

Breaking the Silence: Women's Narratives of Sexual Violence During the 1994 Rwandan Genocide

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
SOCIOLOGY

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April 16, 2007

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Genocidal Rape, Rwanda, Genocide, Sexual Violence, Feminist Theory

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ABSTRACT:

In times of war, women are subjected to sexual abuse that is largely ignored by military organizations, media outlets, and international courts. Existing literature has illustrated how wartime rape was accepted or dismissed in the past, and how today, while this practice continues, international courts are beginning to identify the harm being done to women, making explicit how rape is used as a tool of genocide. In this thesis I argue that wartime rape serves as a means of genocide, a way to eliminate a group of individuals and their culture. A recent example of how rape worked as genocide is seen in the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Rape was used as a systematic policy to destroy a group of people, the Tutsi, through torture and the spreading of AIDS. The purpose of this research is to examine genocidal rape from the perspectives of women who were raped in Rwanda during the genocide. The focus is on gaining insight to wartime rape as a form of genocide and the aftermath of rape on the women and the culture within which it occurred. Qualitative, feminist analysis was used to answer the following research questions: How do women raped in the Rwandan genocide describe and explain their experiences with rape and its aftermath? How did the intersection of gender and ethnicity contribute to violence against women during the genocide? What are the implications of rape for the women who experienced it and for their families, communities, and their cultural group?

Acknowledgments

Looking back on this project, it is obvious to me how many people have had a hand in its completion. I am grateful to so many for their support, and this is an attempt towards acknowledging their efforts.

First, this project would not have been possible without the guidance and support of Dr. Carol A. Bailey. I am deeply indebted to you for the time that you have patiently taken to guide me through this process, showing me the possibilities, and for never questioning the value or importance of this research. For the long talks in your office where we would discuss the importance of boots and the West Wing and for the tissues you would throw at me when frustration and stress would bring me to tears, I thank you.

To my parents, I am grateful for the constant support, understanding, and belief that I can do anything. You taught me to love reading, a skill that has come in handy, and I believe that you are to blame for the massive amounts of library books currently scattered around my desk.

I am so thankful for the wonderful friends that I have made here at Virginia Tech. Eileen, Adrienne, Corey, I am so glad that we had methods together our first semester at Tech! Taking sociology and women's studies classes with you has been fun (or we made it fun!), and I have learned so much from each of you. I truly treasure our friendship.

Widad, your reassurance and continual support for this project allowed me to continue when I became plagued with self-doubt. You always seemed to know what I was trying to say, even when I wasn't sure myself. I am so lucky to count you as a friend.

Ellen, I am glad that we could become co-conspirators (even if you wondered to yourself about my disturbed interests) in expanding the collection of the Newman Library. They are lucky to have you and I was lucky to be able to work and learn from you.

Finally, a special thanks to my wonderful committee members, Dr. Kwame Harrison and Dr. Neal King. Your suggestions for improvement and expert knowledge have helped to expand this project. I feel privileged to be able to work on this with you.

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Chapter 1: Problem Statement

Recent conflicts have increased international awareness and response to wartime rape. Rape in war has long been used to destroy societies, infrastructure, and the culture of the “enemy” (Brownmiller 1975; Card 1996). Sexual violence in war is extensive. Recent instances of sexual violence include Japanese troops systematically raping women in Korea, China, and the Philippines during WWII and Soviet soldiers raping two million women in East Germany in 1945. In 1971, Pakistani soldiers raped over two hundred thousand Bengali women and American GI’s raped Vietnamese women during the war in Vietnam. During the August 1990-February 1991 Kuwait war, Iraqi troops raped 3,200 women (Turpin 2003) and in conflicts in Sierra Leone, Chechnya, East Timor, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Angola, Cambodia, Haiti, Peru, Somalia, Uganda, and Kosovo, mass rapes were reported (Koo 2002). In Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1-2% of the female population was raped (Watts and Zimmerman 2002). Since the beginning of 2006, more than 250,000 people have been displaced from Darfur, northern Sudan, and women have been raped on a large scale. These rapes in Darfur are a continuation of violence: in 2003-2004 during attacks between Janjaweed militia and government forces, thousands of women were raped, and hundreds forced into sexual slavery (Amnesty International 2006).

Rwanda provides a recent example of rape being employed as a form of genocide. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 resulted in the death of between 800,000 and 850,000 people. In this instance of genocide, rape was used in a systematic manner to destroy the culture of the Tutsis. This policy was so effective that human rights groups estimate that every woman who survived the genocide was a victim of sexual assault (Human Rights

Watch, 1996). Seventy percent of the women raped have been infected with HIV (Russell-Brown 2003).

