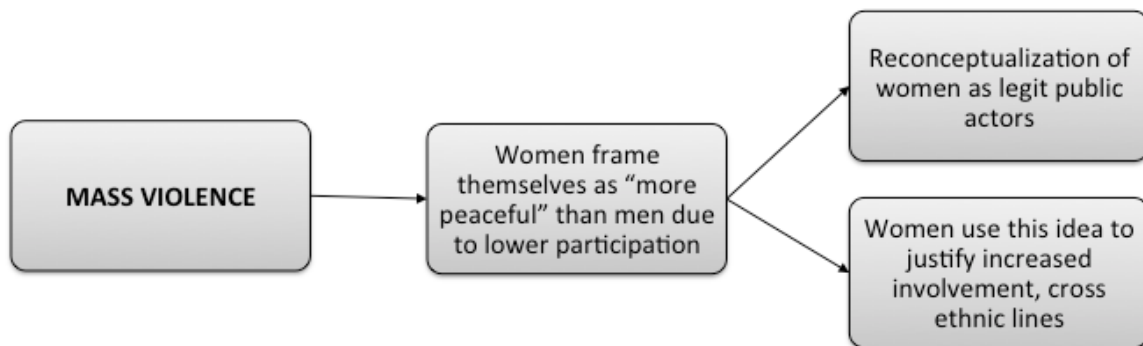
The war reduced per capita GDP to about 20 percent of its pre-war level, and the economic toll was estimated to be between \$50-70 billion dollars (World Bank 1997; Pugh 2002: 468). Industrial production was down by 90 percent (World Bank 1996: 14). By 2000, 46 percent of Bosnians in the Federation and 75 percent of those in Republika Srpska were living in poverty. Nearly two decades later, most of the population still subsists on foreign remittances, foreign aid, undeclared earnings, and backpay or pensions for demobilized soldiers, widows, and other victims of war (Pugh 2002: 472). Pensions, however, barely cover the cost of living. As a result, many Bosnians work in grey or shadow economies, which emerged during the war alongside war profiteers and mafia-linked trading networks. Bosnia's informal/grey economy is estimated to be about \$500 million annually (Pugh 2002: 472; Pugh and Cooper 2004).

CULTURAL SHIFTS

As the number of community organizations mushroomed during the war, the “third sector” emerged as a parallel power structure to that of the state. NGOs and their local implementing partners provided essential goods and services that might normally be provided by a state. Women's presence at the helm of many of these organizations made them well-known public figures in their communities. This growing acceptance of women in more public leadership roles reflected a departure from traditional, conservative, and patriarchal Balkan norms. For many Bosnian women—and particularly for poor, less educated, rural women—participating in organizations involved in issues related to peace-building, refugee return, or income-generating activities represented a departure from their pre-war social roles. Like in Rwanda, I argue that the war allowed Bosnian women to construct a “frame” that legitimized their presence in public because of their

identity as mothers and status as “more peaceful” than men during the war (Goffman 1974; Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow 2000). Women were generally seen as less complicit in the violence, and many began to publically claim that “this was not our war” (see Hunt 2004).

Figure 11. Cultural Shifts After Violence in Bosnia



Women were able to construct this frame, in part, because the dominant narrative of the Bosnian war depicted women as victims—and particularly as refugees and victims of sexual violence (Mertus 1994). Elissa Helms put it succinctly:

Mention women and Bosnia and your first association is likely to be one of two iconic images: distraught women in headscarves and traditional Muslim dress fleeing ethnic cleansing, their ragged children and a few belongings in tow; or the shamed and silenced young Muslim victim of rape and forced pregnancy, doubly victimized by her attackers and then by her own patriarchal community. These were the images that flooded the world media during the war and that have been instrumentalized in various political discussions of the region ever since. (Helms 2013: 25).

Such depictions essentialized and depoliticized women, portraying them as helpless victims of a war in which they were simply caught in the middle. And yet such depictions

also positioned women outside of the political realm. As in the case of Rwanda discussed in Chapter 3, the “affirmative essentialization” (Helms 2003, 2013) of women as more nurturing or peaceful than men allowed Bosnian women to juxtapose their own inherent “peacefulness” with men’s propensity for war. Against the background of the suffering caused by violence, this discourse served the function of politicizing women’s daily activities. It gained traction because women implicitly recognized themselves in the frame.

Many women I interviewed emphasized that women’s ability to empathize and provide “motherly care” made them important peace-builders in their communities. Such essentializing depictions complicate feminist frameworks premised on women’s sameness with men. Yet feminist activists, like Svetlana Slapšak, note that during extraordinary situations like war, women’s movements have the chance to move fast and make progress when they “link their politics to pacifism” (Slapšak 2001: 180). Given the corrupt and immoral perception of politics in Bosnia, such apolitical depictions offered women an opening to advocate for various causes on the basis of their status as “moral victims” (Helms 2013).

Women’s organizations played an important role in crafting these essentialized depictions of women’s victimhood in order to distance themselves from the illegitimate, male-dominated realm of politics and war. In organizational documents and mission statements, “mothers” could affirm some sort of space within the nationalist political discourse. Women could claim—as some did and still do—that the war never would have happened if women had been in charge of the country. As one politician put it,

Women are, as biological creatures, capable of giving birth and raise their children, and by the very nature have the gift that men do not have.

Women have higher level of empathy and are more capable to do everyday life work. During the war, in unbelievable conditions, women managed to do their everyday work that they used to support their families and whole society. They were crucial in rebuilding society and cleaning the mess that was created by the “war games” (Interview #64, 6/10/2013)

Women’s victim status rendered them not guilty of the “war games” this politician mentions, and conferred upon women a sense of moral legitimacy.

This distinction between women’s peacefulness and men’s propensity for war continues to be a salient narrative today. Throughout my fieldwork in Kozarac, I observed multiple women wearing t-shirts that said, “I won’t raise my kid to kill your kid” (see also Helms 2003). As one of many examples from my interviews, Munira Subašić, the director of Mothers of Srebrenica, made the biological origins of women’s inherit peacefulness explicit:

Every mother is just a mother, no matter what her ethnic or religious background. When I realized this, that I could talk to any mother, I understood that all mothers suffer, and that we could overcome obstacles and talk in ways that politicians cannot, and that through this dialogue we can rise above and progress. (Interview #60, 6/5/2013)

Other women reiterated this narrative. A parliamentarian stated that, “women are more sensible and they can create a better society if they are involved in politics...because we can create a better society for our children because we have a sense for negotiation, we are not violent” (Interview #74, MP, 7/2010). Another parliamentarian described how she believed that “women are just on a higher evolutionary level than men. There is scientific evidence that there are more connections between the left and the right hemisphere” (Interview #32, MP, 5/6/2013). She continued by emphasizing that women were the first ones to cross ethnic boundaries after the war, and attributed this to the idea that “all women developed this kind of sensitivity if they had kids.”

Crossing ethno-nationalist divides

In addition to believing that women have a biological predisposition towards peace, many of my interview respondents suggested that women were the only ones able to speak to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds during the war. Anti-nationalism, in essence, became a grounding identity for women's activism. Women's organizations argued that it was easier for women to interact with members of a different ethnic group than men because they did not engage in the fighting themselves (Hunt 2004: 138; Kleiman 2007; Cockburn 2013; Helms 2013). Moreover, their status as mothers made them more capable of empathizing with the suffering of others.

My interviewees provided many examples of instances when women were able to cross ethnic lines more easily than men.¹⁰³ Explicitly feminist organizations, such as Women in Black and Medica Zenica, organized anti-war conferences all over the region and formed an initiative called "Women Activists Cross Borders" that brought women from all parts of the region together to travel in a bus around the region. The goal of the project was to show how women from different backgrounds could transcend newly established borders and begin to build peace (Spahić Šiljak 2014: 89). For instance, Sabiha Husić, the director of Medica Zenica, stated:

...it was during the war that women really started to think in another way; okay, how can we help each other; how can we help other women; where are we; where is our position; what can we do differently. In very hard times, however, women of different religions and backgrounds started to communicate with each other. For example, women from Zenica [predominantly Bosniak] started to speak and to send messages to women from Banja Luka [predominantly Serb] or from Vitez [predominately Croat]...it was so good that we started as women to rebuild our bridges again. (Interview #73, 6/2013)

Women also bridged ethnic divides by founding informal self-help organizations in their communities or while displaced in refugee or IDP camps. In just one of many examples, in the village of Grahovo, Croat and Serb women formed the Women Citizen's Association (Funk 2015). Led by Danka Zelić, a practicing Catholic dedicated to peace-building in her community, the organization's mission was simple: to bring neighbors together, regardless of their ethnicity (Spahić Šiljak 2014: 41). The association introduced livestock programs, daily production initiatives, and even fish farming into the region, and all property of the program was registered in women's names in order to promote cross-ethnic female solidarity (Spahić Šiljak 2014: 41; Funk 2015: 5). This cross-ethnic collaboration led by women also occurred in the business sector; Nermina Ćemalović, a former electrical engineer who now sits in Parliament, described how she came up with the idea to organize an exhibition of industry products in spring 1995 in order to foster dialogue between different ethnic groups in her hometown of Zenica. The exhibition was a success, and according to Ćemalović, "It was the first event organized between Croats and Bosnians [during the war]. They were surprised" (Interview #50, 5/22/2013).

CONCLUSION

Women's ability to situate themselves outside of the political realm while still engaging in important political activities depended largely on their ability to re-frame their presence as one linked to peace, motherhood, and non-participation in the war. In the context of the devastation of violence in both Rwanda and Bosnia, being "peaceful" now legitimized women's presence in public; their victimization during the war and subsequent efforts to rebuild the country rendered them assets to the recovery process and

less likely to enflame ethnic animosities. Although this narrative relied on an essentialized understanding of gender difference, it was an important initial step in re-conceptualizing women as legitimate public actors. Yet such a framing raises questions about how sustainable women's gains might be if they are premised on such gendered essentialisms.

We have seen throughout this chapter how violence precipitated demographic, economic, and cultural shifts in Bosnia in the 1990s. Massive population displacement, sweeping economic needs, and a re-conceptualization of women's roles propelled many women to engage in new activities in their communities. While the gendered division of labor and patriarchal norms remained in place, these new activities ushered in processes of political mobilization that marked a departure from the past. In the following chapter, I analyze the impact of these demographic, economic, and cultural shifts on women's participation in informal and formal political capacities.

CHAPTER 7: Women's Political Mobilization in Bosnia-Herzegovina

“Yes women do have power, more than people would expect. And it is important to show them where the power lies and to empower ones who don't recognize it.”—Merima (Interview #56, 5/28/2013)

Sabiha Husić was 22 years old and living in Vitez—a city in central Bosnia—when the Croatian Army (HVO) violently expelled her and her family from their home. They ended up in Zenica as refugees. Before long, her father was wounded and her brothers were called to fight in the Bosnian army. Sabiha found herself responsible for the wellbeing of her family and for keeping them together (Interview #73, 6/14/2013; Spahić Šiljak 2014: 3-9). While in the refugee camp in Zenica, she felt motivated to help others and began working with refugees who had experienced trauma. Through a friend, Sabiha was connected with women refugees who had experienced wartime rape, and soon dedicated herself to this cause (Spahić Šiljak 2014: 3-9). The refugee community in general was predominantly comprised of women, children and the elderly. Men had been “cleansed,” recruited to fight in the military, or killed. Sabiha wanted to “mobilize women so that we start to do something concrete;” she felt that “we cannot sit only and listen to news and wait to see what will happen” (Interview 6/14/2013).

Sabiha began working with Medica Zenica, an organization recently formed by Monika Hauser, an Italian gynecologist to treat women survivors of war violence (Cockburn 1998: 174). Over the next few years Medica became a highly respected organization and one of the most essential service providers in the country. It collaborated with international feminist networks and received foreign visitors and

funding from various countries and foundations. Sabiha described how participating in the organization shifted her mindset from caring for women's medical needs to caring more holistically about their human rights (Interview, Husić, 6/14/2013; Spahić Šiljak 2014). Together with others at Medica, she worked with local religious leaders in an effort to de-stigmatize rape. Eventually, the group's efforts prompted the Imam of Zenica to issue a *fatwa* urging people to respect women who had been victims of rape (Cockburn 1998: 180). Today, Sabiha is Medica's director, and she is a widely known and respected human rights activist and champion for women's issues. She often speaks publically about the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the landmark UN resolution aimed at increasing number of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.¹⁰⁴ She and the Medica team work with other NGOs to advocate for women's political representation, educational opportunities, and promotion in business.

While Sabiha ended up as the director of one of Bosnia's foremost women's organizations, hundreds of thousands of other Bosnian women also experienced shifts in their public engagement as a result of their experiences during and after the war. In this chapter I examine the impact of war-induced demographic, economic, and cultural shifts on women's political engagement. Unlike in Rwanda, the end of the war in Bosnia did not bring about a regime change; instead, the Dayton Accords divided the political system into two semi-autonomous entities with a loose national federation overseeing the divided state. Alma Čolo, a member of parliament, described how "the men stayed who were engaged in politics and the army...few women wanted to get involved in politics" (Interview #74, 7/2009). There was little room for women in politics.

Ordinary Bosnians perceived formal politics during and after the war to be chauvinist, corrupt, nationalistic, and—perhaps most critically—male. “Politics is a whore” (*politika je kurva*)¹⁰⁵ became a widespread refrain. Politics also often “happened” over *rakija* at bars, a male space where women were excluded. In interviews and in more informal social settings, women in Bosnia today repeatedly expressed their awareness of the lack of openings in the national political scene after the war. Women were shut out, both formally and informally, as the post-war political elite emerged as the same people responsible for the war in the first place.

Yet while there was a widespread condemnation of the formal political realm, in what follows I describe how the war catalyzed a shift in many women’s everyday engagement in public spaces and with government institutions. Women I interviewed expressed a deep sense of moral conviction that the war was wrong, which motivated them to make changes to their everyday routines that could secure a better life for themselves and their children. As women applied for passports, appealed for restitution for lost property, or even sought verification of marriage documents to claim benefits after the death of a spouse, I argue they engaged in a “politics of practice” that reflected a change in women’s roles from before the war. Testifying about rape and sexual violence in court was also part of this shift. Such acts began to accumulate as tens of thousands of women faced similar circumstances.

Women also increased their engagement in informal political spaces by founding and participating in civil society organizations. Given the widespread disdain for politics in Bosnia, the organization or NGO sector became a key site for political activities in the aftermath of the war. “Humanitarian” became a buzzword that differentiated some

women's NGOs from the more political activities led by organizations partnered with international actors—such as Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Office of the High Representative (OHR), and the UN. This label situated women's organizations squarely within women's traditional domain and allowed them to stress their independence from political parties. Yet, like in Rwanda—and as Clemens (1993, 1996) found in relation to women's associations in the U.S. in the late 19th century—framing these organizations as non-political allowed women to mobilize politically in novel and eclectic ways. Many women-led organizations advocated for the return of refugees, justice for survivors, or ethnic reconciliation—all distinctly political issues (Cockburn 2001; Helms 2003, 2013). As a result, they provided essential services that would normally be provided by the state (e.g., health care) and thereby gained status in their communities, while avoiding political complications and pushback.

The war also brought another shift in women's political activities: an increase in women's defiant or resistant actions in public spaces. Their actions were defiant in that they challenged patriarchal expectations about what women could or could not do in public, often visibly and vocally deriding the established political order. Unlike in Rwanda where public space was tightly controlled, women in Bosnia had few constraints on their ability to protest in public. These protests occurred before the war but took on a new meaning and dimension in its aftermath, particularly as public spaces became increasingly intertwined with chauvinist, nationalist political rhetoric. These activities reflected a middle ground between informal, everyday political activities, and more overt, deliberate forms of formal political action.

I conclude this case study by analyzing how the war impacted women's participation in the formal political realm. Unlike in Rwanda, Bosnia did not experience an upsurge in women's formal political representation after the war. The war did, however, impact some individual women's decisions to enter politics in the years that followed. Moreover, women's organizations that emerged after the violence advocated for the adoption of various measures to increase women's presence in government. While today the percentage of women in Parliament is still no higher than it was in the socialist era, there is a growing acceptance of women in government, and anti-nationalist parties like the Social Democratic Party (SDP) have made progress towards positioning women in important political capacities.

A “POLITICS OF PRACTICE”: EVERYDAY POLITICS

Like in Rwanda, Bosnian women took on myriad new roles and responsibilities in their households and communities as a result of widespread displacement, the loss or absence of male family members, and a decrease in economic capacities and resources. Establishing normalcy under the conditions of upheaval required new forms of action. Women, as caretakers for their families, were particularly likely to adapt. As one woman put it,

Women tend to find ways to adapt to new situations without thinking about their individual benefit. I've seen refugee women in camps who have been university professors, who now go out of the camp and clean other women's houses because they want to make sure the children are dressed well when they go to the local school, so that no one makes fun of them. (Interview #63, 6/7/2013)

Because thousands of women faced similar circumstances of displacement, economic scarcity, trauma, and loss, shifts in women's day-to-day responsibilities—including shifts

in the status of the work—were pervasive. Such shifts were particularly salient for Bosnians who were displaced from their homes, who lost male family members, or who testified in court about their wartime experiences. In a patriarchal, conservative society like Bosnia, as women in these situations struggled to improve their lives and the lives of their family members, their daily survival activities became part of a broader political transformation. For Bosniaks in particular, working to live amidst violence designed to cleanse Muslim culture from the land became a distinctly political endeavor.

Women without husbands were the most likely to take on new responsibilities, such as tending to and maintaining the home and land, negotiating permission to travel with government or international aid officials, or finding ways to earn money. This marked a departure from the pre-war era, when, as one NGO founder put it, “women were kind of protected by their husbands. If they wanted something to happen they would tell them” (Interview #22, 4/25/2013). Fifteen of the 86 Bosnian women I interviewed for this project lost husbands or sons during the war and each described how this loss motivated their increased participation in public life. In these families, women often took on new activities related to the survival of their dependents; they also faced the additional logistical and emotional burden of finding out when, where, and how their loved ones had been killed.

One type of activity that rapidly increased during and after the war was women’s interactions with various government institutions and multinational aid agencies. Before the war, men typically represented their families in interactions with state institutions (Bringa 1995). During the war, women whose husbands were off fighting, in prison or concentration camps, or dead, had to assume this role. Women had to register their

property or marriages and apply for social support payments. In order to leave Bosnia during the war, families had to navigate a complicated and divided government bureaucracy in order to receive letters of sponsorship and valid travel documents (Mertus 2000; Interview #6, 4/9/2013).

Ajla, for example, was a young mother living in Sarajevo during the war (Interview #34, 5/9/2013). Her husband was killed in combat while fighting for the Bosnian Army. Ajla's daughter was just two years old at that time and suffered from a series of health problems during the siege. It became apparent that her daughter needed surgery. Ajla described how she "had to be a father and a mother at one time" and began searching for ways to get her daughter out of the country to have the necessary surgery. She had to apply for travel permissions and documents and then enlisted the help of a larger NGO for financial support. Her daughter was able to have the surgery in Germany in 1995, and Ajla described how "during the war I realized how tough I am. During that time you realize how strong your will is to survive, to keep on going—it really did make me stronger." By surviving the siege and securing health care for her daughter, Ajla described how she gained a new political consciousness that motivated her to get involved in women's organizations and eventually politics.

Several of widows I interviewed mentioned that in order to apply for federal financial assistance or their husband's pension during or after the war, they had to produce documents showing they had been married. This required them to navigate the divided government bureaucracy and appeal to local officials to find their personal records. Many also registered with the International Commission of Missing Persons (ICMP) in order to provide DNA samples, dental, and medical records of their missing

loved ones. These mundane tasks facilitated everyday interactions with government and multinational institutions, which began to accumulate and shift women's social networks. Some women joined together in small groups or aligned themselves with grassroots organizations that could help in this process. As discussed below, widows and mothers' organizations provided support for women as they navigated this bureaucratic process and eventually encouraged women to demand accountability and justice from the government. After the war, campaigns to ensure widows received pensions became a controversial national political issue; by pressuring government institutions for such pensions at the local level, many women unknowingly joined part of a broader political fight.