The international community was slow to respond and intervene in Rwanda, and mass rape was ignored. For example, the original indictment presented to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) did not include rape as genocide. This indictment was later amended after human rights groups and feminists applied pressures (Lyons 2001: 104-105). The inclusion of rape as genocide was an important first step in recognizing that the experiences of men and women in this war differed in significant ways, with rape being a form of violence primarily directed toward women. In spite of the acknowledgement by the Tribunal, the impact of rape from the perspectives of the women who were raped in Rwanda is largely unknown.

Scholars have also largely ignored rape within the context of war, although there is considerable research on rape more generally. Years of research indicates that rape is not just an individual act of aggression perpetrated against another person but is also violence that occurs and is made more likely within specific cultural and social contexts. For example, in a cultural context that places great importance on the honor of a woman, rape is more successful in breaking a community. If it is perceived that the honor of a woman is violated through rape, if she is made to feel shame and her family is stigmatized, rape is more successful in achieving the intended goal of destroying a community (Thomas and Ralph 1994:88-89). Additionally, "Soldiers can succeed in translating the attack upon an individual woman into an assault upon her community because of the emphasis placed-in every culture in the world-on women's sexual purity and the fact that societies define

themselves, in overt or less clear-cut fashions, relative to their ability to protect and control that purity” (Thomas and Ralph 1994: 89). One factor that changes how women experience rape is the way that their society defines honor in relation to their community.

Correspondingly, the experiences of women who are raped vary by context. For example, the fear of rape, the amount of violence used, the legal ramifications of, the interpretation of responsibility, access to abortion after rape, among others, vary from setting to setting. Research on rape within the United States and other industrialized countries has given scholars and activists insight to the experiences of women in different context. Still, the understanding of the experiences of women who are raped within the context of war is largely unexplored. Even when these events garner research attention, the first-hand accounts of women who were raped are rarely used as data for analysis. Thus, the meanings of and implications of rape from the perspectives of women who were raped in war are largely unknown. Further, feminist theorists repeatedly remind us of the dangers of generalizing from the experiences of one group of women to other women in different contexts. Without an understanding of wartime rape in non-Western countries, what scholars know about rape remains largely based on the experiences of women in Western countries.

The purpose of this research is to examine wartime rape from the perspectives of women who were raped in Rwanda during the genocide. The focus of this research is more than just on the individual experiences of rape per se, as important as these are. Rather, the focus is on gaining insight to wartime rape as a form of genocide and the aftermath of rape on the women and the culture within which it occurred.

Based on the perspectives of the women who were raped during the Rwandan genocide, primary questions are as follows:

1. How do women raped in the Rwandan genocide describe and explain their experiences with rape and its aftermath?
2. What are the implications of rape for the women who experienced it and for their families, communities, and their cultural group?
3. How did the intersection of gender and ethnicity contribute to violence against women during the genocide?

Qualitative analysis of transcripts of interviews of women who were raped in the 1994 Rwandan genocide were utilized to examine the research questions. The human rights group African Rights conducted these interviews.

The following chapters provide a discussion of the conflicting definitions of concepts utilized in this research. Then, because of the importance of the context in which rape occurs for the experiences of and aftermath of rape, the following chapters present an examination of debates in the literature regarding genocide and sexual violence, and a brief overview of the history of the Rwanda genocide.

Chapter 2: Definitions

This chapter will define some of the terms addressed in this research. Terms such as genocide, rape, and genocidal rape do not have one definition. The purpose here is to show the relevant debates and make clear the way in which these terms will be used in the pages that follow.

Genocide

Genocide is a fairly recent word, termed by Raphael Lemkin in 1933. Lemkin's definition of genocide is "the criminal intent to destroy or to cripple permanently a human group. The acts are directed against groups, as such, and individuals are selected for destruction only because they belong to these groups" (Andreopoulos 1994: 1). Lemkin's definition was adopted and expanded by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (UNGC), established in 1951 (Fein 1999: 157). Still, the way that the INGC defined genocide, and the UNGC as an organization have been critiqued. Shortcomings include exclusion of political and social groups in the definition and an absence of an enforcement body to punish the perpetrators of genocides. A leading genocide researcher, Helen Fein, has proposed an alternate definition of genocide. She believes that genocide is characterized by

Sustained purposeful action by perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members, sustained regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victims. Genocide is most often a strategy that ruling elites use to resolve real solidarity and legitimacy conflicts or challenges to their interests against victims decreed outside their universe of obligation in situations in which a crisis or opportunity is caused by or blamed on the victim (or the victim impedes taking

advantage of an opportunity), and the perpetrators believe they can get away with it (Fein 1999: 157-158).

Scholars argue that there are different types of genocides, and these types are determined by the motives of the perpetrators. The 1994 Rwandan genocide is an example of a retributive genocide, genocide to “eliminate a real or potential threat” (Fein 1999: 158). The perpetrators and organizers of the genocide were a Hutu elite, a segment of the dominant ethnic group and felt threatened by another ethnic group, the Tutsi. Important in the success of genocides is the complacency on the part of other states. Because these genocides are often tolerated, and other states even arm the perpetrators, they are repeated often. Alison Des Forges headed the international commissions that investigated human rights abuses in Rwanda. She writes: “there was a conscious weighing of the risks. In that sense, yes, it was rational. If we are going to go back and capture the thinking of the planners, a crucial point was the violence in Burundi and the total failure of the international community to react to it” (Fein 1999: 161).

Rape and Sexual violence

Rape in common law in the United States is defined as “an act of enforced intercourse by a man of a woman without her consent” (Adler, Mueller, Laufer 2004: 253). Rape is a crime of violence, an expression of power, dominance, and control. Catherine N. Niarchos believes that:

all women know a great deal about rape, whether or not we have been its direct victims. Rape haunts the lives of women on a daily basis: it is the stranger approaching on the street; the violent husband or partner at home. More than other crimes, fear of rape leads us, consciously or unconsciously, to restrict our

movements and our life choices, or alternatively to prepare for battle armed with mace, tear gas, and our rage. We ask whether it is safe for women, thereby accepting a double standard for our personal liberty and security. We learn to adjust from an early age: from fairy tales to the classics, we are conditioned to the fact that we are vulnerable to attack at any time because of our gender. We arrange our lives accordingly; rape is an effective means of social control (Niarchos 1995: 650).

In some literature, the terms sexual violence and wartime rape are used interchangeably. Some scholars have argued that using the term sexual violence is more representative of a wide range of violence women experience during war. Sexual violence includes rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, and sexual humiliation. Using the term sexual violence emphasizes the violence inherent in the act (Skjelsbaek 2001:70). Sexual violence is an act of aggression with “sexual manifestations” (Niarchos 1995:650). Sexual violence is also different from other forms of violence, in that it includes forced sexual contact. Scholars who use the term sexual violence to describe certain acts, including rape, do so in an attempt to illustrate the different violations and how power is being employed (Skjelsbaek 2001: 71).

Mass rape versus genocidal rape- debates in the literature

As events were taking place in Bosnia and Rwanda in the early 1990’s, and accounts of mass rape were reported to the public, feminists began to push for the inclusion of rape in the indictments in the prosecutions that were to follow. Eventually, they were successful in their efforts. One important, yet debated, event in the process of making sexual violence in war unacceptable in the international community is the

Rwanda Tribunal that began in 1998¹. A judge on the Tribunal, Richard Goldstone, writes, “Rape is a form of aggression. Rape is a violation of personal dignity. Rape and sexual violence constitute one of the worst ways of harming the victim as he or she suffers both bodily and mental harm” (2002). The case of *Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu* was the first time that genocidal rape- rape under orders-was defined by an international criminal tribunal. Rape as genocide was not one of the original charges facing Akayesu. It was not until the testimony of numerous women, relating their experiences of rape, and the strong insistence from the sole women judge, that the charges were amended. In these additional charges of rape, the ICTR equated rape with torture, identifying how rape violated an individual’s personal dignity, and how it was used as “intimidation, degradation, humiliation, discrimination, punishment, control, or destruction of a person.” Rape was then defined “as a physical invasion of a sexual nature, committed on a person under circumstances which are coercive” (Statute of the International Tribunal for Rwanda 1994).

This tribunal identified how rape is used in war to systematically destroy a specific group of people. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) defined genocide to

mean any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

¹ As of September 2006, the ICTR has issued twenty-five judgments. Currently there are ten trials in progress that involve twenty-six accused persons. More information is available at the internet site for the ICTR: <http://69.94.11.53/default.htm>

- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (Statute of the International Tribunal for Rwanda 1994).