For women whose family members had been killed, these routine interactions with government became more regular and contentious. The founder of the NGO *Žene Srebrenica* (Women of Srebrenica), for example, described how interactions with government institutions eventually morphed into more overt forms of protest (Interview #19, 4/25/2013). For example, after "the bulk of [her] family was killed during the war," she worked with other women to search for her husband and son, whom she hoped were alive in concentration camps. She described how "We went from one [government] institution to another. For two or three or years we were trying to find them." This process involved filling missing persons reports with the ICMP, coordinating with the Red Cross to see if they had been displaced as IDPs or refugees in the region, and talking to untold numbers of Bosnian politicians from different political parties. Eventually, however, authorities discovered mass graves in the area her husband and son had last been seen. At that point, "we realized that all of them were killed. Then we started

looking for their remains, and of course, we put pressure to arrest the people who did this genocide.” This woman’s experiences reveal how the loss of male family members motivated women to pressure local leaders to arrest perpetrators of the violence and demand justice. This process of mobilization connected women to others in similar circumstances, expanding their social networks and cultivating a sense of shared solidarity. While Rwandan women joined grassroots organizations to gain official documentation of their land rights, Bosnian women pressured the government to find missing loved ones and identify their remains using DNA technology. In each case, the war catalyzed changes in women’s public engagement.

Women’s participation in these new capacities was, in many ways, an unexpected result of the patriarchal mentality that considered women less capable (Slapšak 2001: 191). Before the war, women—and particularly women from poor or religious families—were socially marginalized and discriminated against. Yet when faced with the daunting tasks of surviving and caring for children—especially in the absence of their husbands—Bosnian women turned “handicaps into advantages.” This led to what activist Svetlana Slapšak called the “spontaneous creation of a kind of women’s market of information and services” (2001: 191). This “market” consisted of women taking over the tasks most essential for a “normal” life—finding food, water, shelter, health care, and so on. Such everyday tasks were essential for survival and thereby for maintaining Bosniak lives in the face of a political project aimed to destroy them.

Testimony as politics

Testifying in national or international courts became another element of everyday politics, as seemingly atomized women told similar stories of their abuse and suffering to

strangers in public settings. The UN established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993 to “try those individuals most responsible for appalling acts such as murder, torture, rape, enslavement, destruction of property and other crimes.”¹⁰⁶ Women activists were instrumental in creating the court and in ensuring that sexual violence was treated as a systematic war crime, rather than as a byproduct of war (Mertus 2004). Situated in The Hague, Netherlands, away from the ongoing war, the ICTY eventually charged more than 160 people. Thousands of women became involved in this international justice project when they testified as part of ICTY proceedings, either at the ICTY offices in Sarajevo or in The Hague. Given that a courtroom as a “theater of power” (Cole 2010; Koomen 2013), giving testimony—especially about rape or other personal experiences—became an explicitly political act that had profound consequences for both national and transnational justice initiatives.

For many women, testifying was a terrible experience. At the beginning of the court’s tenure, one witnesses described being housed in the same hotel as the family of the defendant and suddenly running into the defendant’s supporters in the hall (Interview #47, 5/2013). Another reported that she requested something to eat after being kept waiting all day to testify, only to be brought a sandwich with a bill that she was unable to pay (Interview #68, 6/2013). Others reported that they were asked to testify without being given appropriate clothing, so that one they arrived at the court they were embarrassed and ashamed by their poverty (field notes 2013; Amnesty International 2009). Such experiences deepened trauma and provoked insecurity among those willing to testify. As awareness grew about the court’s shortcomings, many women’s organizations in Bosnia began lobbying for reform (Mertus 2004; Engle 2005). They pushed for the inclusion of

gender-expertise and gender-sensitive protocols at all stages of the prosecution; eventually the court implemented measures to increase the protection of survivors and witnesses of gender-based crimes, setting new standards for gender-inclusiveness in international law.¹⁰⁷ In fighting for these reforms, many women's groups were connected to international actors and networks. For several women I interviewed, the act of giving testimony and then lobbying for these legal reforms left them with a deeply felt political mission for justice. Collectively, women's testimony helped change the international legal standard and establish rape and sexual violence as a war crime, a crime against humanity, and as part of genocide (Stiglmayer 2003; Engle 2005; Oosterveld 2005).¹⁰⁸

NEW ACTIVITIES THROUGH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Beba Hadzić, a school principal before the war, was displaced from her home during violence in the Drina valley. She described how she had a normal life before the war, but then in May 1992, “Serbians ... put us in trucks and took us out of town, and then 10 days later they put us in trucks again like cattle and took us to slaughter, and then I became a refugee” (Interview #22, 4/25/2013). She described how she was shocked to find herself asking the Red Cross for food and shoes—she had been wearing flip flops when Serb militias arrived at her house. Beba took shelter with hundreds of other refugees in a school in Tuzla. There, she brought together a group of women who did not know the fate of their male family members. They realized that while their husbands were gone, “they had to take responsibility for the family to find shelter for them to find food for them... They had to be in charge at this time.”

In order to give these women something productive to occupy their time, Beba decided to form an organization. She studied Bosnian law to figure out how to go about

this process. After she had registered the organization, Beba appealed to Oxfam for materials to launch a knitting project. At first, they gave her 300 kilos of wool, and they women were really happy and encouraged by the project. Beba approached Oxfam again:

The next time they gave me 4,000 [kilos]. The first project started at three schools...We created socks and sweaters for school kids. After three weeks we had created sweaters and it was created from that group of women. Oxfam was surprised and everyone was very happy...[the] next contract was for 44 schools and we got a car and everything. It was a huge project...(Interview, 4/25/2013)

Eventually, Beba's organization—which she named BOSFAM to represent a large Bosnian family—grew and founded over a dozen centers where women produced handmade garments and crafts. While it started as an emotional support group, today BOSFAM sells the goods made by women in the organization to the public. Beba recognized the importance of the group for women's solidarity and survival during the war, acknowledging that:

There were a lot of bad moments during the war of course. But there were of course some great moments as well. Having this great group of people that works together creates a special kind of connection, and that is one of the greatest moments of this time. This is what helps the person to go through it; you learn new things and you don't think about the war. (Interview, 4/25/2013)

While organizations like Beba's were virtually nonexistent before the war, between 1,500 to 8,000 organizations emerged during and after (Simmons 2007: 175; ID/BHI 2008). As discussed in Chapter 6, organizations formed in large part to meet the urgent needs created by violence. They were particularly likely to form in Bosniak (Muslim) areas—including Zenica, Tuzla, Mostar and Sarajevo—because they were often set up where there were large numbers of people in need of aid. These organizations were essential for creating pockets of stability within the crisis of war, as they helped

people communicate with displaced family members, transfer money and goods, re-settle after displacement, find jobs, emotional support, housing, financial support, medication, and much more.

As discussed in the previous chapter, many organizations developed and formalized with the help of INGOs or other funding agencies, which linked individual women like Beba to international institutions like Oxfam. These interactions encouraged women's organizations to mimic the missions and structure of larger organizations and elect individual women to formal leadership positions—a process that DiMaggio and Powell (1983) termed “institutional isomorphism.” Over 100,000 foreigners from various UN agencies and over 200 INGOs were reported to have been part of the humanitarian operation in Bosnia (Andreas 2008: 1). These individual actors brokered connections between emergent grassroots organizations and more formal international humanitarian agencies. This influx of international funding led to new distribution networks for critical goods and services and also provided well-paying jobs for some locals.¹⁰⁹ Many INGOs—such as Kvinna til Kvinna from Sweden or Medica Mondiale from Germany—adopted local implementing partners, and thereby helped local organizations grow and formalize as funding increased. A five million dollar grant from the U.S. in 1996 launched the Bosnian Women's Initiative, which aimed to coordinate NGO efforts working to empower women (Cockburn 2001: 32). This funding further facilitated the formation of community organizations.

Strategic use of humanitarianism

Many women's organizations that formed during this period strategically used women's importance as caregivers to justify forming the organization. For example,

Srcem do Mira (Through Heart to Peace) is a small women's organization based out of a large yellow house in Kozarac, a town currently located in Republika Srpska just outside of Prijedor. Before the war, 90 percent of the town's 24,000 residents were Bosniak (Sivac-Bryant 2008). The town experienced high levels of violence during the war and a massacre in May 1992 left hundreds (and maybe thousands) of residents dead. Most of the survivors were sent to concentration camps and hundreds of Bosniak homes were razed. Some residents fled to Croatia, where they congregated in refugee camps.

While in a refugee camp near Zagreb, Majda¹¹⁰ saw many women from the region around Kozarac who were eager to do something to improve their lives (Interview #8, 5/27/2013). Because she was well-known in her community before the war, Majda organized a meeting with about 20 refugee women from different walks of life—there were doctors, lawyers, hairdressers, seamstresses, housewives, and farmers. None had ever participated in a community organization and they did not know how to write a proposal to get funding. But according to Majda,

We sat down and they wrote their goals for what they were trying to accomplish. There were women whom had children and those children had to go to school. So they wanted to talk about how they were going to go to school and where. And if they were sick or needed medical attention [how they would get it]

The group of women identified their strongest skills. With a hairdresser in the group and several talented tailors, they decided to open a small hair salon in the refugee camp and establish a sewing group that could make clothing to sell. The group became a place where women “could come...and work.”

After the war, Kozarac was incorporated within Republika Srpska. As a result, few Bosniak residents were eager to return. Many, including Majda, returned to Sanski

Most, a nearby city just across the border in the Bosnian-Croat Federation. Soon, however, Majda and several other women in her group decided to return to their hometown. Many lived under tents until their homes could be rebuilt. Despite constant harassment from the local Serb population, other displaced Bosniak residents followed. Former Serb army leaders dominated local government in the area around Kozarac and in nearby Prijedor; many were widely known to have committed atrocities. Local authorities erected memorials to Serb victims of war, but denied that crimes against Bosniaks occurred and prevented survivors from erecting their own memorials (Subašić 2013). Nearby concentration camps, like Trnoplje, lay in ruins. Majda noted how people in the area constantly felt threatened or unsafe. “You have to live here and feel it,” she said, “The people who were in the Serbian army who did bad things, they now had high positions and a good reputation here. They are like heroes.”¹¹¹

Srcem do Mira became a pillar of the returnee population. But at the same time, the organization purports to be apolitical— Majda emphasized to me in our meetings that it is a “humanitarian” organization primarily run by and for women. Even the organization’s name, Through Heart to Peace, reflects an essentially feminine logic. At the jubilee anniversary of its founding in May 2013, members and supporters of the organization heralded its mission to promote “*ljbuu, tolerencja, and mira*” (love, tolerance, and peace). Handmade paper doves and flowers decorated the event. These “feminine” touches were designed, in the words of one attendee, to show how “you can’t hold beauty back” after the destruction of war (field notes 5/2013). And yet such a framing of Srcem do Mira’s mission is in part strategic, as it situates the organization

outside of male-dominated political channels, allowing it space to maneuver without significant pushback from the local Serb authorities.

In reality, Srcem do Mira has been a leader in a highly contentious political project: the resurrection of a vibrant Bosniak community in the middle of a hostile Serb region that, according to popular lore, has one of the world's highest numbers of convicted war criminals per capita (field notes 5/2013; Sivac-Bryant 2008). The organization frequently brings its members and supporters to former concentration camps, drawing the attention (and ire) of the surrounding community and quietly demanding that Serbs acknowledge the crimes that occurred. The town is now widely known as one of the most successful returnee communities in Bosnia (Sivac-Bryant 2008). Framing the organization as non-political was gender-conservative, and yet it strategically allowed the organization to engage in the contentious process of minority refugee return (see also Helms 2002: 25).

Organizations like Srcem do Mira often judiciously adopted the label “humanitarian organization” in order to differentiate themselves from other “political” organizations, which tended to have ties to nationalist political parties. Adopting the humanitarian label allowed women's organizations to operate without controversy, as powerful men largely saw them as unthreatening because they extend women's traditional caregiving roles. At the same time, these organizations engaged in explicitly political goals, such as working towards ethnic reconciliation, refugee return, or rights for the displaced (Walsh 1998, 2000; Helms 2013: 16). Therefore, through traditional roles, these organizations have provided a platform for their leaders and members to interact with international actors, funding networks, and other institutions of power.

These “humanitarian” organizations allowed women who had not previously engaged in any type of political activities to join together in a group with some purpose or goal. Dr. Branka Antić-Štauber described how the urgent needs created by war eventually allowed ordinary women “to have some political power because they are together in a group” (Interview, 7/26/2010). As Dr. Branka suggests, participating in an organization—regardless of mission—became a form of political engagement in itself. While before the war few women were engaged in public or political life, one interviewee described how “these unfortunate circumstances [of war]...were a catalyst for [women] being politically engaged” (Interview #72, 5/16/2013).

In the years since the war, the humanitarian sector in Bosnia emerged as a parallel power structure to the state. Organizations like Medica Zenica, Vive Žene, and BOSFAM became the primary service providers in the country (Walsh 1998; Mertus 2000; Bagic 2004; Helms 2013). Some of these organizations became implementing partners of the UNHCR, which connected them to the resources and bureaucratic network of the United Nations (Walsh 2000). Through their expanded social networks, connections to international sources of funding, and official leadership titles, women who participated in these organizations gained power in their communities that could extend beyond the civic realm.

Feminist advocacy emerges

Some organizations that formed to address the acute needs of women during war morphed into explicitly feminist organizations. For example, Žene Ženama, founded by feminist activists from different ethnic backgrounds immediately after the war, was initially designed to aid women refugees in Sarajevo who needed urgent economic,

medical, and psychological care (Kleiman 2007).¹¹² But the three women who formed the organization had experience in feminist networks—including in the Women in Black movement discussed below—and ultimately aimed to create a space where they could advocate for women’s human rights in all spheres of private and public life (Kleiman 2007; Interview, Jadranka Miličić 6/7/2013). By virtue of their different ethnic backgrounds, the founders also knew that they were making a political statement simply by working together (Interview, Jadranka Miličić 6/7/2013). They therefore used the influx of foreign funding for trauma counseling to develop both counseling programs and an organizational structure dedicated to broader women’s empowerment initiatives (Kleiman 2007).

Medica Zenica is another example of a service-providing, “humanitarian” NGO that morphed into a political, feminist organization. Initially designed to provide care for survivors of sexual violence, Medica soon became a holistic treatment center, providing refuge, hot meals, and general interpersonal support and solidarity to women in the region. Many women who became involved in Medica found that their work as doctors, nurses, therapists, or support staff catalyzed a shift in their own political consciousness (Cockburn 1998; Interview, Sabiha Husić 6/14/2013). Meliha, for example, worked for Medica as an anesthesiologist. She was completely non-political prior to the war. After joining Medica, however, she stated, “it’s not enough to be a doctor. You have to be engaged in a political sense too. Through the project I’ve met a lot of women who are in the women’s movement and I’ve found my place in it” (quoted in Cockburn 1998: 191).

Medica Zenica and *Žene Ženama* reveal how women’s organizations made humanitarian wartime needs linked to a broader political project. By espousing a clear

feminist mission and by networking with international feminists and feminist organizations, staff members and clients of both organizations were exposed to discourses on anti-militarism and patriarchy (Interviews Sabiha Husić, 6/14/2013; Jadranka Miličić 6/7/2013). The organizations struck a balance between providing necessary services to vulnerable women and advocating for the importance of women's needs in a public, political way. As the years passed, both organizations began to engage in goals aimed at changing Bosnian women's legal rights. Medica led a coalition of women's groups to advocate for the Bosnian government to enforce the 2003 Gender Equality Law and the 2005 Law on Domestic Violence (Spahić Šiljak 2014: 33). Žene Ženama appointed itself the domestic monitor of the government's plans to implement CEDAW, the Millennium Development Goals, the Beijing Declaration, and UN Resolution 1325. Both organizations participate in the yearly "16 Days of Activism Against Male Violence Against Women," which they coordinate in collaboration with several government institutions. As such, these organizations have become leaders in the fight for gender equality, and their staff and leadership have a national (and sometimes even global) platform from which they can engage women's rights issues.

RESISTANCE AND DEFIANCE: BRIDGING INFORMAL AND FORMAL POLITICS

"We did not want this war, we refuse it."—Women in Black, Belgrade, 1991

War also opened spaces for a third form of women's informal political action: resistance to and defiance of patriarchal norms and social expectations. These forms of resistance were more overt and public than in Rwanda because of the greater political tolerance of such forms of political dissent. I thus include them here in a distinct section. Women began public resistance before the war as the possibility for violence became

increasingly real. In June 2, 1991, a group of parents—primarily mothers of soldiers conscripted by the Yugoslav National Army (JNA)—broke into the Serbian Parliament in Belgrade and demanded their sons be released from military duty. They issued a statement that read,

We refuse that our sons become the victims of senseless militarists. It is not clear what are the goals for which we should sacrifice our sons. Our sons have been deceived: they have to participate in a war for which they are not the least bit responsible, in a war that has not even been declared. That they should give their lives for imperialist purposes is the project of politicians. It is a disgrace to win a fratricidal war (Mothers of the Soldiers of Belgrade 20 July 1991, quoted in Zajović 2013: 88)

The following day busloads of protestors traveled to Ljubljana, Slovenia in an attempt to bring their sons home (Cockburn 1998: 166). These women only had one weapon in their hands: “little photographs of their sons” (Ugrežić 1994, cited in Nikolić-Ristanović 1998: 234). A mass demonstration followed in Sarajevo, and the protestors once again interrupted Parliament to demand their sons be released from military duty. By August 29, an estimated 100,000 people gathered in Zagreb to protest the war (Cockburn 1998: 166). Mothers angry about the conscription of their sons replicated this model around the region throughout the war, and there were similar episodes of protest in smaller cities as well. For example, a large group of women gathered in Prijedor in 1992 and attempted to steal the list of men to be drafted for military service (Interviews, Majda #8, 5/27/2013; Tabiha #52, 6/27/2013). Majda, who participated in these early protests, described how women rallied because “they did not want to send their brothers and sons and husbands to kill innocent people.” Branka Rajner emphasized how these protests were women’s way of influencing politics through the civic sector. As she put it, “That’s how women do politics” (Interview #72, 6/14/2013). These activities indicate the extent of women’s

activism in the early phases of the war. As the war progressed, these actions continued but shifted in focus. Many of the early protestors came from the educated elite, women who had networks or exposure to feminist thought. As the war progressed, more and more ordinary women became participants in various forms of visible political protest.

Women in Black

Women in Black (*Žene u Crnom*) was at the forefront of women's public activism during the war. Originally founded in 1988 by Israeli women who were protesting Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the Women in Black model of silent protest spread throughout the world through feminist networks during the 1990s. The Women in Black model brings women together in a public square or in front of an important building or monument to protest war by standing silently dressed in black. The movement is oriented by a staunchly feminist, antimilitarist, anti-patriarchal, non-violent philosophy, and is guided by the moral imperative "Not in our name!" and the slogan of "Always Disobedient!"

The group began in the Balkans as a support group for like-minded women opposed to the war and regime in Serbia (Spahić Šiljak 2014: 76). Jadranka Miličić, an early member of the movement, described the first meetings as being "Fifteen girls in a café bar with just enough money for two cups of tea and one coffee" (quoted in Spahić Šiljak 2014: 76). Women in Black held their first protest in the Balkans in Sarajevo on September 27, 1991, in response to Serbia's threats of violence. Their subsequent protests were primarily in Belgrade, although they also traveled around the region and set up chapters in Zagreb and Ljubljana. Every Wednesday at 3:30 pm members gathered in a public place to protest. Many protests were held at Trg Republike (Republic Square), the

historical heart of Belgrade and the site of many of Serbia's most notable events in the country's recent political history (Athanasίου 2013; Spahić Šiljak 2014). Members wear black because, as noted by Staša Zajović, co-founder of the movement, "Wearing black is testifying about war while the war is still going on, and about crimes while they are being committed; it is intervention in reality and exposing what is being denied in the public sphere, in the City Square" (Zajović 2013: 30). Women in Black protestors were self-conscious about the power of their bodies in the center of a male, public space, and saw it as an act of defiance of the patriarchal political order (Mostov 1995). They selected public sites like Trg Republike in order to bring attention to their rejection of war, patriarchy, hegemonic nationalism, and militarism. This reflected an understanding of the female body as a medium for protest, and also made the link between military war violence and domestic gender-based violence. Zajović described,

By exposing their bodies in the Square, members of Women in Black inscribe their bodies in the history of anti-war resistance, "kidnapping" the space from the dominant discourse and from those who promote it in public spaces, acting subversively against patriarchal traditional symbols. (Zajović 2013: 34).

The group's defiant and subversive logic put it squarely in conflict with the Serbian state. The group's protests, pamphleteering, and volunteer work with refugee populations soon prompted pushback, ridicule, and retaliation by authorities and nationalist groups, who began to refer to the activists as "witches" and "traitors." Serbian authorities arrested some members for their involvement; for example, Jadranka Miličić was arrested three times during the war (Interview #61, 6/7/2013). Nevertheless, Women in Black and other feminist groups were unfazed and organized solidarity trips during which women from Serbia would travel to Bosnia to stand with their Bosnian sisters against the war.

Jadranka described meeting with seven other Serbian women during the war and traveling frequently to Sarajevo. These pan-Balkan feminist movements were the most vocal and visible political resistance against the war, as they disobeyed formal restrictions on citizen travel and provided feminist women a forum for condemning male-dominated war machine.

Women in Black activists continued regular protests after the war ended. As information about the Srebrenica massacre of as many as 8,000 men and boys emerged in 1996, they pointed to it as “the paradigm of Serbian crimes” (Zajović 2013: 16). In the years that followed, they used Srebrenica as a way of shaming nationalist Serb leaders, demanding justice and that the truth be told within Serbia. Srebrenica became a rallying point for many of the movement’s new forms of protest; for example, in July 2010, the organization brought together activists from across the Balkans to collect thousands of pairs of shoes representing the men and boys killed during the massacre. They demanded that a permanent monument be built in Belgrade that commemorated the atrocity. This type of protest put Women in Black activists in contact with artists, theater activists, and other feminist organizations.

Women in Black continue their public protests, publications, and activities in Bosnia to this day. Moreover, many of its early members have gone on to launch additional feminist organizations. As mentioned above, Jadranka Miličić went on to found *Žene Ženama* (Women to Women) and then established the CURE Foundation in Sarjevo. Žarana Papić, a professor at the University of Belgrade, went on to found *Glas Razlike* (Voice of Difference), an organization that promoted women’s political rights. In addition, Svetlana Slapšak helped found the activist organization “Balkan Women

Against War” and established a feminist magazine called ProFemina in 1994 in Belgrade. This magazine served as a forum for feminist anti-war activism and space for artists to publically resist the war and Milošević’s nationalist regime.¹¹³

Mothers of Srebrenica

The Srebrenica massacre in July 1995 sent tens of thousands of civilians from the Podrinje region to take refuge in Tuzla and other cities in Bosnia under the control of the Bosnian army. At first, the women, children, and elderly who had been allowed to leave the Srebrenica UN “safe zone” assumed that their male relatives would be following close behind. Months went by and many still waited for news. As the war came to a close, it became increasingly clear that many of their male family members had been killed. In early 1996, reports started emerging about the extent of the atrocities committed in Srebrenica. Women I interviewed conveyed a sense of shock after realizing that their loved ones were actually dead; many had assumed they had simply been detained in concentration camps, and would be returning any day.

The realization that 8,000 men and boys had been killed provoked disbelief, grief, and soon, outrage. Women began to organize. Kada Hotić, for example, a founding member of the NGO *Mothers of Srebrenica*, was a factory employee before the war. She lost her husband, son, and many other family members during massacres in the Drina Valley region. She described how women’s lives transformed after the loss of their family members:

[Serbs] began genocide...In my family, it was my son, my husband, his brother, and later on I realized that 56 of my family members had been killed. We had questions. Where are the people we love? Are they imprisoned? Are they alive? What was their destiny? We did not have a lot of answers. (Interview #49, 5/20/2013)

In the aftermath, she joined with other women from the Srebrenica region to find the bodies of their loved ones, and to pressure the government for aid. Believing that “protests were the only way to be heard,” Kada described how she began to organize with other women. Most women from the region were not well educated—they were primarily farmers or factory workers, and few had more than a couple years of schooling. Unlike Women in Black, what emerged was not a feminist movement; at no point did mothers of those killed articulate a commitment to abolishing patriarchy or recognition of a shared oppression of women. Instead, it was a “mothers’ movement,” organized around their shared grief as mothers and widows. Nevertheless, the mothers movement in Bosnia was a form of political awakening for thousands of Bosnian women as they demanded Serb leaders reveal the location of their loved ones’ bodies and used DNA technology to identify their remains. As such, it was similarly political and resistant to entrenched cultural expectations that women would be passive victims, and that their physical bodies would largely remain in the private realm. Instead, women leveraged their identities as victims and as mothers to engage in self-described “disobedient” activities in public spaces.

The first protest began when a group of women from the movement stormed the Red Cross offices in 1996. Women were furious—as one journalist put it, “these women could tear you apart” (Interview #67, 6/11/2013). They demanded the truth about their loved one’s whereabouts, the exhumation of bodies from mass graves, compensation for the surviving relatives of those killed, an international investigation into what happened, and the arrest and prosecution of those responsible. They also demanded accountability

from the UN, and particularly from the Dutch Peacekeepers, who were charged with securing the “Safe Zone” around Srebrenica. Similar protests continued over the following years. The mothers met in public spaces with pictures of their missing loved ones, demanding some sort of accountability and justice. Mothers organized annual commemorations on July 11, the anniversary of the massacre, in which the bodies identified in the previous year would be buried with public rituals of grief and prayer.¹¹⁴ In part because of the Mothers’ actions, what happened in Srebrenica slowly became revealed to the world. Such protests and public displays of grief helped to define these women as “pure victims.” These “victim groups” became an important political constituency for the divided post-war government, and for international actors. Women in the group understood the power they wielded, because “There is no politician who is brave enough to come in front of a mother who lost her five sons and tell her, ‘I don’t care what happened to you,’ because he is going to lose all of the elections forever” (Interview #67, 6/11/2013).

By 1999, the global community formally recognized “Mothers of Srebrenica” (Simić 2009). Because of their status and self-professed identity as a non-feminist mothers organization, Mothers have reinforced essentialist notions of women as more peaceful than men, and have positioned their own power as derived from the suffering they experienced because of the death of their son (or husband). They do not aim “to disrupt the old script that each conflict leaves behind men in the power and women in tears” (Simić 2009: 229). Their identity as a mothers organization emerged in part from relationships they developed with other mothers groups around the globe, including Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina. When I visited the organization’s office in

Sarajevo, I saw pictures of other mothers groups lining the walls. A special plaque from Las Madres is featured, along with pictures of various leaders of the organization with leaders around the world.

In the years since the war, Mothers of Srebrenica has organized protests, events, seminars, and so on in an attempt to further the quest for justice. Most of these actions have been less defiant than their initial protests, although they continue to disrupt traditional expectations of uneducated, rural women's roles in society. Their mission has often placed them in contact with international organizations like the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP), which was charged with exhuming the graves and using DNA technology to determine the identities of the victims. They have appealed to former President Bill Clinton and other international leaders who they feel are morally responsible for failing to protect their loved ones during the massacre. They have become adept at utilizing the media to spread information about their cause. As Munira Subašić put it, "At the beginning of the war we were just housewives and we were raising kids and our husbands were in charge of providing food for us...[Today] every powerful person that comes to Bosnia wants to talk with us" (Interview #60, 6/5/2013). Indeed in the middle of my interview with Munira, she pulled a crumpled piece of paper out of her purse—it was a letter hand-signed by former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who reached out to her after the arrest of General Ratko Mladić in 2011.

Munira has become a subversive (and controversial) representative for the Mothers. In 2013 she flew herself to the United Nations headquarters in New York City and sat in the audience for a speech given by Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić. The UN had barred her from talking at the meeting on international criminal justice, and in

response, she stood up during Nikolić's speech wearing a t-shirt that read "Srebrenica: Justice is slow but it's reachable" and held a sign that read, "Republika Srpska – Genocide." She was quickly removed from the UN hall, but the commotion surrounding her removal led to a well-attended press conference where she was still wearing the shirt.¹¹⁵ Munira's disruption was celebrated by people in Bosnia as an example of the public defiance required to get any attention for the lack of justice today. Several weeks later, Nikolić publicly apologized for Serbia's role in the "crimes" committed in Srebrenica (although he stopped short of calling the massacre genocide).¹¹⁶

The Mothers have also employed less obvious tactics that are comparably subversive. For example, Kada Hotić described how every July 11th members of the organization travel to Srebrenica to bury the remains of those who had been identified in the previous year. Shortly after the war, they had requested access to a large plot of land in Srebrenica for a memorial and burial site. Yet the Republika Srpska government did not grant them access, and even "laughed at [them] when [they] proposed the idea." Regardless, they continued to bury people there every year "right under their noses" (Interview #49, Kada Hotić, 5/20/2013).

Of course, with such aggressive tactics and successful fundraising efforts, some Bosnians are suspicious of them. During my fieldwork I often heard rumors that Munira and Kada had profited from their jobs running the organization (although I never personally saw evidence of this). As a result, similar NGOs have also emerged led by different widows or mothers of those lost in the Srebrenica massacre. As I discuss in Chapter 8, these groups frequently compete for funds. One such group is *Žene Srebrenice* (Women of Srebrenica), a group located in Tuzla and led by a woman who lost her son

and husband during the war. Despite the disagreements between the two groups and constant battles over funding, they both utilize defiant or subversive tactics to advance their cause. For instance, one member of *Žene Srebrenica* described how the war made her “loud.” She said,

Before the war I worked in administration and I didn't have to be allowed to complain, I had things to do at work and when I went home to be a housewife. And now women are, and me as well, we are louder. We have to fight for ourselves because men are killed. And someone has to take care of us. And now we have to take care of ourselves...And everything is on us because we're alone. And we are loud because we are in danger, women are in danger in this society. (Interview #69, 6/11/2013)

On the 11th of every month, *Žene Srebrenica* organizes protests in the town center of Tuzla, in which dozens of women—and a few men—gather carrying the images and names of their loved ones who were killed. I joined them in June 2013 and spoke many of the participants, who indicated that such a form of public protest would have been inconceivable before the war. But now, as several put it, they have nothing to lose.

FORMAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Above I illustrate three ways that women engaged in informal types of politics as a result of the war. I now turn to the final forum of women's political engagement: the formal political realm. The Dayton Peace Agreement ended the military conflict and divided the country into two self-governing entities. This thwarted a re-constellation of power at the state level, as Dayton allowed the same political actors involved in the war to remain in power. These included alleged war criminals like Slobodan Milošević who remained President of Serbia after the war, and Bosniak politicians like Alija Izetbegović who served as President of Bosnia during the war and then joined the country's rotating tripartite Presidency after. In the years since, a “political-business-criminal nexus”

(Bassuener 2012) has masqueraded as a democratic party system, profoundly limiting the democratic process and discouraging ordinary Bosnians from taking part in politics as a career. Citizens widely perceive the ruling (male) elite as pursuing its own self-enrichment. Like in other countries transitioning from socialism to free-market economics, political elites and their well-connected friends took control of many business opportunities, and became linked to mafia-run smuggling rings, transporting weapons, drugs, and people throughout the Balkan region (International Crisis Group 1998).

As I discussed in Chapter 5, the Dayton Accords completely excluded women at every stage of decision-making or policy-making in the aftermath (Cockburn 1998; Björkdahl 2012). In the first post-war elections, women were elected to merely 2.4 percent of the seats in federal Bosnia-Herzegovina House of Representatives, and no woman was elected mayor of a municipality (Cockburn 2001: 23). Therefore, this peace settlement did not upend gender norms at the national political level, but rather fossilized those of the past. Nevertheless, despite the lack of opening in the formal political sector, some individual women did become engaged during and after the war. Parliamentarian Alma Čolo was inspired by the shift away from Communist politics during the war and described her motivation to get involved as follows:

I entered politics in 1993, during the war...As a lawyer I worked in one office in the Ministry for Foreign and Trade Policy. And when the war started, I was there. And this building was destroyed, and we went to the Presidency building and worked from there. I entered in politics because my friend was the President of the City Council of the [SAA] party. He is a doctor, and he wanted—he asked—for me to help them establish that party in Sarajevo, which was under the horrible circumstances [of siege]. Without water, without electricity, [without] anything that is necessary for normal life. And I'm here now. (Interview #74, 7/2010)

In Alma's experience, the war physically pushed her to work out of the Presidency's office, where she expanded her social network and eventually made the connections necessary to launch a political career.

Other politicians described how the circumstances of war motivated them to become politically active. This was particularly apparent in interviews conducted with current politicians in mixed marriages or from mixed national backgrounds. Besima Borić (Interview #10, 4/12/2013), a member of the Federation Parliament and high-ranking member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), was politically active before the war. As she put it, however, her "serious" political life began after, as she recognized the tragedies that so many people had faced and felt compelled to do something. She was raised secular in a partisan family and identified as "Yugoslav" before the war, although her ethnic heritage is Bosniak (Muslim). She had children from two different mixed marriages; her daughter's father is a Croat, and her son's father is Serbian. As such, her family represented all of the ethno-national groups within Bosnia. As ethnic nationalism intensified during the war, Besima felt motivated "to make some positive change. I believe if I do good, I do good for my kids, and then I do good for my country, then it is good for everyone." She described the war as an awakening, since she began to think about what it meant to kill other human beings on the basis of an ethnicity that she had never seriously considered before (Spahić Šiljak 2014: 236-240). She emphasized that women who came from mixed families, like her own, had an easier time crossing ethnic lines after the war. As she put it, "Women were the first ones who had a normal conversation with two MPs who were on the other side of the war. In '96 and '97—and this was a big deal—women talked and worked together, women from two entities..."

(Interview 4/12/2013). By joining the multi-ethnic SDP, she rejected the nationalist political parties that were dominant in the post-war movement.

The sense of conviction, or resilience, that Besima reflected was common among female politicians who had survived the war. Ismeta Dervoz, a member of the national parliament, survived the siege of Sarajevo while working as a public broadcaster for a radio program. Everyday during the siege she painted her nails red, applied lipstick, pressed a clean white shirt and donned high heels. The act of dressing up, she suggested, helped her maintain her identity and resist the chaos of war that unfolded around her. Continuing to work during the siege gave her motivation to survive. As she put it,

When you are alive at the end of the day, you must feel that you are human being. You must be useful to yourself and the others, of course, if you can, and I found all of this in my work....We worked sometimes 72 hours or 80 hours in a shift, because it was impossible for somebody to come [relieve us], so I stayed sometimes three or four days in the radio television building, and I worked 24 hours, but it was wonderful because all of the colleagues (technicians, journalists) worked as normally as possible...We did not want to be involved in any propaganda, in any situation in which we could maybe be put on some side. We were on one side. We were the citizens of Sarajevo under siege, of course. (Interview #2, 4/3/2013)

Ismeta's experience suggests the power of everyday politics and resistance in catalyzing more formal types of political engagement. During the war, Ismeta described how she refused to be victim; she did not believe the war was legitimate. She was expressly anti-nationalist and felt a conviction to spread information to the citizens of Sarajevo—regardless of ethnicity—who were under siege. She understood that all citizens of Sarajevo were victims because of the violation the siege caused to “our dignity, our human rights, our lives.” Her position as a broadcaster connected her to many foreign journalists during the war. Though these connections she managed to organize a Bosnian

delegation to attend the Eurovision competition in Ireland in order to “send a message to the world that we are not savages, [that] we are people who have rights to live, to work, to be alive, and to do the best that we can in our profession.” Ismeta’s determination was successful and she was able to travel to Ireland with Bosnia’s Eurovision delegation during the war. After the war Ismeta described how she became motivated to fight for “a much better situation in Bosnia” through formal politics.

Others women I interviewed described how the end of the war, and the political stagnation that ensued, motivated them to enter formal politics. A Serb member of parliament who is married to a Bosniak man noted, “When the war stopped, things started developing slowly, and then I got my motivation to start in politics” (Interview #29, 5/29/2013). Because of her mixed marriage, this MP had suffered greatly during the war, as her husband had been conscripted to fight with the Bosnian Army. Her house was hit many times by mortar shells and gunfire. She was hopeful that things would improve in the aftermath, but soon became discouraged. She decided to join politics so that her children would not suffer from the same exclusion and nationalist tension she had faced.

One former Minister was widowed during the war and left to raise her young children on her own. In the aftermath, she described to me how she discovered that a friend in Australia had been sending her money, but that she had not received it. She approached a newly forming political party to get assistance with locating the missing aid and, as a result, ended up joining the party “to take matters into my own hands.” She also became involved with two organizations after the war that aimed to support wounded soldiers and their families. Her decision to enter politics after the war was a form of “rebellion” against the nationalists who had killed her husband. As she put it, “I thought

about it, and I decided that the loss of my husband should not be my end. I grew stronger and decided to fight. I did not let myself go with the flow. I had the support of my friends, so that is how I managed to fight against that. That was my rebellion” (Interview #16, 4/23/2013).

A national effort to include more women in formal political roles strengthened after 2000. The OSCE, the League of Women Voters, international organizations (e.g., National Democratic Institute), and various local women’s organizations spearheaded this movement. Their first USAID-funded campaign, “There Are More of Us: Let’s Vote,” encouraged women to vote in their own interests, educated women about the new electoral system, and pressured the provisional election committee to adopt a gender quota (Cockburn 2001: 23). In the 2006 elections, the number of female candidates on party lists for parliament surpassed the required 30 percent threshold for the first time (Kleiman 2007). As a result, the number of women in Parliament increased as well, to just over 18 percent in the Republika Srpska National Assembly, 21 percent in the Federation Parliament, and 14 percent in the federal Parliament (Kleiman 2007; IPU 2008). Many of these gains, however, were superficial: political parties put forward women who had little political experience, or were the wives or daughters of the party elite. As such, many became the pawns of the male-dominated political establishment and failed to advance women’s interests (Cockburn 2001: 23).

Nevertheless, women in these formal political positions found they began to have more substantive power while in office. Many have succeeded in working with civil society organizations to pass legislation aimed at helping other women survivors of war. For example, the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia-Herzegovina was passed in 2003,

prohibiting discrimination based on gender. Subsequent 2005 laws in the Federation and Republika Srpska granted women protection from gender-based violence and access to legal resources (Kleiman 2007: 12). Organizations like Medica Zenica and Žene Ženama were essential in coordinating women's advocacy efforts for these legislative victories. For instance, a campaign in 2006 called "For the Dignity of Survivors" was led by a coalition of women's organizations with Medica Zenica at the forefront. This initiative aimed to get the government to recognize rape survivors as civilian victims of war so that they would be entitled to financial compensation. The campaign eventually succeeded when SDA¹¹⁷ politician Nermina Kapetanović lobbied the speaker of the House of Representatives to sponsor the bill (Helms 2013: 207). The passing of this bill granted women rape survivors a legal status that entitled them to a small monthly pension from the government. It also reflected the commitment of some women in government to support those who suffered most from the war.

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined Bosnian women's mobilization after war in both informal and formal political spaces. The loss of men and the widespread displacement of the population in Bosnia led many women to take on new roles in their households and communities in order to survive. Women-headed households were particularly vulnerable and therefore joined together with others to find basic supplies. Women represented their families and navigated government institutions in order to secure various permissions and reparations after the war. They also gave testimony about their experiences to local and international courts, speaking publically about sexual violence and thereby challenging cultural expectations of silence and shame. Economic destruction and the loss of income

also pushed women to seek aid from humanitarian agencies and find new ways to earn money for their family. This led to the rapid formation of community organizations, which worked with international humanitarian NGOs to distribute essential supplies. Women were able to take on leadership roles in these nascent organizations in part because they framed themselves as victims of the war and thereby as non-combatants. This gave women the ability to cross ethnic lines and engage in contentious processes like refugee resettlement while articulating their work as inherently non-political. Women framed organizations as “humanitarian” to juxtapose them with the “political” organizations working on state building, refugee return, and disarmament at the national level. This framing allowed women the room to engage in contentious political issues without significant pushback from political elites. Women’s involvement community organizations reflected “quiet encroachment” of the feminized civil sector as a parallel power structure to that of the ethno-nationalist masculine culture of the state. While formal politics remained—and remains—male dominated and defined by a corrupt, patrimonial logic, some individual women have been motivated by their experiences during the war to get involved. Today, the number of women in Bosnian politics continues to grow.

Yet although the war was transformative for women’s engagement in politics in many ways, women’s power in Bosnia remains highly curtailed. As I discuss in the next chapter, intimate partner violence is common, as is sexual harassment and overt gender discrimination. Political elites and the media ridicule feminist organizations and communities harass and stigmatize rape survivors. I show how many of the current

restrictions on women stem from the involvement of the international community, the structure of the state, and a revitalization of patriarchy in the wake of war.

CHAPTER 8: Limits of Mobilization

In the previous chapters, I illustrated the various ways violence shaped women's political lives. In both Rwanda and Bosnia, women engaged in a "politics of practice" that shifted in their everyday activities; they joined community-based organizations and entered public spaces in ways that were previously unimaginable. Moreover, the Rwandan government passed landmark legislation supporting gender equality. By 2003, Rwandan women held the world's highest percentage of seats in parliament and key positions in government ministries, the judiciary, and local government. Without an overhaul of the political system in Bosnia, few women assumed positions in national government. Nevertheless, Bosnian women gained power and positions within civil society, which emerged as a parallel power structure to the state. In both cases, then, there is a story about the unexpected opportunities war can sometimes open for women. While acknowledging the devastating consequences of violence, this project has shown war to be a period of liminality in which structural changes interact with women's agency.