Sexual violence in the 1994 Rwandan genocide served a purpose- the intent was to destroy the Tutsi. The ICTR professed the opinion that rape and sexual violence “constitute genocide in the same way as any other act as long as they were committed with the specific intent that characterizes genocide.” They also showed that rape “resulted in the physical and psychological destruction of Tutsi women, their families, and their communities” (Verdirame 2000). In the 1994 Rwandan genocide, seventy percent of the women raped have contracted HIV (Russell-Brown 2003). The case, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu* illustrates the first time that wartime rape has been defined as a crime against humanity, as an act of genocide, and this recognition has the potential to be an important step in increasing accountability for rape in the International courts (Goldstone 2002).

Some legal scholars do not believe that the *Akayesu* case, or the inclusion of rape as genocide by the International Tribunals, is as groundbreaking or progressive as it may appear (Engle 2005: 780). This debate highlights many issues, namely the feminist debate concerning the description and naming of the events, with the most contentious issue being whether the rape of women in Bosnia and Rwanda was genocide or mass rape. What makes mass rape genocidal? Mass rape and genocidal rape share common elements that at times can blur the distinctions between the two. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda found that “the rape of Tutsi women was systematic and was

perpetrated against all Tutsi women and solely against them” (Statute of the International Tribunal for Rwanda 1994).

In this instance of rape as genocide, women were specifically targeted based on their ethnicity as well as their gender. Because Hutu and Tutsi have the same race, religion, nationality, language, and culture, the ICTR decided that they were not separate groups, but that there existed a need to protect “similar groups”- pointing to discrimination in custom and law in their reasoning (Statute of the International Tribunal for Rwanda 1994).

The debate over the naming hinges on the way the events² are defined. Feminists engaged in this discussion can be categorized into two main groups. One group defines the events in terms of rape as genocide, arguing that rape in these cases should be seen and understood as an instrument of genocide. By defining rape as a tool of genocide, it highlights differences between so-called everyday rape, and even wartime rape because genocidal rape is a tool of systematic extermination. The other dominate opinion, in opposition to rape as genocide, sees mass rape in war as nothing new, occurring in conflicts across centuries, and that drawing attention to genocide makes rape seem less horrible (Engle 2005: 779).

One argument put forth by opponents to naming these rapes genocidal hinges not on the way that rape can function as genocide, but that the naming of an instance of mass rape genocide “functioned to downplay the extent to which all women raped during war were victims” (Engle 2005: 786). While Catherine MacKinnon distinguishes between

² The events that the feminist groups primarily are concerned with in their theorizing of genocidal rape are the genocides that occurred in Bosnia and to a more limited extent Rwanda.

wartime rape and genocidal rape by the intent of the perpetrators to eliminate an ethnic group (MacKinnon 2006: 188-189), Rhonda Copelon asserts that genocidal rape can occur on all sides of a conflict, putting the focus on gender not ethnicity. (Copelon 1994: 207). Women are targeted because they are women, not necessarily because of the ethnic group they belong to or what side they are on in a war. Copelon believes that an emphasis on the genocidal nature of the acts has the potential to make rape invisible yet again. She believes that the primary issue in this debate should focus on how rape is perceived: the idea that rape is a crime against dignity and honor is problematic in that it ignores the inherent violence of the act. In making gender the focus, a category of victimization, women are targets not simply because they “belong to” the enemy, but precisely because they keep the civilian population functioning and are essential to its continuity. They are targets because they too *are* the enemy; because of their power as well as their vulnerability as women, including their sexual and reproductive power. They are targets because of *hatred* of their power as women; because of endemic objectification of women; because rape embodies male domination and female subordination (207).

Catherine MacKinnon likewise believes that rape is committed against women because they are women, everyday, in all corners of the world. But she feels it important to emphasize the ethnic component, and the extent to which genocidal rape is a policy, with the goal of destroying an ethnic group through women.

The result is that these rapes are grasped in either their ethnic or religious particularity, as attacks on a culture, or in their sex specificity, meaning attacks on women- never both at once. Attacks on women, it seems, cannot define attacks on

a people. If they are gendered attacks, they are not ethnic; if they are ethnic attacks, they are not gendered. One cancels the other. But when rape is a genocidal act, as it is here, it is an act to destroy a people. What is done to women defines that destruction. Besides, aren't women a people? (MacKinnon 2006: 185).

In addition to the genocide versus mass rape debate, some feminists assert the word rape and consequential understanding associated with the term is itself problematic. Regardless of how these occurrences of rape are defined- be they genocidal or mass rape, women are the victims. Although it is true that women are overwhelmingly the victims of such violence, this preoccupation with women as victims limits their agency and becomes the sole factor by which they are defined. Sharon Marcus, in her writing about rape and the language of rape critiques the way rape is understood, calling for it to be “as a language and use this insight to imagine women as neither already raped or inherently rapeable . . . argue against the political efficacy of seeing rape as the fixed reality of women's lives, against an identity politics that defines women by our violability” (1992).

This perspective of women as victims was played out in the events surrounding the genocidal rapes in Bosnia, in which all Bosnian Muslim women were seen as victims of rape. An estimated 20,000 women were systematically raped. Despite these high numbers not all Bosnian women were raped, but all Bosnian women were seen as rape victims, portrayed as such in media reports and even academic literature (Engle 2005: 795-796). The label of rape victim became the defining factor in their lives, limiting their opportunities for agency. For example, the extent to which Bosnian women participated in or held nationalist ideals that contributed to the conflict was ignored, essentially women were not granted political agency, instead they were viewed as brainwashed

victims (Engle 2005: 797). It is important to critically analyze the ways in which women are continually silenced and denied agency, limiting the power women have, even when steps to promote justice are well intentioned. Denial of women's political agency and denial of women's sexual agency portrays women as perpetual, constant victims in war, leaving no room for possible consensual sexual relationships. This may be done to make rape seem more horrible, or is presented as disloyalty. Ignoring the possibility of consensual sex may unintentionally reinforce ethnic differences. In an effort to punish sexual violence, the International Tribunal limited the extent to which consent could be used as a defense, reinforcing an "understanding of antagonisms as 'age-old', 'tribal', and 'natural'" (Engle 2005: 813).

After exploring the feminist debate regarding the naming of the violence in Rwanda, for the purposes of this work I have decided to use the phrase genocidal rape to highlight when elements of genocide are present in narratives of sexual violence. My purpose in doing this is not to prove or to test a hypothesis regarding genocidal rape, but rather to take the definition of genocide as articulated by the Tribunal and show when the experiences of women are framed in a manner that is consistent with this definition. I have decided to adopt this definition of a few reasons. First, I do not believe that naming the rape genocide obscures the harm caused by rape that do not occur during genocides. Rape should be viewed as an act of violence and of personal injury, regardless of the context. Second, I believe that women were targeted for sexual violence because of their ethnicity and their gender during the Rwandan genocide. It is the intersection of ethnicity and gender that makes these rapes genocidal.

Chapter 3: Overview of Rwandan History

Many have looked and still look at the Rwandan tragedy as the result of ethnic hatred, others as the consequence of bad politics and power struggle; some take it for the direct outcome of colonial and neo-imperialist manipulations, while others take it to be the outlet of socio-economic frustrations, and so on . . . And the truth again is there in the middle – as big as all those elements put together (Rwandan Protestant Church worker, Eltringham 2004: xv).

Before examining the literature and theory of wartime rape, the history of Rwanda will be explored because an awareness of the complex history and debates surrounding the genocide are useful in discussions of how women in Rwanda have been affected by sexual violence.

Background

Rwanda is located in the Central African Great Rift Valley, bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Zaire. This landlocked country, although smaller than Maryland, has a population of over eight million and is the most densely populated country in Africa. Rwanda is one of Africa's poorest countries and suffers from problems of erosion and deforestation, which are complicated by overpopulation. Ninety percent of the population is engaged in subsistence farming, and the country lacks natural resources and industry. Fifty-six percent of the population identifies as Roman Catholic. Rwanda has three official languages, English, French, and Kinyarwanda (The World Fact Book).

Hutu/Tutsi definitions and debates

No history of Rwanda would be complete without addressing the intricacies of the ethnic populations. Two main groups occupy Rwanda, Tutsi and Hutu, in addition to a much smaller group, Twa. Eighty-four percent of the population identifies as Hutu, fifteen percent Tutsi, and one percent Twa. The Hutu, the majority, are mainly peasants, the Twa inhabit the lower social classes, and the Tutsi, also a minority, are mainly cattle herders. Prior to the 1994 Genocide, these groups lived side by side, sharing a culture and common language and intermarriage was common (Prunier, 1995).