Yet, have these shifts in women's roles been maintained over the two decades since the violence ended? Moreover, have increases in women's political engagement led to a sustainable increase in women's power? In the aftermath of war, there was some fluidity in the gendered social ordering in both countries. At the same time, international actors intervened with sweeping humanitarian projects and domestic post-war regimes established new policies and laws governing society. While largely altruistic in motive and designed to aid post-war recovery, these efforts sometimes undermined emergent

grassroots organizations, as international actors implemented projects and policies that inadvertently created hierarchies of victimhood and cycles of dependence.

I address three themes in this chapter, including international involvement and the domestic state structure. These themes are not mutually exclusive, and underscoring both is the reinvigoration of patriarchal norms and practices in the aftermath of war. In both countries, women's progress is frequently hijacked by patriarchal and nationalist assumptions about women's place within the home. Moreover, violence continues to persist in women's daily lives. The discussion that follows aims to temper any superficial readings of the previous chapters that war is in any way good for women. I show that, while war is a period of liminality that can open unexpected opportunities for women to engage in new social and political roles, interference from INGOs, the state, or patriarchy can close or transform these opportunities. As such, this chapter cautions against an "easy reading" of this broader story of social change.

International actors in "Aidland"

Humanitarian aid is essential to keep people alive and healthy after episodes of mass violence, and development assistance is critical for a country's recovery. The humanitarian response in both Rwanda and Bosnia kept millions of people alive and did a great deal to mitigate suffering. But the arrival of a virtual army of foreign workers and aid programs was not a neutral phenomenon. Most critically, international NGOs partnered with grassroots organizations in order to implement programs, but in doing so, shaped the structure and mission of these organizations to better align with international funding priorities than local needs. This ultimately undermined and stunted some women-led grassroots initiatives.

After war, thousands of international NGOs, multinational agencies, diplomats, journalists, relief workers, religious organizations, and others attempt to “build peace” and reduce the pain of loss. This culture of humanitarian relief work has roots in the 1945 UN Charter, which established the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Since the 1980s (de Waal 1997: 65), a plethora of humanitarian agencies and NGOs—including World Vision, Doctors without Borders, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the World Food Programme, and Caritas—have become essential to the process of delivering emergency relief in the aftermath of the violence. Such efforts echo past colonial projects, as foreign actors have far-reaching aims to transform society from one capable of war to one in line with Western ideals of peace and democracy. As Severinne Autessaire (2014) puts it in reference to post-war peacekeeping missions, these foreign actors can do nothing, make some improvements, or make things worse. The same typology applies to humanitarian aid, and in my research in both Rwanda and Bosnia I found countless examples of all three. Here I focus on the ways in which humanitarian actors make things worse, in order to shed light on why women’s advances have been, in many ways, set back as the years passed. A large scholarship critiquing the international humanitarian aid industry—dubbed “Aidland”—exists, and is growing (see De Waal 1997; Anderson 1999; Easterly 2001; El-Bushra 2008; Apthorpe 2011; Mosse 2011; Fechter and Hindman 2011). With these critiques in mind, here I draw primarily from my observations in the field.

International actors can “make things worse” for many reasons. To begin, peace builders and humanitarian aid agencies are part of a global community that values technocratic knowledge over local context. INGOs can thus implement programs that

were successful elsewhere while paying little attention to local experiences or expertise. In the 1990s, most international actors encouraged giving aid to organizations engaged in “democracy promotion,” and they pushed for elections and the privatization of industry after transitions from war or socialism.¹¹⁸ In pushing neo-liberal ideas and technocratic knowledge, foreign actors undermined and antagonized local actors as they swept into an area and set up initiatives that fell outside of local needs. Inequality between these international actors and the local population bred resentment and even hostility, and it ultimately created new structures of inequality at the local level. “Hot topics” in aid also shifted rapidly from one month to the next—varying from psychosocial trauma to micro-credit—which weakened the efforts of high functioning grassroots organizations specializing in a single area. Programs often presupposed the internal homogeneity of “women” as a group or as a series of ethnic groups, ignoring the regional, class, linguistic and other categories of difference that divide women in each country (Mohanty 1988; Crenshaw 1991). International experts displaced local experts; their training was deemed more credible even if they had little knowledge of the cultural or social context. This led to ill-conceived or inappropriate programs and cultivated a sense that women were uniformly passive victims of violence. In both Rwanda and Bosnia, for example, teams of foreign psychiatrists deemed trauma counseling a top priority; however, many ordinary people were more concerned about economic survival and establishing a daily routine, and thus may have been better served by various income-generating projects (see Walsh 1998; Summerfield 1999).

International actors also learned about both countries from global media coverage, which tends to depict the world as inherently anarchical and violent. Within this political

realist paradigm, the media portrayed women as suffering victims, the morally pure “innocents” who were caught amidst a war that was not of their making. As a result, “women” becomes coterminous with “victims.” Men—who were also victims, including of sexualized assaults—were left out of this victim narrative, which allowed them to maintain their hegemonic masculinity (Žarkov 2001; Buss 2009; Helms 2007, 2013). Global news coverage depicted “Muslim women” and “African women” as doubly victimized, both by their experiences during war as well as by the patriarchal cultures that perpetuate their oppression (Mohanty 1991). As discussed in the introduction and elsewhere throughout this project, such depictions have two sides. They can provide women activists with some distance from the male-dominated political realms discredited by war and thereby allow women space to mobilize; at the same time, however, such depictions also essentialize and demobilize women. When INGOs implemented policies and programs to aid rape victims, widows, or refugees, they often cemented these identities within those seeking service. Hierarchies and economies of victimhood emerged as different victim groups used their victim status as a commodity to be competed for or sold (OSCE 2007; Dowling 2013).

For example, as I discuss below, INGOs encouraged “raped women” to come forward in order to receive aid. INGOs competed in “oppression Olympics”¹¹⁹ by claiming that the people they served were *more* victimized or *more* oppressed than others in order to receive funds. Of course, giving the most help to those most victimized seems like a smart approach. However, rather than empowering these populations, the distribution of aid on the basis of victimhood served to further social divisions and reduce women’s experiences to a single marginal, disenfranchised identity. Groups who most

effectively displayed their victimhood held all the moral capital.¹²⁰ As the Rwandan and Yugoslav Tribunals re-defined rape as a “weapon of war” and as an “instrument of genocide,” they only recognized women of a certain ethnicity to be victims—the rape of Hutu women, for example, was not prosecutable at the ICTR. Thus, women who did not fall into the categories of victimhood set out by humanitarian actors often found it difficult to obtain aid (Moran 2010; Buss 2009). Moreover, politicians used “raped women” and “widows” as a propaganda weapon, inflating or deflating the number of women in each group to serve political ends and rally nationalist support. How this hierarchy of victimhood impacted women’s ability to mobilize has not been fully explored by scholars. I propose here that such approaches to international aid may undermine grassroots organizing efforts and reinforce patriarchal structures of inequality.

Essentialized narratives about victimhood also extend to the broader depictions of the violence at large. International humanitarian organizations advertised simplistic accounts of the violence to potential donors; in this process, they constructed categories of “victim” and “perpetrator” that did not capture the complexity of the violence on the ground. The international media portrayed the “Rwandan genocide” as a tribal conflict of the “evil Hutu” against the “innocent Tutsi,” which obscured the historical complexity of contestations over state power in Rwanda. The international media also depicted all Serbs as perpetrators, obscuring the fact that many Serbs suffered from the violence as well, and that Bosniak and Croat forces also committed atrocities.¹²¹ Again, such depictions were not neutral; they deeply shaped the allocation of resources in the aftermath of violence. Falling into a “perpetrator” ethnic category often meant less access to aid, fewer opportunities to partner with internationally linked organizations, and more stigma in the

aftermath. Below I include examples from both cases to illustrate the potential problems that can arise from such narratives in the aftermath.

The State

The second theme I address in this chapter is the state's impact on women's mobilization. In the aftermath of any episode of large-scale armed conflict, the domestic political settlement—i.e., the configuration of laws, institutions, and power holders that defines post-war political system—plays a major role in supporting or undermining women's efforts. Rwanda and Bosnia are remarkably different in terms of the reach of the central state into the lives of its citizens. In Rwanda, the state has historically wielded great power over its population through compulsory labor programs, well-organized military and civilian defense forces, and a hierarchical state structure (see Newbury 1988; Prunier 1995). In Bosnia, the crumbling Yugoslav federation had weak control over many parts of the country; the state even lacked a coercive apparatus like a national military or police force (see Malcolm 1996; Ramet 2006). As a result, the state was largely absent from ordinary people's daily lives. Despite these differences, I have shown how women in both countries mobilized in similar ways, shifting political power in the process.

But once the women's mobilization was underway, the state shaped and constrained women's actions. Most importantly, the structure of the post-violence political settlement—namely, regime change in Rwanda and the fossilization of the old political elite in Bosnia—profoundly impacted the ability of women's grassroots mobilization to manifest in formal political spaces. As the RPF regime came to power in Rwanda, it eliminated political opposition and public dissent. It also began a total transformation of the country into one in which any discussion of ethnicity was illegal. A

“high modernist” development scheme was prioritized above all (Scott 1998). The state’s developmental logic and intolerance of dissent stymied women’s groups’ ability to operate freely and led to coercive state interference in ordinary Rwandans’ lives. Moreover, government-backed “women’s empowerment” efforts have created new forms of oppression for women, ranging from new forms of gender-based violence to a heightened dependence on men for accessing political rights (see Berry 2015b).

In Bosnia, a “political-business-criminal nexus” (Bassuener 2012) emerged to run the country, leading to widespread NGO corruption whereby leaders linked to political parties personally profited from humanitarian aid. Political elites have made efforts to integrate women in formal political spaces, but many of these efforts have resulted in the promotion of women with close ties to party elites who have little interest in advocating on behalf of women’s collective interests. Further, by dividing the country into two ethnically defined and increasingly homogenous entities, the political system inscribed at Dayton has encouraged the emergence of nationalist extremists. This political system perpetuates the masculine, military culture associated with the war in the first place. As I show in the examples below, there is little room for women in politics today.

INTERNATIONAL INTERFERENCE

Rwanda

Most of the discussion about the international community’s failings in Rwanda center on its failure to intervene and stop the violence. In the U.S., the Clinton administration was aware of the scale and extent of the killings as it was beginning (Power 2003; Dallaire 2005). However, the administration delayed action because there was little popular support for putting U.S. troops on the ground in the wake of American

troop deaths in Somalia just months earlier. Debates about whether the killings constituted genocide stymied the UN's response and led to differing interpretations of what was occurring. These debates have been the subject of extensive study in recent years (see further discussion in Melvern 2000; Rieff 2003; Power 2003; Kuperman 2004; and Stanton 2004). Here I look beyond the debate over international intervention to examine the humanitarian aid response, which has received comparatively less attention.

To begin, while the international community struggled to make sense of the violence in Rwanda as it was unfolding, even more uncertainty emerged in its aftermath. The confusion centered on whether the RPF-controlled "transitional government" was making decisions in the interest of the country as a whole, or whether it was involved in a "Tutsification" of the state and a consolidation of power (Uvin 2010). Much of this debate centered on Paul Kagame himself and whether he was a visionary leader or a brutal dictator. As evidence of the RPF-orchestrated massacre at Kibeho and reports of other extrajudicial killings emerged, some in the international community worried that aid would be used to prop up a brutal, exclusionist regime.

Foreign actors (e.g., INGOs, government agencies) were split in these debates. Some countries, including France, initially saw the RPF as the instigators of the atrocities and sent massive amounts of funding and humanitarian infrastructure (about \$2 billion dollars worth) to the DRC to aid in the refugee crisis (Eriksson 1996). This infuriated Kagame and the RPF, who wanted the aid to be spent on survivors of the genocide, rather than its perpetrators. It also led to confusion and a lack of coordination in the aid response (Eriksson 1996). Another set of donors, primarily from the U.S. and the UK, were enraptured by Kagame and gave him *carte blanche* to pursue his domestic agenda

unfettered by foreign concerns over his human rights record. These donors believed that some extrajudicial violence was inevitable given the circumstances (Mann and Berry 2015). While promoting democratic reforms was initially at the top of the donor community's agenda, democracy soon took a backseat as Kagame cautioned that elections would be too dangerous. Most donors agreed, understanding that stability—even if achieved with political oppression and violence—was a higher priority than democracy.

The divergent interpretations of the violence among the humanitarian aid industry resulted in disagreements about who was deserving of aid. Initially the disagreement was about whether priority should be on the refugee crisis in Congo—where tens of thousands of people were dying of dysentery and cholera—or within Rwanda itself. The international community initially focused aid on saving lives by providing food, shelter, medical care, and sanitation facilities to the massive number of displaced. By the end of 1994, there was a re-direction of focus and funds to the human and institutional devastation resulting from the genocide and civil war (Eriksson 1996). Much aid was earmarked for widows, survivors, orphans, and rape victims.

Hierarchies of victimhood

Establishing who constituted a “survivor,” however, was fraught with debate—which continues today. According to the official narrative of the genocide put forth by the RPF, only Tutsis were targeted during the genocide. Little mention was made of Hutu targets of the former genocidal regime—they were deemed victims of the civil war, not genocide. Moreover, no mention was made of victims of RPF killings—indeed the regime denied its involvement in any civilian deaths. In essence, the regime created a

hierarchy of victimhood whereby Tutsi survivors were the most victimized and therefore most deserving of aid in the aftermath.¹²² However, ethnicity is illegal to discuss in Rwanda today; as a result, victim categories like “survivor,” “perpetrator,” and “returning refugee” have emerged as the new form of social categorization (Hintjens 2008; Berry 2014).

This system of social categorization spread to foreign aid agencies, which distributed aid on the basis of such hierarchies. This resulted in the fusion of ethnicity and guilt/innocence together—ethnic Hutu were redefined as perpetrators, and ethnic Tutsi were universally deemed innocent survivors if they were in the country at the time of the genocide (Gourevitch 1998; Jefremovas 2002). Hutus who had fled to Congo were particularly likely to be considered perpetrators by organizations like the UNHCR (Pottier 1996) The tens of thousands of Hutu who were targeted by *génocidaires* because of their moderate politics or intermarriage with Tutsi fell into an ambiguous category; they were not “survivors,” and therefore were not considered *as deserving* of aid as survivors. In addition, Hutu women who had been raped by FAR or Hutu militias during the war could not access the same resources offered to Tutsi rape victims (Buss 2009; Burnet 2012: 111). Hutu whose family members had been killed by the RPF were not entitled to any victim identity and were not even permitted to bury their dead in the same cemeteries as victims of genocide (field notes 2007-2009). With complicity from the international community, the government of Rwanda erased the experiences of Hutu victims from public discourse (see also Straus and Waldorf 2011; Burnet 2012; Thomson 2013).

This hierarchy and politicization of victim experiences had acute implications for the distribution of aid and other resources in the aftermath. For example, the UK-based Survivor Fund supports initiatives for “survivors” of the Rwandan genocide—and takes the postwar government’s definition of “survivor” seriously. It funds Rwandan organizations like Avega-Agahozo (for widows), AERG (students survivors), Uyisenga-N’Manzi (survivors association of HIV-positive child-headed households), and Solace Ministeries (association of Christian survivors of genocide).¹²³ “Survivors” are entitled to all of the resources that these various organizations provide—including cash payments, medical care, housing assistance, school fees, vocational training, and trauma counseling. Since only Tutsi victims of the genocide could be considered “survivors,” all survivor organizations are essentially Tutsi organizations. Hutu victims of the war and genocide may not join these organizations, except under exceptional circumstances. As a result, Tutsi-led, “widow” or “survivor” organizations were better positioned than Hutu-led organizations to access international funds, and they were more likely to formalize and develop a platform from which members could climb the economic ladder, enter public spaces, and fill new political vacancies. By creating these victim categories, the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan government essentially erased Hutu experiences of survival from political discourse, and humanitarian aid organizations reinforced this erasure by distributing funds according to the government’s victim framework.

Problems in implementation

There were many other ways that the international community undermined women’s grassroots organizing after the war. Top-down technocratic knowledge about how to care for refugees and rebuild infrastructure, for example, replaced local

knowledge or efforts about the same projects. International humanitarian personnel feared that if Rwandans—and particularly Rwandan Hutus—organized, they could potentially undermine order (Pottier 1996). As such they viewed all Hutus as having nefarious political motives, rather than simply a desire to live a normal life in the context of widespread displacement and scarcity. This led to a serious neglect of bottom-up organizing efforts. For example, in a refugee camp in Congo, displaced women developed a system to foster nearly 7,000 unaccompanied minors (Pottier 1996: 412-13). These women were likely mostly Hutu. But representatives from Norwegian People's Aid lamented the lack of a proper orphanage and intervened to take charge of the children's relocation—despite that, in Rwandan tradition, orphaned children are typically cared for by extended family or neighbors. Small loans or micro-credit schemes may have significantly bolstered these emerging groups and thereby local economies. Instead, expensive expatriate-led humanitarian relief programs created cycles of dependence, which may have ultimately destabilized local economies (Pottier 1996), not to mention grassroots mobilization efforts.

Due to this top-down approach, humanitarian aid agencies often did not provide funding, logistical support, or security to grassroots self-help organizations in certain parts of the country, many of which were led by women. Instead, foreign NGOs frequently shut down or supplanted local organizing efforts. They sometimes did this directly, by preventing groups (specifically, Hutus) from organizing in public spaces under the idea that such groups posed a security risk. They also did this indirectly by hiring the most impressive emerging leaders from civil society, granting them positions that could eventually lead to their promotion within the global structure of these

organizations (USAID 2000). While such promotions were likely good for the economic status of those hired, they deprived local women's organizations of their strongest members.

In the years that followed the initial humanitarian response, INGOs did give funding to women's grassroots organizations within Rwanda. However, little of this aid extended to women organizing in refugee camps outside of the country (Pottier 1996; Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, Study 3, 1996). This meant that INGOs gave Tutsi women in survivors' associations funding and other technical assistance, while often neglecting Hutu women. Creating this hierarchy of victimhood helped facilitate the ascent of Tutsi women in Rwandan politics, while providing few channels for ordinary Hutu women to ascend to positions of power. It also entrenched social divisions in society and limited chances for women to form allegiances across ethnic lines.

Bosnia

Like in Rwanda, the problematic implementation strategies pursued by the international community impeded Bosnian women's grassroots organizing after the war. More researchers have explored this rich topic in the Bosnian context than in Rwanda (see Smillie 1996; Korać 1998; Walsh 1998; Summerfield 1999; Smillie and Everson 2003; Bagić 2004; Helms 2013). Many of the people I interviewed expressed frustration at the international community's response as a whole and especially at the Dayton Accords. Setting aside the myriad problems that emerged from the governing structures put forth at Dayton (see critiques by Chandler 2000; Bose 2002; Bjorkdahl 2012), here I specifically address the problems linked to humanitarian aid.

Bosnia was a unique setting for humanitarian aid because of its location in Europe. Unlike far-flung conflicts around the globe, Europeans could literally drive to Bosnia to participate in aid relief—and thousands did. In many respects, Bosnia became the paradigmatic example of humanitarian aid and state-building in the post-Cold War era. Actors from all parts of the globe got involved (Andreas 2004). In Rwanda, the RPF regime was suspicious of the international community, both because of its colonial history and also because of its failure to intervene in the genocide; as a result, it actively resisted much of the international involvement in the aftermath. In contrast, NATO stopped the war in Bosnia and the country became an international protectorate managed by foreign institutions like NATO, the UN, the Office of the High Representative, the OSCE, and the Peace Implementation Council. As such, Bosnian politicians did little to restrict the massive influx of INGOs and other foreigners after the violence.

This swarm of humanitarian aid NGOs, trauma experts, development specialists, peace builders, and human rights activists was not neutral. Like in Rwanda, most of these foreigners came from the U.S. and from Western Europe; in Bosnia, some also came from countries in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, as well as from Japan (Mertus 2004: 24). Most of these foreign actors aimed to immediately assist with Bosnia's reconstruction and eventual entry into global financial markets and the broader European community. These international actors offered a technical toolkit of short-term reconstruction and post-war reconciliation strategies, which were derived from success in other places. But as they implemented various policies and programs, they frequently made decisions that suggested a staggering lack of knowledge about the lived realities of ordinary Bosnians (Walsh 1998; Jansen 2006;

Helms 2013). Many came with Orientalist assumptions that Bosnia was a low-developed, “primitive” place fraught with religious strife, rather than a middle-income industrial economy in the heart of Europe (Zarkov 2014). They also assumed all Bosnian women were victims with low skills and education. Studies of the post-war period in Bosnia suggest that the Bosnian public largely viewed “internationals” as arrogant, ignorant, and inept (Jansen 2006; Helms 2013).

Problems in implementation

The humanitarian aid industry in Bosnia employed countless problematic strategies. To begin, funding priorities were ephemeral and changed on a whim to accommodate donor demands. Humanitarian agencies would prioritize “peace building” one day, but “democracy promotion” the next. While this strategy ostensibly aimed to provide flexible and responsive aid, in reality this approach added a level of uncertainty for recipients who depended on donor funds for their own programs. According to Smillie and Everson (2003: 298), the first “hot topic” was emergency psychological assistance. As a result, Bosnians founded social welfare organizations that could accommodate trauma projects. Funding agencies prioritized reconstruction next, and welfare organizations morphed into building and renovation organizations. Microcredit followed, and as Smillie and Everson put it, “welfare organizations scrambled to understand interest rates” (298). In 1998 this was replaced by a shift in focus to refugee return. These erratic shifts meant that grassroots organizations that received external or international funding often had to change their programs to accommodate donor requirements—or at the least had to fudge their programs to at least *appear* to adhere to donor requirements. This led to inconsistent implementation and constant uncertainty

(Walsh 1998). This trend neglected the responsibility many scholars and practitioners believe humanitarian NGOs have, which is “to provide local NGOs with the freedom and the ability to bring promising projects to a successful conclusion” (Evans-Kent and Bleiker 2003: 109). An NGO worker complained about this process:

What I never liked...was when somebody in some other country, on some other continent, imagined what we would need to do in [our country], and then they send us their guidelines and that's it: We finance this and this and this. So we start to adjust. In order to get the money, groups often did what they would have never been doing, simply because the funders would provide financing. Instead of the other way around, that the group does something because there is a genuine need for it, and because they know that they have the human resources, and the experience...Very often there was jumping from one theme to another. That means that now for three months we will do a project, let's say, on conflict resolution, and after that we'll work on, I don't know what, combating violence against women, then afterwards we'll do some publishing... Something like that... So, now all of us know everything, and in fact nobody knows anything. And so we remain amateurs in everything. (Respondent 1, quoted in Aida Bagic 2004: 11).

These ill-conceived funding priorities caused widespread resentment among Bosnians trying to work in their communities, particularly as local organizations competed over funds. Dr. Branka described this constant re-funding of new initiatives as inhibiting her ability to make real progress in her organization—it was “just like a tornado,” she said. “We're all just going in a circle, around and around, and nothing will be resolved” (Interview 7/24/2010). Organizations with staff that spoke English or had marketing skills were often better able to morph their organization's programs to appeal to the latest donor trend. Ultimately, programs that were hastily constructed and poorly conceived got funded (Walsh 1999: 41).

With little knowledge of the local context, INGOs also implemented programs that targeted women as a monolithic group and thereby reinforced essential gender stereotypes. For instance, INGOs implemented programs aimed at creating income-generating projects for women. But without conducting skills assessments of the women they were trying to serve, many assumed Bosnian women had little education or skills. They therefore enlisted women in sewing, knitting, or housekeeping businesses that confined women to low-profit gender-segregated work (Walsh 1998: 336). Highly educated women I interviewed found these projects insulting and a way of further taking away their dignity.

Such ill-conceived programs also generated tension between foreign NGO staffers and locals. Like in Rwanda, the arrival of over 100,000 foreigners—most of whom were in a far superior financial position than average Bosnians—artificially inflated local economies. NGO salaries sustained restaurants, drivers, translators, sex workers, and security personnel; businesses sprung up to cater to foreigner's needs (Evans-Kent and Bleiker 2003: 110; Pugh and Cooper 2004). The demand for sex workers fueled by these international actors—and particularly by UN troops—led to massive increases in human trafficking from the Ukraine, Moldavia, and Romania throughout Bosnia and Southeast Europe as whole (Human Rights Watch 2002; Pugh and Cooper 2004: 174-175).¹²⁴ When aid began to dry up in 1999 with the escalation of the crisis in Kosovo, these inflated economies collapsed. INGOs abandoned local NGOs, as they no longer needed local implementing partners (Cockburn 2001). Unemployment and economic recession followed (Pugh and Cooper 2004: 161-162). Women I interviewed expressed resentment of these shortsighted international efforts.

Hierarchies of victimhood

International actors also created hierarchies of victimhood. A few particular hierarchies stand out. The first was the almost voyeuristic obsession of international actors with “rape victims,” as I discussed in Chapter 7. The fact that most victims were Muslim—even if they were agnostic or hardly considered themselves religious—inspired a particular kind of pity. Journalists and NGOs were on a mission to find, speak to, and help so-called “raped women,” who became a media spectacle. Journalists could make headlines by interviewing them, and pictures of these women served to draw the pity from people around the world.¹²⁵ Humanitarian NGOs decided that this “epidemic of rape” warranted swift and immediate attention. They began constructing centers for “raped women,” which offered psychological therapy, financial resources, and other types of social support.

Yet these well-intentioned projects rested on several problematic assumptions. The first was that women survivors of sexualized violence would willingly assume the identity of “rape victim,” ignoring the potential for the distribution of aid on the basis of this victim identity to create a self-fulfilling prophesy. Bakira Hasečić, a rape survivor who has made her appeal for justice in public, said,

I come from a family of 17 members, and I did not mention that I was raped, because that was a taboo subject. I was putting myself at risk if I said that...Part of society considers that a disgrace for women...a lot of marriages fell apart, because they could not cope with that. Their kids left them, as well, because they could not cope with it. (Interview 5/21/2013)

As Bakira notes, in the patriarchal local context, being identified as a rape victim had deeply negative repercussions.¹²⁶ It diminished survivors who articulated their experience as one of survival (Summerfield 1999) and, moreover, stigmatized rape

survivors as “soiled” and pitiful (Mertus 2000: 28). Admitting to being raped was also seen as a dishonor to the victim’s male relatives, as rape was often a tactic of emasculating men through the abuse of their “property” (i.e., wives and daughters) and the threat to their genealogical lineage. As a result, few women wished to identify publicly as having suffered sexual violence during war. Bakira was one of these women; several years after the war she join with other rape survivors to speak out against their perpetrators. The backlash was tremendous. As she put it, “War criminals started contacting us, provoking us, humiliating us. They told us, ‘Are you coming back so we can finish what we started?’” (Interview #46, 5/21/2013). At the time of our interview in 2013, Bakira was regularly receiving harassing calls, texts, emails, and Facebook messages from anonymous people. In the middle of our conversation in her office she brought me and my research assistant over to her computer to show us a photograph that a Serb man had sent her that morning of his penis, along with a host of disparaging messages. She described this constant abuse as continued “psychological warfare.”

Such programs for “raped women” also assumed sexual violence harmed women more than other experiences. Yet as I discussed in Chapter 6, rape was not always the most traumatizing event in a women’s war experience, especially if she had lost a child or spouse. Women I interviewed recounted that when seeking counseling or aid for other war experiences, humanitarian NGOs told them to talk about their rape first, other sufferings later. Being a rape victim was a currency that women could “cash in” on for treatment—but in doing so, they risked stigmatizing themselves for life. Tabiha (not her real name), a survivor of the Omarska concentration camp, exemplifies this tension. Serb forces killed Tabiha’s eldest son during the war. They also detained her at the Omarska

Concentration Camp and raped her. In her mind, her own experiences pale in comparison to the pain she feels about her son's murder. As of 2013, Tabiha's son's body still had not been found, causing her tremendous anguish. And yet journalists and NGOs with whom she has interacted over the years have been primarily interested in her experiences at Omarska, imposing on her the identity of "rape victim" (Interview #52 5/27/2013).

Programs dedicated to "rape victims" further assumed that foreign programs had superior technocratic expertise than local agents. Bosnia was the first major international crisis in which humanitarian aid responders prioritized trauma healing as humanitarian intervention (Abramowitz 2010: 49). These interveners generally assumed that the entire population suffered from PTSD and therefore needed expert medical treatment, without considering that many Bosnians had developed ways of dealing with trauma that were rooted in their local customs and social networks. For instance, many found comfort through their faith or through a heightened sense of national belonging. Trauma-based aid thus privileged outsider knowledge over local understandings (Summerfield 1999). This emphasis on trauma-mediating projects incentivized NGOs to over-estimate the number of their clients with PTSD since the more diagnoses an NGO could make of clients with PTSD, the more funding they could receive. As such, NGOs encouraged women to come forward as "rape victims" in order to receive trauma support. This was incredibly problematic, as there is little in the medical literature to suggest that rape is a discrete cause of psychological vulnerability in conditions of war, nor that a specific therapy strategy could be sufficiently effective to justify the increased risk of exposing women's experiences to their communities (Summerfield 1999: 1456).

By identifying “rape victims” as in need of particular forms of care, these international efforts ignored women who did not fit into this victim category. According to psychologist Derek Summerfield, a leading expert in the field of post-war trauma, “trauma models, where the focus is on a particular event (rape)...exaggerate the difference between some victims and others, [and] risk disconnecting them from others in their community” (1999: 1456). Such a narrow framing of victim categories compelled “rape survivor” groups to compete for foreign funds against groups of widows, concentration camp survivors, and returnees—without recognizing that some people were simultaneously situated in multiple categories. They also failed to consider the different experiences of women from different class backgrounds—poor, rural women faced tremendously different struggles after displacement than women from upper class, urban backgrounds. In other words, by prioritizing certain types of victimhood and suffering, international actors established a hierarchy of victimhood that interfered with local dynamics and understandings. This had profound political consequences, as particular victim categories were then used to serve certain political interests, mobilizing nationalist groups and even legitimizing aggression during the war. Bosniak politicians, for example, held up widows and rape victims to justify their most nationalistic political decisions.

Thus INGOs created perverse incentives for women to claim they had been raped (whether they had or not) in order to receive aid; and yet once women did so, the local community stigmatized them. Such incentives were ultimately disempowering at an individual and collective level, as they stripped women of agency in determining which identities were the most salient in their lives and presumed a greater understanding of what women needed than local women themselves. Instead of looking at the priorities of

local organizations, INGOs created their own priorities and forced local organizations to accept.

There were many other hierarchies of victimhood in Bosnia, including the elevation of the massacre at Srebrenica over all other crimes in the country. For those living in the region around Prijedor (the area with the second highest rate of violence against civilians), the international community's disproportionate attention to Srebrenica victims generated tremendous frustration. The elevation of Srebrenica over other massacres was because it was the largest single massacre during the war, and because the UN ultimately labeled the massacre "genocide." By assigning Srebrenica the "genocide" label, the International Court of Justice and the UN gave it special attention. This is one reason that I insist upon using the term genocide judiciously, as applying it in this case elevated the deaths of Srebrenica victims over the deaths of tens of thousands of others killed during the war. This hierarchy of victimhood continues today, as associations from Srebrenica continue to secure international funding and a global media platform, while organizations that address missing people or engage in peace building in the Krajina region struggle to access funds.

The effects of these hierarchies of victimhood and problematic implementation strategies are multiple. Competition for resources between community organizations leads to infighting, a lack of trust, and the withholding of information. This creates further divisions within society, *within* and *between* ethno-national groups. In Bosnia, fighting between different "victim" groups has limited opportunities for collaboration and stalled projects aimed at erecting memorials to war victims.¹²⁷ Several of my respondents noted that after the war they had been amazed at how united women were, but since then

divisions between women's groups have polarized women in general. These divisions have also led many community-based organizations to be ethnically homogenous, limiting prospects for inter-ethnic collaboration and peace building in the long run.

DOMESTIC INTERFERENCE FROM THE STATE

Rwanda¹²⁸

Rwandan state efforts to modernize the country have also limited women's power. In its ambitious Vision 2020 plan, the Rwandan government states that its goal is to transform Rwanda's economy into a middle-income country by the year 2020. To achieve this the country must "transform from a subsistence agriculture economy to a knowledge-based society, with high levels of savings and private investment" (Republic of Rwanda 2000). This requires reengineering the rural agricultural sector, eliminating subsistence farming by professionalizing farming techniques and restructuring land holdings (Pottier 2006; Ansoms 2009). It also requires developing a modern workforce with advanced education and technical skills. Because of such "high-modernist" (Scott 1998) development goals, scholars have characterized Rwanda as patrimonial developmental state (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; Kelsall 2013).

In order to achieve these ambitious plans, President Kagame and his small clique of Tutsi military officers have centralized their control over the country. The government champions cleanliness and security as part of a plan to make Rwanda "the Singapore of East Africa." Under the theory that ethnicity promotes "divisionism" or a "genocide mentality," the police can arrest anyone using ethnic language in public. Authorities impose fines on the population for failing to wear shoes, use mosquito nets, or bathe regularly, selling homemade goods like cheese, running informal businesses, or other

violations (Ingelaere 2011: 74). Plastic bags are outlawed, and citizens are forbidden from walking on grass in public places. Strict regulations prohibit informal work considered dirty and at odds with the image of a modern Rwanda. Government employees are bound by *imihigo* performance contracts, which set standards and accountability aiming to ensure Rwanda hits certain development targets. Organizations must register with the government, which keeps tabs on each organization's activities and finances. If an organization becomes critical of government policies, government agents will accuse the organization of inciting "genocide mentalities" and shut it down (field notes 2007-2013). Individuals and organizations engage in self-sanctioning behavior as a result.

This modernization project is therefore dependent on massive state interference in ordinary Rwandan's lives. For example, the government actively encourages its citizens to get involved in the wage economy. Youth growing up in Rwanda today are repeatedly told by the government and by NGOs that they can have a "bright future" if they do well in school, which will enable them to join Rwanda's rapidly advancing economy and access the "good life." As a result, after finishing school, tens of thousands of youth migrate to the urban areas in the hopes of finding decent paid work in Rwanda's burgeoning economy (Republic of Rwanda 2011). They are quickly dismayed to learn that good jobs are hard to find and usually require personal connections. Women face particular challenges finding wage employment, as there are more wage jobs for men than for women: 82 percent of women work in the agricultural sector compared to 61 percent of men. Today skilled service occupations employ 4 percent of women, compared

to 7 percent of men (Republic of Rwanda 2011). The English-speaking elite in Kigali holds the majority of these non-agriculture jobs (Marijnen and van der Lijn 2012).

After searching in vain for jobs, some youth with limited education and skills end up settling for informal work as hawkers. Street hawkers—who sell clothes, vegetables, or fruit—are predominantly women. Like other informal vendors across the world, these workers start small businesses selling fruits, clothes, or vegetables that they can cheaply purchase from rural areas and wholesale markets. They then sell these items on the streets from baskets, or from informal stalls located just outside of the formal markets. The government, however, has declared these types of informal work illegal. Low-skill industries dominated by women (e.g., informal domestic work cleaning or doing laundry, sex work) are disproportionately illegal compared to low-skill industries dominated by men (e.g., selling phone credit, construction, brick making, driving moto taxis).

The Rwandan government has prohibited informal vending, labeling it a threat to security. Yet thousands of women (and some men) still make their living selling these basic items on the side of the street. With the new restrictions, vendors must collectivize to form a cooperative if they are to have any hope of legally continuing this practice. But the government has imposed fees to join these cooperatives, which also require weekly dues and collateral. Further, only cooperatives that sell certain types of items in specified locations are approved. Therefore, most urban hawkers live day-to-day selling the small quantities of fruit or vegetables they are able to purchase with small loans from income saving cooperatives (see Berry 2015b).

The police strictly enforce restrictions on hawking. I interviewed fifteen women currently or formerly employed illegally as street vendors. Each reported having been

arrested between three and fifteen times (the average was about eight) since they began working. Each arrest sent their lives into chaos, as they were put in jail for days, weeks, and sometimes months at a time. Solange, a twenty-four-year-old fruit vendor and genocide survivor, explained:

I'm a single mother, and I have one child. So if they arrest me, you can't imagine what happens to my kid. He is all alone. And sometimes you have to spend two weeks in jail if you can't pay. And they cut your hair, you sleep on the floor. It is really horrible. When you come back after two weeks, you don't have anything. You have no money. So you have to borrow money from your friends to restart your business. (Interview 2/2013)

As Solange notes, the children of single mothers are abandoned to friends or neighbors; once arrested, women are not given a chance to notify their children that they will not be coming home. In jail, women reported that prison guards shave their heads, give them only meager cups of corn to eat, and occasionally abuse them—a term left vague by my respondents, which might refer to verbal, physical, or sexual abuse. Most devastating for their future financial stability, upon arrest, the police confiscate or destroy their inventory. Alliette, a thirty-year-old vegetable vendor, expressed her frustration about the hypocrisy of the government, which emphasizes *kwihangira imirimo*—or the idea that you should try to start your own business and be self-reliant:

They keep saying this [about *kwihangira imirimo*], and trying to raise awareness on it. But that is what we did—we tried to think of our own projects by carrying those baskets and selling our goods. You know? So that we don't have to expect to be employed by anyone else. But look at what they are doing to us! We are employing ourselves, we are doing our own businesses, but they won't let us. (Interview 2/2013)

The state-sponsored abuse of these women limits the ability of poor, uneducated women to participate in legitimate paid employment. Moreover, for many, the constant threat of

arrest and poor profit margins from vending simply does not make for a sustainable career. As a result, many of these women turn to sex work, which is comparably illegal but can result in higher wages and does not carry the same risk of having one's inventory destroyed by the authorities. Poor urban female youth in Rwanda are very likely to perform sex work, in part because of the difficulty finding wage jobs outside of the agricultural sector (Binagwaho et al. 2010; Sommers 2012). In a small sample (n=93), but the only study specifically on youth in Rwanda to date, sex work was the most common occupation for urban female youth (Sommers 2012: 177).

Repression of civil society

The government of Rwanda also exerts tight control over civil society, limiting the ability of women's organizations to function without constant state interference. Legislation passed in 2001 gave the government the power to control the management, finances, and projects of national and international NGOs. As a result of this legislation, many civil society organizations have been taken over by government proxies, typically RPF elites with close ties to Kagame (Gready 2010). These infiltrators aim to tame an organization's political agenda and squelch any latent political dissent. These government proxies have essentially taken over women's organizations like Avega-Agahozo, as well as survivor organizations like Ibuka. Independent, critical organizations like LIPRODOHR (the largest human rights organization) have been effectively shut down. Former RPF elites who defected from the party issued a report in 2010 stating, "There is less room for political participation [in Rwanda] than there was in 1994. Civil society is less free and effective. The media is less free. The Rwanda government is more repressive than the one that it overthrew" (Nyamwasa et. al. 2010).

Thus while the civil war and genocide in Rwanda caused shifts in women's political engagement, the state's ambitious development goals and desire to entrench its power infrastructure have been achieved by restricting citizen's behavior, labor, dress, and speech. Moreover, the state's heavy-handed tactics have limited the ability of informal organizations to thrive. Such an approach echoes past "high modernist" efforts to make societies more "legible"—or more organized and controllable—in order to bring about development (Scott 1998). Human disasters in China, Tanzania, Russia, Mozambique and Ethiopia have demonstrated that ambitious development projects can become lethal if states are willing to use coercive force to bring development to fruition and if civil society is too weak to resist. My interviews with Rwandan street vendors suggest that the government is indeed prepared to use force to maintain control—President Kagame himself has repeatedly referenced the potential for violence, once stating, "We will continue to arrest more suspects and if possible shoot in broad daylight those who intend to destabilize our country" (East African 2014). Despite the advances of civil society after the war, Rwandan civic space is likely too weak to resist (see Mann and Berry 2015). These repressive government policies make ordinary women's advancement more difficult, giving pause to celebrations of Rwanda's success in promoting "women's empowerment."

Bosnia

While the international community undermined women's organizing efforts and created disempowering hierarchies of victimhood, the domestic political system in Bosnia set back many gains women had made. While the Rwandan state intervened with a brutal, authoritarian force, the Bosnian state was more dysfunctional. Bosnia might be

considered a post-war country, but it is not a post-conflict country; as I heard many times during my fieldwork, the Dayton Accords may have ended the violence but a war of a different kind continues today.

The dysfunctional state impedes women's progress in several ways. Non-Serbs who have returned to homes and communities within the Republika Srpska have a hard time accessing aid to rebuild their homes, face harassment from neighbors and local authorities, and lack recognition from Serb politicians for crimes committed against them. While watching a football match in a bar one night during in the Republika Srpska, I met a young man who lamented that his (Bosniak) friends keep killing themselves because the situation is so dire—they cannot find jobs, and Serbs constantly harassed them (field notes 5/2013). Politicians from all ethnic groups continue to appeal to extremists by using nationalist political rhetoric aimed at further entrenching social divisions. This rhetoric hampers efforts to establish (or reestablish) cross-ethnic solidarity on the basis of women's collective interests. It also has led to the elevation of war veterans over women survivors of sexualized violence.