Prior to colonization, the kingdom of Rwanda had a complex client-patron relationship. A patron was responsible for the welfare of his client, and a client pledged loyalty and obedience to the patron. This pledge of loyalty and obedience was especially true in times of war- and the kingdom was almost permanently in a state of war. These wars were both civil wars and wars with foreign kingdoms. Civil wars were not fought between Tutsis and Hutus; instead, they were civil wars between lineage groups. A Tutsi patron and his Hutu clients would be at war with another Tutsi patron and his Hutu clients. The geographical landscape of Rwanda is hills- and hills represent social and economic units. During a civil war, the dispute would be for control of a hill- or group of hills. The organization of these hills, or social and economic units, was very precise in the time before colonialism. A Tutsi overlord had three chiefs for each hill. The first chief, a Tutsi, was to maintain control of the pastures and to guarantee that cattle were grazing where they should. The second chief, the chief of the land, was a Hutu, and he made certain that people cultivated the land- and that people's boundaries were not crossed.

The third chief, a Hutu or Tutsi, and was the chief of administration, especially regarding men preparing for war (Prunier 2001:109-110).

Some scholars believe that the term Tutsi was a description of status, a term that signified membership in a 'high' lineage, a person of authority, individuals who owned cattle, or a non-Hutu. Eventually, it came to mean wealth and power, while the term Hutu signified inferior status (Eltringham 2004: 14). Prior to colonization, this distinction of Tutsi and Hutu identities were subject to change, if certain conditions were met. A Tutsi who lost his cattle would then be regarded as a Hutu, or a prosperous Hutu who married a Tutsi would come to be considered a Tutsi (Clark 78). The categories of Hutu and Tutsis were social categories, not entirely determined by biology. The ethnic identity of a family had the potential to change over several generations, depending on economic success and marriage (Newbury 1998: 84-85).

Colonialism

Compared to some countries, Rwanda had a relatively short colonial history. Germany colonized Rwanda and had a continued, but limited presence from 1898 till 1916. Germany did not have adequate time to make significant changes in Rwanda, nor did they have the presence- one historian writes that Germany had 96 Germans in Rwanda and Burundi (Prunier 2001: 111). After World War I, the German colony was given as a mandate to Belgium. Belgium was the colonizer until independence in 1962. In 1924, Belgium did away with the three chief systems in an effort to centralize the country. Instead, they had one chief who administered each hill, and that chief had to be a

Tutsi. The only way that this new system worked was through Belgian intervention (Prunier 2001: 111).

Three Rwandan kings served under German and Belgian rule. Yuhi Musinga ruled from 1896 till 1931, Mutara Rudahigwa ruled from 1931-1959, and Kingeri Ndhindurwa was the last, ruling from 1959 until 1962. Tutsis who occupied the noble caste were instruments of indirect colonial rule. The major effect of colonization was that it cemented the identities of Hutu and Tutsi, when before they were somewhat fluid. This was accomplished by issuing identity cards to all individuals, marking them a Hutu or Tutsi (Dorsey 8-9). Children inherited the identity on their father's identity card, making what was previously abstract, literal (Eltringham 2004: 18-23).

Colonial powers associated class and culture with ethnicity, seeing the Tutsi as upper class, and the Hutu as lower class. Additionally, their new concept of ethnicity was used to determine the location of material resources, education, and job opportunities- in favor of the Tutsi (Newbury 1998: 87). Education became the means of defining and maintaining ethnic categories. Catholic priests and nuns established schools, but they were exclusively for Tutsi- education thus became the vehicle for maintaining ethnic superiority (Clark 79). Education was also significant in the path towards independence. It was the educated Tutsi who had the desire and pushed for independence even though they were the group privileged by the Belgians with education and jobs. The Belgians switched loyalty and favor to the Hutu, who were at this time, less educated and not as interested in independence (Prunier 2001: 111).

In order to try to perpetuate colonial domination (which was a lost cause by the 1950s), the Belgians gave power to a group that had been a majority but had been

totally marginalized. In other words, they put together a very nice bomb and then, when it turned out that they could not keep control over Rwanda or Burundi or the adjoining vast Belgian Congo, they walked away. The fact that the bomb exploded is not a surprise at all. In fact, it began to explode even before they left (Prunier 2001: 111-112).