The divide between Republika Srpska and the Federation also complicates women's organizing efforts. For example, women's organizations and activists campaigned for the enactment of a Federal law in 2006 that classifies women rape survivors as civilian victims of war. This classification entitles them to small, regular welfare payments as well as medical assistance, legal aid, and priority in finding employment and housing (Cockburn 2013b). This classification is rooted in international laws, which grant all victims of sexual violence the right to remedy and reparation (e.g., restitution, compensation and rehabilitation; Amnesty International 2009). But women

who live within the Republika Srpska (and the independent federal district of Brčko) are not entitled to these benefits unless a health commission deems them to have 60 percent “bodily damage”—in other words, permanent physical disfigurement or disability (Amnesty International 2009; de Vlaming and Clark 2014). Those suffering from PTSD or other psychological ailments are not entitled to benefits. In contrast, the Federation has declared that the 60 percent threshold does not apply to survivors of rape. Moreover, if rape survivors in the Republika Srpska do manage to qualify for the social benefits, they are only entitled to 100 KM (\$55 USD) per month, which is far short of what most need to live. In the Federation, the benefit is 563 KM (\$210 USD) per month (Amnesty International 2009: 43). As such, some Bosniak women in Republika Srpska maintain inexpensive residences in the Federation just to be eligible for these payments, as they are unable to access sufficient support from Serb authorities.

Between 2004 and 2013, the national courts completed just 215 war crimes cases, leaving a backlog of 1,315 war crimes cases (OSCE 2013). It is not known how many of these cases are related to war rape and other crimes of sexualized violence. At the current pace, it will take decades before these cases make their way through the courts. There is been little to no justice for rape survivors—by 2012, only 33 people had been convicted of conflict-related sexual violence (OSCE 2014; Amnesty International 2012; TRIAL 2015). Many perpetrators of war rape live with impunity in the same neighborhoods as their victims, subjecting survivors to retraumatization and fear of moving freely around their communities. This frustrates survivors, many of whom came forward to seek justice at risk of stigmatization. Combined with prosecutions at the ICTY, as of December 2013, only 139 people had been tried for crimes related to sexual violence during the war—

while conservative estimates are that upwards of 20,000 women were raped (OSCE 2014).

To make matters even worse for women survivors of rape in the Republika Srpska, some perpetrators of war crimes occupy high positions within government. For example, in Prijedor, the director of the Social Welfare Center is the former commander of a territorial defense unit that was allegedly involved in the atrocities in the region. Further, the head of the Department for the Protection of War Veterans and Invalids was an interrogator at Omarska Concentration Camp (Amnesty International 2009: 46). According to several women I interviewed, the presence of these suspected war criminals in high government positions discourages survivors of war crimes to seek assistance from these institutions. There are also moral and legal questions involved with allowing perpetrators to make decisions about whether their former victims are deserving of entitlements (Amnesty International 2009: 46).

Even within the Federation, women struggle to acquire the state of “civilian victim of war” due to government corruption and ineptitude.¹²⁹ Many rape victims I spoke with described how accessing support requires going from institution to institution, explaining over and over what happened to them and feeling humiliated in the process. This process starts at the NGO led by Bakira Hasčić, *Žene Žrtve Rata* (Women Victims of the War), which is responsible for conducting interviews with potential claimants to determine their eligibility.¹³⁰ One rape survivor, Sayira, complained how “it is so much more complicated for victims than criminals,” since victims have to struggle for recognition and pay for their health care, medicine, lawyers, and so on, while criminals have all of these things provided by the state during their incarceration (Interview #48

5/21/2013). “The government doesn’t support us,” she continued, “they keep giving us different amounts of money each month so we can’t plan, we can’t work properly.” Sayira’s frustrations about government were nearly universal among the women I interviewed and paralleled the experiences of women in Rwanda (Rombouts 2006).

Political corruption created these bureaucratic difficulties and also furthered the hierarchies of victimization that emerged during the war. Bosniak nationalist politicians depicted raped women and widows as “pure victims” of Serb territorial aggression; when Bosniak nationalists needed to rally supporters, they treated women’s groups like Mothers of Srebrenica and Women Victims of War as political currency to bolster their political campaigns. As a member of one of these organizations put it, “[Politicians] only call us before elections to get votes from us or take pictures with us during a burial, so it’s only for political points” (Interview #69 6/11/2013). Conversely, Serb politicians claim that Bosniak women have invented claims of being raped and that Serbs must band together to avoid such accusations. This sentiment is evident in the additional hurdles women in the Republika Srpska face in accessing reparations.

Political parties also use women as pawns during political contestations. During the first weeks of my fieldwork in Bosnia in 2013, transportation workers at the state’s transportation company, Gras, went on strike over unpaid wages. The company’s board blamed Gras’ female director for the company’s problems and forced her to resign. Besima Boric, a leading MP, described this as a political game; the state-owned company had appointed the director *because* she was a woman, so that it could blame any problems on her and dispose of her easily if needed (Spahić Šiljak 2014).

Political parties also use women to satisfy the 2006 Gender Law, which requires that political parties have 30 percent women on their party lists. Many nationalist political parties put forth women candidates that are politically weak and indebted to the party elites. This means that once they enter parliament or other government positions, they are charged with carrying out the party head's agenda. This is not the case across the board—certainly women I interviewed like—Besima Boric and Ismeta Dervoz—are strong independent actors. But, it indicates the deeply seeded patriarchal norms that still underscore the domestic political system.

REVITALIZATION OF PATRIARCHY

In both Rwanda and Bosnia, women's gains were further pushed back or undermined because of the resurgence of patriarchal norms, transmitted through the family, religious institutions, media, and the education system (see Enloe 1993; Cockburn 1998). Patriarchal norms underscored women's day-to-day life, typically through disproportionate time use, as well as subtle forms of intimidation and violence that ensure women's subordinate status to men. For instance, women in Rwanda spend an average of 20 hours per week on domestic tasks, compared to men who spend just nine hours (EICV 3 Gender Thematic Report: vi). Women in both countries still are regarded as dependents of their male relatives, and their primary responsibilities are to serve as wives and as mothers. Patriarchy also manifests in more overt ways, such as in domestic violence in the household other forms of gender-based violence. While much attention has been given to the violence inflicted on women during both periods of war, the rates of violence—and new forms of violence—in the years since are alarming. The line between

war violence and violence more broadly is not always clear, forming a continuum that reflects men's "perennial sense of entitlement to women's bodies" (Cockburn 2013b: 3).

Expectations about men's dominance in the home and community resurfaced after the violence in both countries ended, and men once again asserted control over household decision-making. If women attempted to assert the same level of control over household decision-making as they had in their husband's absence, some faced backlash. According to Cynthia Cockburn,

[Men] are brought up, even in the most peaceful of times, to identify manhood with a readiness to exercise authority over women and to wield force, against women and other men. In war-time they are further trained, and rewarded, for the practice of wounding, raping, killing. Often this experience traumatizes men as well as their victims. And it shapes their behaviour after war, for the disposition to violence is not readily put aside with demobilization." (Cockburn 2013b: 3)

The continuation of violence against women in Rwanda and Bosnia is the most pervasive way that women's oppression is maintained and reproduced.

My interviewees in both countries explained this continued violence by referencing the "mentality" of Bosnians or Rwandans, suggesting such violence is a deeply ingrained process that will be hard to change. Certainly figures about physical and sexual violence are notoriously hard to come by, and scholars have debated whether rates of domestic violence increase in the aftermath of conflict, or simply whether awareness about domestic violence increases, which leads to an increased rate of reporting. This is in part due to the lack of a reliable baseline from before the war. Some studies, however, have shown indications that there was an increase in domestic violence—at the minimum, they suggest that levels of violence against women are extremely high in both countries.

In Rwanda, for example, men indicated that they beat their wives with more frequency now that women are engaged in profit-making activities outside of the home (Slegh et. al. 2013: 19). A study by the International Rescue Committee found that literate, educated and employed women experienced the highest rates of community violence, suggesting that men use violence as a way of repressing women's increased status (Rombouts 2006: 206). According to another study conducted between 1998 and 2003, approximately one-third of women reported having been physically or verbally abused by someone who was not their spouse on at least one occasion in the past year, while 54 percent reported being victims of violence at the hands of their spouse or sexual partner (Republic of Rwanda 2004b). Of those committing the violence, 24 percent were soldiers and 17 percent were local defense officers (Republic of Rwanda 2004b: 33). Some men justified spousal abuse by saying that their wives were making the extra income as prostitutes (see Barker and Schulte 2010).

This accusation—that women are prostitutes—was shockingly common among the women I interviewed in both countries. Men inside and outside women's families often accuse women—and especially young, urban single women—of being prostitutes (typically the word “whore” was used in Bosnia) and subject women to violence and harassment as a result (field notes 2010-2013). In Rwanda, various types of abuse ranged from forced virginity tests, to public or police harassment for wearing revealing clothing, to intimidation from medical professionals when unmarried women seek to access birth control (see Berry 2015b). Simply accusing a woman of being a prostitute is a way of degrading a woman's status among her family, friends, and community.

Countless examples of women's sexual and physical abuse after the war emerged during my fieldwork in Rwanda. I asked almost all of my interviewees what they thought the most significant challenge was facing women in Rwanda today. For political elites, the answer was almost always poverty. For ordinary women, however, the answer was almost always "violence." When pressed further, my respondents described various ways that violence manifests in their lives. For example, Delphine, a 27 year-old woman from Bugasera, described how she was visiting her uncle and walking down the road in his village when a young man attacked and raped her by the side of the road (Interview #83, 1/27/2013). She said that she screamed for help, but even though people were around, nobody came to her aid. Her family forced her to become her attacker's wife. She bore three children by him, one of whom died. This man regularly beat her, eventually causing her to leave the marriage. Now she suffers because she cannot afford to feed her children; since she never attended school, she is unable to find decent work. She survives by "digging"—offering her labor to larger landholders in exchange for about a dollar a day. Naomi, a 28 year-old woman from the same region, described how a man got her pregnant and then refused to marry her (Interview #64, 2/8/2013). She described how the hospital workers considered her a prostitute, since she did not have a legal husband to claim paternity of the baby. Eventually the man agreed to marry her, but he infected her with HIV and became extremely abusive, often locking her out of her house and forcing her to sleep in the banana fields nearby. These stories, and dozens of others that I heard during my fieldwork, hint at the extent of gender based violence in Rwanda and remind us of the persistence of heightened patriarchy in a country often celebrated for its "empowerment" of women.

In Bosnia, women of all ethno-national backgrounds and classes face high rates of violence in the family (UNICEF 2009). Former combatants experienced a decline in their material and symbolic wealth as they struggle to find employment, which has perhaps amplified rates of violence (Bougarel 2006: 485). Women's organizations that formed after the war have led a concerted effort to address this problem and spread awareness about resources and legal protections available to abused women. A 2004 study conducted by Žene Ženama, the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly, and the Foundation of Local Democracy in Sarajevo attempted to ascertain the levels of violence within Bosnian homes. They discovered that two-thirds of Bosnian women (from all ethnic groups and both entities) had personally experienced some form of abuse in their family or immediate environment, and that more than one in five women had been beaten by her spouse (Kleiman 2007: 11). In addition, some women who had been raped during the war faced increased violence from their husbands in the aftermath, who blamed them for what had happened (Amnesty International 2009: 59).

Many of the organizations that formed during the war in Bosnia to deal with women survivors of war rape now serve women who are suffering from intimate partner violence. At several organizations I visited, the women seeking treatment were children during the war. According to Lana, a woman in her late 20s when I interviewed her in 2013, the war emotionally damaged both her and her husband. She described how “we still remember things. We wouldn't live like this if there wasn't war...because the war influenced anything everyone could remember from the age of 7 to 77” (Interview #21 4/25/2013). Her husband regularly beat her, and she ultimately took shelter in a center for women survivors of domestic trauma.

An evolving field of literature has attempted to document the link between women's economic or educational gains and rates of domestic violence within the home. Some studies have posited that when women increase their authority and control over household finances or have a higher social status than men because of their education, men may attempt to reassert their control over the household through violence (see Vyas and Watts 2008; Ahmed 2008). While I did not investigate this explicitly, several of my respondents described this process as ongoing in both Rwanda and Bosnia. Women made the link between the gains they had made after the war, including their enhanced social networks, and the rate of violence they experienced. For example Branka Rajner, the director of Horozonti Tuzla (a human rights NGO), described how she had witnessed this first hand in her community:

Women got offered to take bigger power. More power. Because foreigners tried to empower women through a lot of projects. But it wasn't very wise because of the mentality of Bosnian Herzegovina. Women got empowered, men came back from war, they're traumatized after war without work. And then the war in families start. Because men weren't in charge anymore. And war empowered women. And the balance in the marriage was disrupted. (Interview #72, 6/14/2013)

To avoid this violence, women often defer to men within the home regardless of the positions they have taken on in their communities. In Rwanda, one study found that 75 percent of women said that their husbands dominated all decision-making within the family unit (Slegh 2013: 21).

The war in Bosnia also enabled human traffickers to operate with impunity in the country. Beginning in 1995, the UN suspected that 25 percent of the women and girls working in Bosnian nightclubs and bars were trafficked. These women—usually from Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania—were often held in debt bondage, forced to perform

sexual acts for clients and beaten by their “owners.” As mentioned above, investigators found that international aid and military personnel—including private defense contractors working from U.S. military bases—were complicit in the trafficking and exploitation of these women (Human Rights Watch 2002). The UN’s police monitoring force (IPTF), comprised entirely of foreigners, was repeatedly implicated for its involvement in this forced prostitution.

Some feminist scholars have pointed out that if a resurgence of patriarchy in the aftermath of war is to be thwarted, women must be included in the peace process. In Bosnia, women were strikingly absent at the Dayton Accords, which established a peace that was far from gender-just (Björkdahl 2012; Cockburn 2013b). In Rwanda, the military victory of the RPF and the establishment of a rebel army as the new governing power meant that there was never a formal peace process. While women held high ranks in the RPF, the core power structure of the regime is dominated by a small group of men with close ties to President Kagame. Yet, as I discussed throughout this project, the post-war governments of both Rwanda and Bosnia established legal provisions to promote women and protect women from gender-based violence and other harms. While these legal protections have not eradicated patriarchal structures embedded in both societies, they are nevertheless a substantial improvement from the pre-war era.

CONCLUSION

Despite the shifts war precipitated in women’s lives in Rwanda and Bosnia, the involvement of international actors, the domestic state, and patriarchal structures complicated and restricted women’s gains. Policy makers should consider whether the humanitarian aid industry could alter its practices and programs in order to mitigate harm

after violence. One simple way to do this would be to give local actors a platform to determine the most urgent issues facing their communities, and distribute aid accordingly. In addition, INGOs should consult regional and local specialists—including academics and journalists—while designing post-war relief programs; knowledge of the local context is often more important than technocratic expertise developed in other contexts. The domestic political system may ultimately be harder to remedy, although given the heavy involvement of foreign actors during post-war reconstruction, it seems likely that greater efforts could be made to protect women and enact policies designed with long-term gender issues in mind.

Underlying all of this is the continued persistence of patriarchy in both countries. While patriarchal norms were in flux during the war, they reemerged (with renewed strength) in the aftermath. As a result, women in Rwanda and Bosnia face high levels of violence in their lives from spouses and other family members. This violence limits the ability of ordinary women to take advantage of many of the legal rights the government has granted them since the war. Moreover, these experiences of quotidian violence highlight the importance of not just establishing peace after mass violence, but of establishing a “gender-just peace” that recognizes women’s agency and secures specific social and legal rights for women (Björkdahl 2012).

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

In 2013 I visited an exhibit commemorating the Srebrenica massacre in downtown Sarajevo. Walking into the dimly lit exhibit hall I was confronted by large photos of victims before the slaughter and of daily life shattered—an abandoned doll, a woman’s hands, some discarded clothing. A soft heartbeat sound filled the room, a dark and haunting soundtrack. On the far wall of the rectangular exhibit room a slideshow of war images flickered and played in a loop. They appeared to be from the Siege of Sarajevo—snipers, mortar explosions on modern city sidewalks, civilians shot down in the streets, children running for cover. Before leaving the exhibit, I watched the scrolling images with more attention, and I realized they were not from Sarajevo. Instead, they were from Syria, and had been taken in the past 12 months.

War, at its most fundamental level, is an accelerated period of social change. It destroys social structures, fractures social trust, dismantles institutions, and alters power relations. In this project I examined war as a period of liminality—a critical juncture when institutions, social structures, and gender relations are in flux but are also constrained by the social and historical structures that predated the violence. Such periods of flux can loosen the hold of traditional gendered power relations, restructure the institutional and structural layout of society, and ultimately facilitate women’s participation in new social roles.

As I write this in May 2015, however, the human cost of war seems to dramatically overshadow its potential for structural and institutional transformation. A four year-old civil war in Syria has claimed more than 200,000 lives. Yemen is teetering on the brink of collapse and threatens to become the site of a regional proxy war. Reports coming out of parts of Iraq and Syria now occupied by the “Islamic State” suggest

egregious violence against civilians, including the systematic rape of women (Human Rights Watch 2015). Violence in Central Africa Republic and Libya is threatening to escalate. And as Burundi goes to the polls at the end of June, spectators fear that that violence will once again erupt in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa.

If there is one thing that became clear to me throughout the course of this research, it is that *violence begets violence*—it never fully ends in the lives of those who live through it and constantly lurks during peacetime, threatening to reemerge at some point in the future. For the people who live through war, memories of the violence, the loss of loved ones, constant fear and instability all leave marks on individuals, which may fade but rarely disappear. This is an extremely depressing way to end a research project. But it draws our attention to a moral imperative for social scientists in the 21st century: violence is, and will continue to be, a central feature of our social world. It thus requires our attention, as better understanding war will be critical if we are to develop ways of preventing violence—or at least mitigating some of its effects—in the future.

If we are to successfully prevent or mitigate the effects of violence, I believe that women will play an integral role. Throughout the project I argued that war can precipitate three structural shifts that have implications for gendered power relations. The first was a shift in the demographic composition of society due to the disproportionate death, conscription, and imprisonment of men, and the massive displacement of people from their homes. This demographic shift led women—and particularly those in women-headed households—to assume new roles in their households and families. It also facilitated the creation of new social networks.

The second shift was economic, triggered by macro-economic collapse during war and exasperated by the corresponding destruction of infrastructure and agricultural capacity. This shift led to urgent material needs among the population for food, water, shelter, medical care, and so on. While before the violence women performed traditional caregiving roles within the domestic sphere (e.g., caring for children), after women become active in public spaces and sought aid from international humanitarian NGOs, government institutions, and neighbors. Women formed thousands of informal self-help groups to help them meet these urgent material and emotional needs. These emergent organizations institutionalized a system of women's leadership at the grassroots level, helped women develop self-reliance, encouraged profit-making activities, and facilitated a shift in how women controlled surplus income.

A third shift was cultural. As women's participation in grassroots organizations and public spaces became increasingly common, the cultural understanding of who constituted a legitimate public actor shifted. Individual women and women's organizations advocated for their increased presence in public spaces by pointing to the fact that they were not responsible for the war. Women strategically juxtaposed their "more peaceful" nature with men's propensity for war. As a result, citizens became increasingly accustomed to the idea of women as legitimate political actors.

I illustrated how these three shifts facilitated women's mobilization in informal political capacities. Women took on work that was previously considered "men's work," interacted with government institutions and INGOs as the representatives of their households, and went outside of the home to find basic goods to keep their family alive—all activities constituting a "politics of practice." Activities involved with daily survival

became part of a larger political project to establish normalcy within conditions of widespread upheaval. And, they began to accumulate, as hundreds of thousands of women found themselves in similar situations. This led to a mushrooming of women's organizations, through which women could meet the needs of daily life, undertake collective projects, and build new social networks. These organizations did not aim to challenge women's oppressed status but rather aimed to help women survive the circumstances at hand. They also institutionalized women's leadership at the community level and provided a platform for some women to launch further political careers. With exposure to feminist activism and an open civic space, women in Bosnia had the additional opportunity to engage in public protest activities. After a regime change and the installation of a gender-sensitive government seeking to establish popular legitimacy, women in Rwanda found opportunities to engage in formal political roles within the national government. Other countries with similar post-war political settlements may also find an increased opening for women to enter the formal political realm. Rwanda and Bosnia had very different histories, experiences during war, and aftermaths. Yet despite these differences, the cases showed many similarities in how women organize. This suggests a more universal pattern in women's experiences after war.

Now, how well might this argument hold up in other cases of mass violence? If war can be transformative for women's roles in Rwanda and Bosnia, might we expect to see similar mobilization in other contexts? History provides some clues. From the rise of the international women's movement in the wake of World War I, to American women's increased employment in traditionally male-dominated jobs during World War II, wars have pushed women into new social roles throughout history. Evidence from North

Ireland and Israel shows that even low-level violence catalyzed women's political mobilization and created an atmosphere in which women expanded the number of legitimate political roles they could assume (Aretxaga 1997; Sharoni 2001). And, evidence of women mobilizing for greater political rights during war is present in El Salvador, Sri Lanka, East Timor, and elsewhere. Of course, the aftermath of war often sets back women's wartime gains; World War I, for example, substantially set back British women's progress (Mann 2012: 296).