Events leading up to the 1994 Genocide

Rwanda Revolution of 1959

The Rwanda Revolution of 1959 is called the first genocide (the application of the term genocide is debated by scholars) against Tutsis in Rwanda. The Rwanda Revolution marks the end of political domination by Tutsi, effectively giving power to the Hutu. “To many Hutu in Rwanda, the revolution of 1959 was an important watershed because it marked the end of domination of the state by an exclusive Tutsi elite. But in breaking the hegemony of the monarchy, the revolution ushered in a period of new forms of exclusivism- dominated by a group which based its legitimacy on Hutu ethnicity” (Newbury and Newbury 1999: 297). During the violence in 1959, 21 Tutsi chiefs were killed, left destitute, or exiled, and 314 sub-chiefs were killed or fled Rwanda. The clear focus of the violence was on Tutsi elites and political leaders, and much of the damage done was property related. About 1,000 individuals were killed, and this conflict resulted in significant population displacement (Eltringham 2004: 34-40). Tens of thousands Tutsi fled to neighboring countries, and this becomes significant later when these refugees invade Rwanda, seeking to regain power in the early 1990’s (Newbury 1995:13).

In examining the events of 1959, historians look to the past for explanations. In this examination by historians, Hutu hatred of Tutsi is explored in an attempt towards understanding. The colonial powers, mainly Belgium, gave Tutsi almost absolute power, and education and resources enhanced this power. The Belgians also perpetuated the belief that the Tutsi were racially superior, more intelligent and beautiful (Prunier 2001: 112).

December 1963- January 1964

From December 1963 till January 1964, ten thousand to fourteen thousand Tutsis were murdered (Eltringham 2004: 42). In 1963, Tutsi refugees were engaging in armed incursions, in an attempt to regain the control that was lost in 1959. By 1964, 64% of the Tutsi population was living outside of Rwanda (41). The events of 1963/64 bear some striking resemblances to the events of 1994, so much so that it has been said that it serves as a “preamble to the planned genocide that was to take place 30 years later” (44). While the events of 1959 receive much attention, the violence of 1963/1964 is often overlooked (42). These killings were mostly political acts in response to Tutsi incursions from outside the country. Tutsi inside Rwanda were effectively treated as hostages (Newbury and Newbury 1998:298).

1973 Coup d'etat

Tensions increase in Rwanda in the early 1970's as a result of actions taken by Burundi, namely the killing by the Tutsi army in Burundi of thousands of Hutu, causing an influx of Hutu refugees into Rwanda. On July 5, 1973, military leaders replaced the president with Juvenal Habyarimana. Habyarimana concentrated power in the office of the president, and instituted a single party system, the MRND party. This concentration

of power resulted in limited access for Tutsi to state school education and government jobs and harsh treatment of opponents including assassinations. In this struggle for power, class and region were the main areas in which conflict occurred, ethnicity became an issue later (Newbury 1995: 13).

Economic Problems

After Habyarimana assumed power, Rwanda faced some very severe economic problems. Understanding the economic situation leading up to the 1994 genocide aids in comprehension of why so many Rwandans participated in the genocide. In the mid-1980's, the world price of coffee decreased about 50 percent. This drop in prices significantly affected Rwanda because coffee was their main cash crop. At almost the same time, Rwanda was in the midst of a severe drought, in which several hundred people died and caused deprivation for countless others. Following this drop in coffee prices, drought, and the inability of Rwanda to pay their loan, the World Bank and IMF imposed structural adjustment problems that cut social programs- placing further strain on Rwandans who were already experiencing economic setbacks. The structural adjustment programs resulted in increased school fees, and more expensive health care costs (Newbury 1998: 89-90). Youth in Rwanda were especially vulnerable to the structural adjustment programs because the bad economy made it harder to pay school fees. The increase in school fees as a result of structural adjustment programs meant that many could no longer afford to attend school, which left limited job opportunities. Without a job or education, many youth in Rwanda were left without hope for the future. As poverty increased, so did class divisions. This increase in class divisions is later an important factor in the violence (Newbury and Newbury 1999: 302).

The ending of the Cold War offers an interesting dimension to this discussion. Armaments became affordable to poor countries, in abundant quantities. The Rwandan government formed militias of youth, and a large number of people were provided with weapons. It is these armed militias that will later participate in the genocide (Newbury 1998: 90).

Politics

During the 1980's in which a large percentage of Rwandans were experiencing economic setbacks, the concentration of power by one party began to be questioned. The country was being run by a small group of Hutu elite, and the majority of the people of Rwanda did not feel that their needs were being addressed. Habyarimana was pressured to expand the political system so it was more inclusive, allowing for more than one party. His progress was slow, and his move towards a multi-party government is met with anger by powerful members of his own party (Newbury 1998: 89). Habyarimana was also beginning to soften his position on the right of return for Tutsi refugees. In the past, refugees were not permitted to return, instead, they lived as second-class citizens in neighboring countries such as Uganda. With Habyarimana beginning to reconsider the problem of refugees, anxiety was raised among landowners. Given limited information, peasants and landowners feared that they would lose their land, and tensions increased (Newbury and Newbury 1999: 304). These actions being considered by Habyarimana (right of return and move towards a multi-party government) are contributing factors to the October War.