But two key parameters of the argument are worthy of mention. First, a crucial part of the process of organizational formation in both Rwanda and Bosnia was the arrival of a mass of humanitarian aid agencies. These agencies played critical roles in incentivizing women's organizations to form and formalize in the wake of war. The massive involvement of international humanitarian NGOs is a relatively recent development, dating from the 1980s—although the involvement of international actors in foreign conflicts has been on a steady incline since the formation of the United Nations in the aftermath of World War II (Rieff 2003; Uvin 2004). Thus, we would expect to see similar processes of women's grassroots mobilization through informal self-help organizations in other cases of mass violence that experienced a massive influx of international humanitarian organizations after war. While the emergence of women's organizations preceded the arrival of these INGOs, these foreign actors cultivated and nourished emergent women's organizations, allowing them to develop. In closed societies without humanitarian INGOs, we are unlikely to see a similar process of grassroots organizational formation. Further, mass violence in previous historical periods would

likely not be followed by a similar process of women's organizational formation and formalization.

The second parameter of the argument is the scale of the conflict, and more specifically, the corresponding demographic impact of the violence on the population. Around one-half of the population of both Rwanda and Bosnia were displaced from their homes during and after violence. As I explain through the project, this displacement resulted in the fragmentation of social networks and the destruction of previous ways of life. To survive, and indeed to "move forward" after such pervasive violence, displaced women in both countries developed new social networks, found essential goods, and sought help from others in new locations. Such massive disruption, then, was key for such a large number of women to engage in forms of everyday politics, which led to the formation of self-help organizations. That said, a review of others cases of violence in the last few decades, and studies by scholars like Sharoni (1995), Viterba (2013), and others, suggests that even in lower-intensity or regionally-contained wars, women often take on new roles in their households and communities during the upheaval. But the extent of women's mobilization in such cases would likely be more limited, affecting fewer changes in women's status overall.

LIMITATIONS

Like any research project, this research has limitations. The biggest limitation of the project is that in both countries, a significant amount of time has now passed since the violence. This means that women's recollections of their experiences immediately after the violence may be fuzzy, or may be intermingled with narratives produced by the state, media, or other women, regarding the reasons why grassroots organizations formed, or

why individual women joined. It was primarily for this reason that I supplemented the interview data with organizational reports and government documents. While I have made attempts to triangulate the available information, I possess no reliable data about precisely how many grassroots organizations formed as a result of the violence in each country, who the founders were on average, and who participated in the immediate aftermath of the violence.

I was able to spend six months in total in Rwanda (in addition two summers spent in the country prior to beginning this research). While the total time spent in Rwanda was limited, I reached a saturation point with my interviews—meaning that I began to hear similar responses from different women, and that additional interviews likely would not have resulted in substantially different findings. This was especially the case in my interviews with political elites. I only spent four months in Bosnia. Given the complexity of the situation in Bosnia, and the diversity of experiences during the war, I did not reach a point of saturation in these interviews. In the coming year, I plan to return to Bosnia to conduct additional interviews with a broad sample of women from all ages, regions, and ethnicities, in preparation for turning this manuscript into a book.

Another potential limitation of this study was that I do not fluently speak the local language in either case. While I took private and group lessons in both languages, I still needed to use a research assistant during most interviews. However, I found that having a research assistant/translator was in many ways advantageous. At times I was able to establish a sense of women's solidarity during the interviews, particularly in my interviews with poorer women or women who had survived tremendous trauma during the wars in both countries. In these interviews, I encouraged my research assistant to

cultivate a sense that we were all on a team—they were encouraged to ask appropriate follow-up questions within the context of the interviews, and they occasionally shared bits of information about their own lives and experiences. Moreover, particularly in conducting interviews with political elites, having a research assistant in many ways established my seriousness as a foreign academic. It conveyed a sense that I was either better funded or simply more credible than the dozens of other graduate students passing through over the past decade, many of whom only conducted interviews in English. Having a research assistant thus may have made political elites more inclined to accept my invitation of an interview.

I believe it would be valuable for researchers to observe, in real time, the process of women's mobilization during and after mass violence. This, of course, would involve living and conducting ethnography in a war zone. If it could be done safely, it would mean further specifying the way that women often take on new social roles during war that push them into new public spaces and mobilize them to work towards creating normalcy during conditions of chaos. Future research might also aim to observe shifts in women's roles at different intervals after war—for instance, 5, 10, 15, or even 50 years after war has ended. Such a longitudinal perspective would help isolate and identify the various actors involved in both facilitating and inhibiting women's mobilization after atrocity. The findings would have much to offer not only sociological theory, but more critically, humanitarian aid policy and international policy efforts to mitigate the suffering caused by war.

CONTRIBUTIONS

With these parameters and limitations in mind, this project makes a number of contributions to the literature. For scholars of war and historical institutionalism, this study continues in the tradition of Weber, Skocpol, Mann, Tilly, and others who explore the transformative impact of war, while giving particular attention to how such transformations play out differently for men and women from the bottom up. This focus allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the gendered dynamics of violence that shape social structures and institutions. This study, moreover, uses a historical institutionalist approach to study institutional transformation over a mid-range period of time. In contrast, much research in historical sociology is concerned with large invisible social trends that stretch over centuries—the rise of capitalism, the advent of the labor movement, the emergence of revolutions, and so on. My approach in this project has been to look over a shorter time frame—approximately 20 years—and to examine more bottom-up processes of societal transformation.

To do so I embraced William Sewell's (1996) call for an "eventful history" in which events are understood as turning points, or "concentrated moments of political and cultural creativity where by the logic of historical development is reconfigured by human action but by no means abolished" (McAdam and Sewell 2001: 102). Here I seek not to explain why an event occurred, but rather what a major event (war) produced. This endeavor flips Tilly's inquiry into how mobilization led to revolution, asking instead how violence might lead to mobilization. This effort inspired the title for this project. Further research could use a similar approach to look at the impact of war on ethnicity, institutional policy, legal rights, gender-based violence, and other institutional variables.

This study makes another contribution to scholarship on gender by examining both the destructive and transformative effects of war for women. This approach illuminates several ways that women in post-war countries have challenged the feminist truism from the 1970s that gender sameness is the route to gender equality (Lorber 1994; Epstein 1997; Walby 2005). In the aftermath of war, women in Rwanda and Bosnia drew upon their “intrinsic nature” as “peaceful” or as “mothers” to justify their increased presence in political activities. While essentializing, such framings allowed women the ability to organize political projects under the guise of being non-political, and in doing so, allowed women to work to undermine patriarchy. This reminds us that “gender difference” might be an alternative route to women’s equality under certain conditions.

This study makes an additional contribution to the study of social movements, as I demonstrate how a Western understanding of politics obscures more diffuse and less formal spaces of political mobilization. For women in particular, focusing on the politics of the everyday—and not only on formal politics—allows for a more nuanced and rich understanding of how war transforms women’s lives. Most critically, focusing on more informal, diffuse, and emergent forms of mobilization reveals ways that political action and resistance may be occurring in contexts where a traditional social movement approach would not see mobilization. Looking from the grassroots up, then, suggests that even in periods of widespread upheaval and destruction, people may engage in collective political action.

This project makes a final contribution for policy-makers and scholars of development or peace building. While I argued throughout that war can transform gendered power relations, I explained in the previous chapter how any gains women

make after war must be safeguarded. Ironically, the various institutions designed to safeguard women's rights—including INGOs, multinational organizations like the United Nations, and foreign powers like the U.S.—often inadvertently stifle and suppress women's grassroots organization after war. This is because they arrive on scene with a set of funding priorities established not in the local context but at the international nation-state level. Misdirected international humanitarian efforts can create new forms of inequality and hierarchies of victimhood, at times even undoing progress women made during and after the war. Peacebuilding efforts that attempt to impose formulaic prescriptions based on success in other contexts risk establishing a “negative peace” (Galtung 1969), in which violence has stopped but the dynamics of war rage on in other forums. For instance, gender-based violence, a lack of justice, and structural inequality continue to pervade Bosnian and Rwandan women's lives. As I suggested in Chapter 8, interveners, however well intentioned, must value local expertise and experiences on par with international priorities or technocratic knowledge. This contribution cautions against assuming that all efforts to mitigate suffering and rebuild societies after violence are positive, or at worst, neutral.

Finally, this study contributes to debates over genocide and human rights more broadly by emphasizing that violence is always more complex than good versus evil. In many ways the emergence of human rights as a dominant frame since World War II has drawn divisions between certain types of legitimate and illegitimate violence. “Genocides” are illegitimate, as they are understood as amoral, barbaric, and even irrational. Wars, conversely, are simply part of a state's normal repertoire of behavior. But the distinctions between genocide and war are blurred, especially since civilians

comprise the majority of causalities in both.

The contemporary discourse surrounding genocide has essentially identified three actors during conflict. Perpetrators are the ruthless savages; victims are the helpless innocents; and saviors are generally members of the international community that have the power to intervene. This discourse is rooted in the human rights framework, initially formulated so the oppressed could resist power. But as Mahmood Mamdani (2010) has rightly noted, today the language of rights has, in many contexts, become *the* language of power. This means that as external actors debate whether “genocide” occurs, they simplify the conflict’s complexity to situate the violence within a framework of good and evil. This schema of classification is powerful; it establishes Hutu and Serbs as perpetrators, Tutsi and Bosniaks as innocent. It determines that only Tutsi and Bosniak women were raped during genocide—assigning blame for the rape of Hutu, Twa, Serb or Croat women to a different process of violence that was somehow less abhorrent and more normal or legitimate. This has resulted in framings of the violence that reduce individual identities to simplified ones: rape victim, survivor, perpetrator, and so on.

I reject this simplified characterization of the violence because it creates hierarchies of victimhood that determine a group’s ability to gain power or access aid in the aftermath and, moreover, lets certain actors off the hook for their own involvement in the violence. This was the case with the Rwandan Patriotic Front in Rwanda, which was given free reign to impose its own system of government after killing tens of thousands of civilians with impunity. It also allowed the international community to escape any serious blame in Bosnia, despite orchestrating a dysfunctional political settlement that rewarded nationalist aggressors and fostering a culture of humanitarian relief that allowed

foreign actors to engage in human trafficking and sexual violence. Future researchers should pay attention to the complexity of violence and strive to deconstruct categories of victim and perpetrator that are too often accepted without question.

AN ABSENCE OF WAR, STILL FAR FROM PEACE

Looking at both Rwanda and Bosnia today illuminates how violence begets violence. Twenty years after the end of the wars in Rwanda and Bosnia, peace is still a long way off. Violence pervades ordinary citizens' lives in many ways. In Rwanda, the state's intervenes into its citizen's daily lives, suppressing free expression and creating a climate of fear. There has been no resurgence of violence since the end of the genocide and civil war, and the postwar regime should be commended for this accomplishment. This security, however, has only been possible because the state's coercive apparatus (i.e., the police and military) is deeply embedded in citizens' daily lives. In the city of Kigali, armed guards are stationed at regular intervals on the streets. State representatives wear guns and batons at community meetings (Thomson 2013). Police at regular checkpoints ensure every vehicle is registered and obeying traffic laws and also detain ordinary civilians at will. During the country's annual holiday commemorating the end of the genocide and the "liberation" of the country by the RPF, enormous trucks of soldiers armed with automatic weapons and bazookas blanket the streets of Kigali. Military helicopters run exercises overhead. This reminds citizens that the state monopolizes the use of violence and will not hesitate to use that violence against its citizens. This ubiquitous threat of violence has created a climate of fear, in which individual Rwandans change their own behavior in order to avoid being punished (see Thomson 2013). It has

also led many independent thinking Rwandans—like the four young men I mentioned at the outset of Chapter 2—to flee the country.

In Bosnia violence is less overt, but is embedded in the dysfunctional political system that bifurcated communities into ethnic enclaves and rewarded war criminals with a state within a state. In the years since the war, children from different ethnic groups have grown up increasingly separate: the infamous “two-schools, one-roof” policy created discrete schools in the same building, ensuring that Serb or Croat students were taught a completely distinct curriculum than Bosniak students. Towns and cities in the country are increasingly mono-ethnic. Survivors of the war feel threatened when nationalist Serb politicians, such as Republika Srpska President Dodik, publically deny that genocide or war crimes were committed and threaten to split the Republika Srpska off into an independent entity. In May 2015, I received an email from a young Bosnian friend lamenting the ongoing crisis in his country. He asked me to imagine how people in the USA would feel if they were surrounded all the time by Ku Klux Klan members. “This is how I feel when surrounded by nationalists,” he said, “and they are everywhere” (Personal communication, 4/17/2015). Such structural violence—and fear of overt violence—pervades everyday life in Bosnia.

Thus the end of violence in both Rwanda and Bosnia did not bring about a “positive” peace, nor a “gender just” one. While the war precipitated women’s increased participation in political life, and formal laws protecting women’s rights have established women’s legal equality with men, significant barriers to women’s equality continue to persist. In both countries today, the specter of future violence is always on the horizon.

NOTES

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- ¹ See extensive scholarship in this area by Enloe (1989, 1993), Cockburn (2002, 2007),
- ² Insight on Conflict. December 2014. Association of War Affected Women (AWAW). Retrieved January 4, 2015 (<http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/sri-lanka/peacebuilding-organisations/awaw/>)
- ³ The Popular Organization of East Timorese Women
- ⁴ African Women and Peace Support Group, 2004. (2004). *Liberian women Peacemakers: Fighting for the Right to be Seen, Heard, and Counted*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- ⁵ This collaborate project is currently being finalized and will be submitted to a peer-reviewed sociology journal during summer 2015.
- ⁶ Technically, the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- ⁷ Many other categories of people were of course also targeted, including Roma, Catholics, homosexuals, and communists. Raphael Lemkin coined the term in response to the massacres of Armenians during World War I. See a rich field of genocide scholarship by Chalk and Jonassohn (1990), Charney (1994), Fein (1993), Harff and Gurr (2002), Kiernan (2007), Kuper (1981), Mann (2005), Totten, Parsons, and Charny (1997), Weitz (2003) and many others. There are many other problems with UN's definition of genocide, including the political context in which the definition was codified (see Kuper 1981; Power 2003; Weitz 2003). Most notable is the omission of "political groups" from the definition adopted by the UN because of resistance from the Soviet Union's delegation.
- ⁸ One only has to think of the hypocrisy that the U.S. intervened in Iraq ostensibly in part because Saddam Hussein was a genocidal dictator that killed his own Kurdish population, but then unleashed a war in which an estimated 400,000 to over one million civilian deaths (Mamdani 2010:58).
- ⁹ Or, as the Government of Rwanda would prefer, the "1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi"
- ¹⁰ In Rwanda today, Hutus killed during the violence are deemed lesser victims than Tutsi, and the families of Hutu victims are not afforded the same opportunities to mourn their dead as a result. As I discuss in Chapter 8, only Tutsis are deemed genocide "survivors," and as such are the only ones eligible to receive financial benefits from their losses (see the Straus and Waldorf 2011 edited volume; Hintjens 2008; Reyntjens's work in general). As I discuss in Chapter 2, this politicized hierarchy of victimhood has

profound repercussions for ordinary Rwanda's lives, and is largely made possible by the narrow framing of the entire episode of violence as "the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi"—as the episode is officially referred to in Rwanda. At a recent academic conference, I mentioned my hesitation with using the official term to refer to the entire episode of violence, noting that if scholars are referring to the period of violence as a whole they could refer to the Rwandan Genocide, or the genocide and civil war. A senior Rwandan government official and academic at the conference became enraged and accused me of denying the genocide. Such accusations carrying immense political weight in Rwanda today, and are a tactic the ruling RPF regime frequently uses to delegitimize and even imprison political challengers or human rights activists.

¹¹ UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset: Main Conflict Table:
<https://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/Armed-Conflicts-Version-X-2009/>

¹² See U.S. Supreme Court cases *Pittsburgh Press Co. v. Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations* (1973), *Cleveland Board of Education v. LaFleur* (1974), *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson* (1986), and others.

¹³ Although in the aftermath of World War II, these scholars and others show how women's gains in the labor force were set back as men returned from military duty and women's roles were once again conceived of as being within the home.

¹⁴ See an extended debate in the feminist literature on the difference between "practical gender interests" and "strategic gendered interests" (Molyneux 1985; Chinchilla 1992; Lorber 1990; Agarwal 1992; Hale 1993).

¹⁵ While I refer to "women" throughout this project, I in no way aim to suggest that women are a monolithic group, or that women respond to and feel the same way about various social changes. In this study I aim to recognize the range of individual women and groups of women involved in the processes under study, and aspire to give voice to each. Certainly I will fall short, and thus feel it is important to state that I acknowledge a study that looks at "women" cannot capture all of the complexity that exists within this social group.

¹⁶ I thank Susan Watkins for this term.

¹⁷ Although an Office of the High Commissioner, established at Dayton, continues to serve as the ultimate authority in the country.

¹⁸ The only NGO executives that I considered part of this initial category were NGOs that were run by the government. This was more relevant in Rwanda than in Bosnia. For example, the Rwandan National Women's Council is technically an NGO, but the government appoints its directors and heavily regulates its activities.

¹⁹ Put another way, I aimed to select women from different class backgrounds—NGO founders and leaders tended to be from middle class backgrounds, while women who were the beneficiaries of these organizations tended to be poorer women from rural or lower-class backgrounds.

²⁰ Tuzla is not directly situated in the Drina valley, but many refugees from the Drina Valley region fled to Tuzla during the war, and many still remain there today. Therefore it is an important location for finding survivors of the massacres in Srebrenica and the surrounding area.

²¹ Only about 10 interviewees were not comfortable with the audio recording. All of these were in Rwanda; none of my interviewees in Bosnia indicated any hesitation about being audio-recorded.

²² In addition, several interviews were not transcribed because of the traumatic nature of the interview, which was too difficult for me to transcribe and which I feared subjecting a trained transcriber to. One of these interviews, for example, was with a Bosnian woman who quickly deviated from the interview questions I asked her into order to tell me the horrific story of her husband's murder and her multiple rapes. Over three hours, and in painstaking detail, she relived her experience. While the interview provided a forum for sharing and even healing for her, I determined the interview itself was of limited utility to the project beyond the notes I had taken on it.

²³ In general, when I refer to individuals by only their first name, these are pseudonyms.

²⁴ My friend's identity card marked him as a Tutsi, but his father was actually a well-known local Hutu (my friend's mother was not his legal wife, and thus my friend had assumed her ethnic identity).

²⁵ See an account of one journalist here: <http://africanarguments.org/2014/05/06/taking-sides-in-rwanda-by-steve-terrell/>. The government-run newspaper, the New Times, and a series of government-backed blogs also regularly attack foreign researchers, journalists, and human rights workers, discrediting them publically in order to scare them away from covering Rwanda. See <http://www.newsofrwanda.com/forum/21853/french-broadcaster-rfi-fabricates-kagame-quotes/> or <http://theremakingrwanda.blogspot.com>.

²⁶ Colonial administrators drew on the Hamitic myth of racial superiority in order to give special privileges to the Tutsi. The Hamitic myth holds that some people in Africa, including the Tutsi, descend from Caucasians and are recent migrants from Egypt.

²⁷ This section draws heavily from Codere (1973)

²⁸ Women averaged approximately 8 births up until the genocide. In 1978 women averaged 8.6 births each (Republic of Rwanda, Fourth Census of Population and Housing 2014).

²⁹ The time period when this occurred is unclear. Codere uses the term “early days”—probably in reference to the pre-Colonial era, or in the early days of the colonial era. It is unknown how common this was, or if it was widespread.

³⁰ *Uburetwa* was a labor system that required poor Hutus to regularly sell their labor, undermining their ability to provide for themselves and making survival a challenge (Pottier 2002:13). This institution often required peasants to give two days of labor out of every five in service to their “patron.”

³¹ *Umuheto* required that clients give cattle on a regular basis to their “patrons” in exchange for protection (Mamdani 2001: 65).

³² Some of the programs targeting women included the creation of social centers (“*foyers sociaux*”) for women that focused on women’s literacy and health, and also provided leadership opportunities for the women who came to lead them (Burnet 2012: 50).

³³ Agathe Kanzinga (Habyarimana’s wife) had extensive family networks that provided the power-base to her husband’s political strength.

³⁴ This appears to be a revised number from Prunier 1995, which cites this figure as much higher (p. 70). Estimates of many statistics in in Rwandan history vary, given the poor measures used to calculate the figures and the lack of access to unbiased reporting.

³⁵ Throughout this text I refer to both the military and political wings of the movement as the RPF.

³⁶ There is no consensus on how Rwigyema was killed, although some sources suggest that he was killed during a dispute with his own officers. Prunier suggests that his death was accidental (1995: 95).

³⁷ Kagame had actually been in the U.S. training at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, at the time of the initial RPF attack on October 1, 1990.

³⁸ Experts debate how much truth there was in these rumors. Certainly the RPF committed some atrocities against civilians during this period, but the rumors of their ruthlessness likely far outsized the reality.

³⁹ The peace negotiations had a set back in February 1993, when the RPF launched an aggressive military attack that brought them within 30 kilometers of Kigali. FAR were unable to withstand to assault, and called on French troops for support.

⁴⁰ It is worth noting that Agate was likely appointed to be Prime Minister because she was widely seen as politically weak. Her own MDR political party immediately kicked her out of the party upon her appointment, and Habyarimana formally fired her from the

post 18 days later. She stayed on in a caretaker capacity until her death during the first days of the genocide.

⁴¹ For these figures, Prunier (1995) cites the *Commission Internationale d'Enquete sur Les Violations des Droits de l'Homme au Burundi depuis le 21 Octobre 1993*, Rapport final, Brussels, July 1994. That report estimated that roughly 60 percent of the dead were Tutsi, while 40 percent were Hutu.

⁴² Dallaire's memoir contains a remarkable recollection of Gatabazi having too much to drink at a dinner party in February 1994, at which point Gatabazi began publicly repudiating MRND members, accusing them of being extremists and of manipulating the political process (see Dallaire 2005: 187). Dallaire describes Gatabazi as fearless, and suggests that this night led the extremists to eliminate Gatabazi several days later.

⁴³ A French magistrate inquiry concluded that the RPF was likely responsible, before reversing its decision and attributing the missiles to Habyarimana's troops (see: <http://blogs.voanews.com/breaking-news/2012/01/10/french-inquiry-clears-rwandan-president-aides-in-94-plane-attack/>). An inquiry conducted by the Rwanda government perhaps unsurprisingly found that Hutu troops were to blame (see: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jan/12/rwanda-hutu-president-plane-inquiry>). The debate continues.

⁴⁴ Many accounts of the genocide overlay the use of dehumanizing speech in motivating violence. Straus (2006) shows how terms like "inyenzi" or cockroach were actually historically rooted terms used to refer to Tutsi rebels who attacked at night (as discussed above). Such a cautioned perspective is important, as it rejects the "ancient tribal hatreds" explanation of violence and instead attributes people's actions to fear of a militarized enemy.

⁴⁵ Weapons were readily available; several reports indicate that one could buy a hand grenade at any market in Kigali for about \$3 USD immediately before the violence began (Prunier 1995; Dallaire 2005: 166).

⁴⁶ There are few concrete sources to back up this figure, however. Like other statistics in reference to Rwanda, numbers often get reported by a single agency or report, and then picked up and re-reported by other sources without validating the methods used to calculate the figures. In this case, the estimate of 250,000 raped women stems from the number of babies born from rape after the genocide—a questionable way of calculating rape statistics, especially given the myriad other factors that could have influenced pregnancy during the genocide. Straus aptly points out that according to the 1991 census, there were only 163,738 Tutsi women over the age of 14 in the country (2006: 52); although certainly girls younger than 14 were also raped. But given that the majority of rape victims were of child-bearing age, this census figure suggests that either the figure of 250,000 is inflated, or that sexualized violence extended beyond Tutsis and included Hutu and Twa women as well. In 2003 the World Health Organization even issued a

revised figure of 15,700 rape victims between the ages of 13 and 65 (see Turshen 2001: 58).

⁴⁷ See: http://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/ea9aeff7-5752-4f84-be94-0a655eb30e16/0/rome_statute_english.pdf

⁴⁸ Before the violence Rwanda had five levels of administration: national, prefectures, communes, sectors, and cellules. Below the cellule level there was a representative for every ten houses (see Straus 2006: 204).

⁴⁹ The Government of Rwanda re-drew the administrative districts in the country in 2006 in order to change the names associated with some of the areas most associated with the genocide. While the country was formerly comprised of 12 districts, it has now been redrawn into 4 provinces in addition to Kigali City. The new levels of administration are national, province, district, sector, and cellule.

⁵⁰ Many scholars believe that Tutsis were undercounted in the 1991 Census, as the Habyarimana regime wanted to minimize the level of Tutsis in the population.

⁵¹ These numbers actually refer to Kigali Ngali, as the name of the district was not changed until 2006 (after the earlier population and housing survey).

⁵² This debate is still ongoing. Marijke Verpoorten, whose careful analysis of multiple censuses and a single province is perhaps the more methodological sound study, argues that there were likely approximately 512,000-662,000 Tutsi killed in the violence. If the death toll is higher—which it likely is—the additional deaths are Hutu (see: <http://africanarguments.org/2014/10/27/rwanda-why-davenport-and-stams-calculation-that-200000-tutsi-died-in-the-genocide-is-wrong-by-marijke-verpoorten/>).

⁵³ For more on the refugee crisis, and the new crises it initiated, see Pottier 2002; Prunier 2009; Lemarchand 2009.

⁵⁴ Subsequent studies of the *imidugudu* policy include Van Leeuwen 2001; Hilhorst and Van Leeuwen 2000; Pottier 2006; and Ansoms 2009.

⁵⁵ According to the International Committee on the Red Cross, more than 2,300 prisoners died between July 1994 and January 1996 as a consequence of the overcrowding and unsanitary conditions in prisons across the country (Amnesty International 1996b: 15). The ICRC began providing one meal a day for prisoners in 1998 in an effort to improve conditions (Bouka 2013: 226).

⁵⁶ Other women became *de facto* widows because their husbands were sent to re-education camps, where they were taught the “truth” about Rwandan history and instructed on how to confess genocide crimes. These re-education centers, known as *ingando* (re-education) camps, lasted an average of three months, and still continue in Rwanda today (see Thomson 2011, 2012).

⁵⁷ Moreover, approximately one-third of the aid that was disbursed was used to pay arrears on former government's debt (Prunier 2009: 37).

⁵⁸ See Chapter 2: Kanjogera killed the King, her adopted son, in addition to many political opponents.

⁵⁹ These attacks were common and lethal. Amnesty International (1996a, 1996b) has documented many of the attacks, which frequently occurred around Gisenyi and Ruhengeri (near the border with the DRC).

⁶⁰ See exceptions of so-called "maternalist feminists" like Sara Ruddick (1989), Jean Bethke Elshtain (1987), or Ellen Key (1909).

⁶¹ Perhaps a coincidence, perhaps not: I discovered this exact same sentence in Jeanne Vickers' book "Women and War" (1993: 151).

⁶² Not her real name

⁶³ Portions of this taken from Berry 2015a ("From Violence to Mobilization")

⁶⁴ The new RPF regime eliminated groups suspected of being allied with the former regime, or of being opposed to RPF rule. This meant that agents of the state tightly controlled political space—and civil society more broadly—and quickly arrested (or worse) anyone who seemed suspicious. This tightly controlled political and civic space continues to this day (see Mann and Berry 2015).

⁶⁵ See 1995 Beijing Platform of Action:
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#statement>

⁶⁶ Organic Law No. 08/2005 of 14/07/2005 Determining the Use and Management of Land in Rwanda, and Law No. 22/99 of 12/11/1999 to Supplement Book I of the Civil Code and to Institute Part Five Regarding Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities and Successions, O.G. No. 22 of 15/11/1999.

⁶⁷ There were, however, major shortcomings to the law. While outside the scope of this chapter, it is important to note that only women in formal (legally recognized) marriages could claim access to their husbands land, and yet many—if not the majority—of marriages in Rwanda are not officially documented. Moreover, the law could not be applied retrospectively, so women whose husbands or fathers died in the genocide were not given access to their land (Pottier 2006: 519-520). It also codified the importance of the "family council" in determining whether a woman inherits (Republic of Rwanda 1999, Article 51). This stipulation allows for greater nuance in the application of the law, ultimately allowing women to not inherit if the head of the "family council" objects (Pottier 2006: 520; Human Rights Watch 2004).

⁶⁸ INGOs actually weakened some of these burgeoning civil society organizations by poaching their leaders (USAID 2000: 15).

⁶⁹ Assassinations of heads of survivors associations mentioned by Human Rights Watch include Assiel Kabera (2000) and Landuardi Bayijire (2007).

⁷⁰ This differed from forced conversions elsewhere, such as in Bulgaria.

⁷¹ It is worth noting that both Macedonia and Serbia have a rich tradition of women's involvement in revolutionary movements and war. In Macedonia, peasant women were active in the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) active around the turn of the 20th century. Female guerrilla fighters became legends, and during WWI women were again active in the Macedonian underground (Jancar-Webster 1990: 30). Serbia also had a proud tradition of female combatants, dating back to the Serbian defeat in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. During WWI, hundreds of Serb women in Belgrade participated in fighting, as they helped defend the city and were active participants in street fights and fire fighting, as well as the more traditionally "female" roles of caring for the sick and burying the dead (Jancar-Webster 1990: 31; see Gavrilovic 1976 for more info). Bosnia had less of a female military tradition, and yet during WWI, peasant women fought to protect their food supplies against Austrian troops (Jancar-Webster 1990: 31). In Montenegro and Albania, women could renounce being a woman and live as men, assuming the identity of a "sworn virgin" (see Dickemann 1997).

⁷² The term "Muslim" with a capital "M" is used to designate Slavic-speaking Muslims of Bosnia. Many are not religiously Muslim; regardless, this became the de facto designation by the end of the 19th century (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007). The term Bosnik was eventually introduced after the war in the 1990s to apply to all Bosnian Muslims. The term Bosnian applies to Serbs, Croats, and Muslims who live within the territory of Bosnia.

⁷³ While initially *zadruga* simply referred to a living arrangement in which more than two generations were present, it eventually became known as a unit of collective property during the latter socialist period (Bringa 1995: 42).

⁷⁴ Here Jancar-Webster is citing work in Serbo-Croatian by Dunja Rihtman-Augustin (1984).

⁷⁵ In this section, and particularly in the discussion of women's involvement with Tito's partisans, I draw heavily from Jancar-Webster's 1990 book, which represents the first and most substantial English language text on women in Tito's National Liberation Movement.

⁷⁶ I was unable to locate statistics on the death toll by sex. This combined figure is according to the Military Historical Institute in Belgrade. (Note: Ramet says just over one million Yugoslavs died in total during WWII and that the 1.7 figure is an over estimate).

⁷⁷ There were no women participants among the Četniks, who believed in the immorality of women giving up their daily activities to fight alongside men (Jancar-Webster 1990: 47).

⁷⁸ Ultimately, 92 women were designated as “national heroes” by the Yugoslav government as a result of their courage and bravery during the partisan struggle. Of these women, 21 were Serbian, 17 were Croatian, 11 were Bosnian, 21 were Slovenian, and the rest were from other parts of the region.

⁷⁹ Cominform was the Soviet-dominated organization of communist parties founded after WWII. The non-aligned movement refers to states that did not wish to align themselves with either of the Cold War superpowers: the Soviet Union or the U.S.

⁸⁰ This is a measure of the Total Period Fertility Rate (TPFR), a cross-section of women between 14-49 in a given calendar year.

⁸¹ By 1990 the total births per woman was 1.7, and then after the war this dropped to between 1.6-1.7 in 1996 to around 1.3-1.4 in 2000 (Sardon and Confession 2004: 214).

⁸² In 1994 the female replacement rate was +17.38 among Albanians, while -2.93 among Serbians (Cockburn 1997: 161).

⁸³ In 1389, the Ottoman Empire defeated the medieval Serbian kingdom at the Battle of Kosovo. Nationalist Serb politicians frequently referenced the defeat in the build up to the war in the 1990s.

⁸⁴ Ramet (2005: 10) notes reports that indicated some Serbs may have been kept from the polls by Karadžić’s Serbian Democratic Party.

⁸⁵ While some reports of the time indicate that women were very involved with the peace-protests in Sarajevo, my own study of photos by Ron Haviv on display at the Sarajevo History Museum in March 2013 indicated that men outnumbered women at these rallies by ten to one.

⁸⁶ Croatia, however, was quickly turning into a massive refugee camp—it hosted almost one million refugees in a population of just 4.7 million people (Silber and Little 1997: 247).

⁸⁷ I’ve read other estimates that this number is high. According to Gjeltén (1995: 10), the Bosnian Institute for Statistics reports that 34.1 percent of marriages in 1991 were of mixed nationality.

⁸⁸ Sarajevo Survival Guide, accessed online 1/14/2014: <https://www.survivalmonkey.com/threads/sarajevo-survival-guide.19312/>. Another recipe—worth including for its fantastic satire—is for “*Cheese a la Olga Finici*.” The recipe instructs the cook as follows:

4 demi-tasses of milk powder (bought at the black market)

1 demi-tasse of oil (from humanitarian aid) a demi-tasse of water (boil it first!)

0.5 demi-tasse of vinegar, or one lemon

1 small spoonful of garlic powder (present given by a good friend)

Mix it all with a plastic spoon which can be found in the USA lunch package. The mix will thicken immediately, just like a pudding. If you were lucky enough to grab a bunch of expensive parsley, cut it finely, pepper it, and add into the mix. All then should be taken to your balcony, where the temperature is -10 C. ; you can as well leave it in the kitchen, where it is only -8 C. It should get hard. Even if you had other ideas, this dish has to be served cold. Enjoy!

⁸⁹ Five other areas across the country were eventually declared “UN Safe Zones” as well.

⁹⁰ Over 200 men are now members of the Association of Women War Victims, a group that has assumed the duty of officially deeming individuals “rape survivors” (Interview, Bakira Hasečić, 5/21/2013).

⁹¹ There is an interesting parallel here to women “victims” of human trafficking. See work by Jennifer Musto (2009), Stephanie Limoncelli (2005) and others.

⁹² The agreement was entered into force as a treaty in Paris two weeks later.

⁹³ In 1997 the Peace Implementation Council granted new powers—known as the “Bonn powers”—to the High Representative, allowing him to dismiss elected officials who blocked the implementation of Dayton Agreement.

⁹⁴ Of course the irony of this was that the international community lauded Bosnia’s multiculturalism prior to the war, and yet proposed a solution that threatens to erase that history.

⁹⁵ Maja Zuvela. April 25, 2015. “Biggest Serb party in Bosnia threatens 2018 secession.” Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/25/us-bosnia-serbs-secession-idUSKBN0NG0NB20150425>

⁹⁶ There were, however, several typhoid outbreaks in Bosnia (see LA Times 11/12/1992).

⁹⁷ There were other demographic shifts caused by the war, including a “delay effect” in age at first marriage in Bosnia, and fertility rates decreased from 1.9 children per woman to a rate of 1.2 after the war (Staveteig 2011: 148).

⁹⁸ However, as I discuss in Chapter 8, NGOs may have had incentives to overestimate this figure (Summerfield 1999).

⁹⁹ Staveteig 2011 reports similar findings

¹⁰⁰ By 1997, only 40,000 of these houses had been repaired.

¹⁰¹ This forced some humanitarian missions to use air drops to get urgent supplies to besieged cities (Cigar 1995: 58).

¹⁰² Note that this isn't representative of the entire country—since I aimed to interview women involved in organizations, I often interviewed the organization's founder.

¹⁰³ Elissa Helms provided similar examples. For instance, while living in divided Mostar after the war, Helms recounts how it was common for women to cross to the side of the city where they no longer “belonged” to run basic errands (2013: 144). If they were not wearing a visible marker of their religion (e.g., an Islamic hidžab), strangers could not easily recognize a women's ethnic identity.

¹⁰⁴ See: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

¹⁰⁵ This phrase was also uttered before the war. It is also the title of a song by Dubioza Kolektiv, a popular anti-nationalist Bosnian rock band.

¹⁰⁶ ICTY <http://www.icty.org/sections/AbouttheICTY>

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Rule 96 of the ICTY's Rules of Procedure and Evidence. <http://www.icty.org/sections/LegalLibrary/RulesofProcedureandEvidence>

¹⁰⁸ *Prosecutor v. Dusko Tadic* (Opinion and Judgment), IT-94-1-T, International Criminal Tribunal for the Former (ICTY), May 7, 1997. While protection against gender-based crimes were espoused in early legal commissions (see the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and Additional Protocols), wartime rape was generally addressed in a monolithic manner and gender-based crimes were not seen as genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes until the work of the ICTY and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) (Oosterveld 2005: 69-70). The first case at the ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Tadic*, produced the first conviction for sexual violence since World War II, for crimes committed against men. In the subsequent “*Celebici*” case, the ICTY found that rape constituted torture, and further established that the doctrine of command responsibility applied to those who did not commit rape directly. The *Kunarac* case that followed addressed issues of sexual slavery (Oosterveld 2005: 72-79).

¹⁰⁹ Jobs with international humanitarian agencies also allowed some locals access to supply routes and transportation that allowed them to engage in part-smuggling operations, as described by Peter Andreas's research on Sarajevo (2008). I also discuss some of the negative repercussions of this employment in Chapter 8.

¹¹⁰ Not her real name

¹¹¹ During my fieldwork I heard many examples of discrimination against non-Serbs. For example, one owner of a bar described how R.S. authorities are always inspecting his bar and finding some minor violation to threaten him with. Another woman described how she tried to get her child signed up for tennis lessons, but the Serb instructor quoted her a price that was double what she knew other people were paying.

¹¹² The organization was initially called the Center for Women Returnees

¹¹³ See: <http://word.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/1530>.

¹¹⁴ This commemoration occurs in Potočari each year on July 11. In recent years, hundreds of people have participated in a “Peace March” in which they walk for days from different parts of the country to Srebrenica in memory of those who past. This is a deeply religious experience.

¹¹⁵ See coverage here: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/04/11/us-canada-jordan-boycott-un-meeting-on-global-criminal-justice-that-excluded/>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22297089>

¹¹⁷ SDA is the Party of Democratic Action, a Bosniak political party in Bosnia.

¹¹⁸ See two important documents for this period: 1997 OECD Guidelines on Peace, Conflict and Development Cooperation and the 1998 UN Secretary General’s report on Priorities for Post-Conflict Peace- Building

¹¹⁹ This term came up several times in my fieldwork during conversations with self-reflective INGO employees, who had little room to avoid reinforcing victim labels and overly simplifying the conflicts due to fact that INGOs were ultimately accountable to their donors, not the communities they serve.

¹²⁰ I thank Bill Roy for this phrasing and insight.

¹²¹ Indeed “perpetrator” categories in many cases of ethnic cleansing or genocide often report suffering too, especially given that many people in these perpetrator categories are completely innocent. See the Turkish response to discussions of the Armenian genocide.

¹²² Survivors (sometimes called *rescapés*) are defined as Tutsis who escaped the genocide or massacres committed against Tutsis between October 1, 1990 (the date of the RPF invasion) and December 31, 1994.

¹²³ Survivor funds led by the government similarly exclude non-Tutsi victims from the distribution of aid. See, for example, the Assistance Fund for Genocide Survivors (FARG).

¹²⁴ See the film titled “the Whistleblower,” which documents the appalling complicity of a UN contractor in facilitating and then covering up the human trafficking crime syndicates operating out of Bosnia during and after the war. Ed Vulliamy describes the film’s origins in detail in his 2012 book (p. 117-122). He quotes Madeleine Rees, the leading UN officer for gender issues, as saying, “I went to work with large numbers of women who had been the victims of rape during the war, but I ended up working as much with women who were being trafficked and raped by soldiers and police officers sent to keep the peace” (p.122).

¹²⁵ As depicted in Gutman’s work for Newsday, Catherine MacKinnon’s work for Ms. Magazine, among others.

¹²⁶ This process of externally determining that women are victims, like mentioned earlier, echoes the literature on women “victims” of human trafficking (see Musto 2009; Shih 2015). Often called “slaves” by well-intentioned anti-trafficking activists, such externally imposed identities can be demobilizing and disempowering to individual women, who often do not choose such identities.

¹²⁷ The lack of a memorial at the Omarska concentration camps, for example, ultimately had more to do with infighting between camp survivor groups than opposition from Serb political leaders (even if Serb politicians, like Prijedor Mayor Marko Pavic, did not make it easy).

¹²⁸ This section draws heavily from Berry, 2015b (“When ‘Bright Futures’ Fade”)

¹²⁹ Moreover, the law precludes people from acquiring this status if they lived outside of the country for more than three months; this automatically excludes women who sought refuge abroad during or after the war (Cockburn 2013a).

¹³⁰ There are many problems with this process as well, since “Women Victims of War” has been accused of pressuring women to testify against accusers and also has implemented few procedures to avoid re-traumatizing women who come forward to tell their stories. Indeed the organization does not even employ a psychologist on staff (Amnesty International 2009: 44-45).

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