October War

In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), comprised of Rwanda exiles and refugees from the revolution 30 years before, attacked Rwanda. A few circumstances initiated the invasion. One was that Tutsi refugees living in Uganda felt that they were experiencing discrimination. This discrimination coincided with new initiatives being considered by Habyarimana- namely the right of return and an expansion of the political system. Both issues were things that the RPF supported and they wanted to be the ones to implement these reforms. The RPF invaded Rwanda, and the Rwandan Army responded by expanding security forces and labeling all Tutsi internal supporters of the RPF. This invasion was an attempt to regain political power; it was not about ethnicity per se. The Rwandan government, in their effort to militarize the country (military increasing from 5,000-40,000) presented it as a war between two ethnic groups (Newbury and Newbury 1999: 303-304).

Arusha Peace Accords

A United Nations peacekeeping force was placed in Rwanda to attempt to control the violence. The Arusha Peace Accords were a series of compromises proposed by the UN that would have ended the violence. The process was delayed many times and not all were happy with the compromises. The elite in Habyarimana's party believed that too much power was being given up. A transitional government was to be created that would oversee a conference on unity and reconciliation, the writing of a new constitution, and organize elections. The Arusha Peace Accords called for a new army to be formed, one that would combine the RPF (15,000 troops) and the Rwandan Army (40,000 troops) into an army of 20,000. To achieve this number, the Rwandan Army would have to

demobilize 2/3 of their forces. This impending demobilization brought opposition from the military, which increased insecurity and instability. The Arusha Peace Accords also allowed for the right of return for Rwandan refugees. The right of return was essentially a class issue, in that peasants worried about land security and where the land for the returning refugees would be coming from. This concern was made worse when the economic problems and land shortages are considered (Newbury and Newbury 1999: 307-309).

The Arusha Peace Accords were finally signed in April 1994. On April 6, 1994, Habyarimana was returning from Tanzania to inaugurate a new parliament when his plane was shot down, signaling the beginning of the genocide.

The genocide was a perfectly planned and executed operation by a people who felt that this was their last chance of staying in power. It went from the top to the bottom—from feelings of wanting to retain government jobs and to steal foreign aid to the small man who felt that he would lose his land if the Tutsi regained control. There was also the fear of revenge. The sentiment seemed to be, “We killed some of their parents, and they will somehow come and try to reclaim their possessions and avenge old score.” And then, “If we kill those who are inside the country, we can also take their land.” So, the government could count on the loyalty of everybody, from top to bottom, to kill the Tutsi for a variety of reasons. These went from a feeling of inferiority, to the idea of getting land, to the idea of avoiding being ruled again by the old feudal system that would come and take over again (Prunier 2001: 115-116).

1994 Genocide

The Rwandan Genocide is often presented as a tribal dispute, this is misleading and is not representative of the conflict. The genocide in 1994 was planned in advance, and it was shockingly calculated. The planners include hardliners in the Habyarimana government determined to maintain political control. Ethnicity was used as the excuse for killing, but factors such as class and power are just as significant. An ethnic ideology was created to justify the genocide. This ideology linked all Tutsi to the RPF, perpetuated the belief that if the RPF regained control, they would institute a regime that was repressive, the notion that Tutsi were a separate group not native to Rwanda without the right to live there, and encouraged the fear of Hutu being slaughtered by the Tutsi (Des Forges 1995: 46). When Habyarimana's plane was shot down, this ideology, perpetuated since the RPF invasion in 1990 was put into play and this propaganda, combined with economic, environmental, and political concerns of the people legitimized the genocide in the eyes of many people. "The violence which engulfed Rwanda in 1994 was a political phenomenon had strong overtones of class conflict as well. Ethnicity served as a language through which these fears and ambitions were expressed, but it was not ethnicity that "caused" the violence" (Newbury and Newbury 1999: 316).

The planning and calculation of the genocide is reflected in the numbers of people affected. Conservative estimates by the United Nations initially put the number of those killed at 500,000. Recently other estimates place the loss of life between 800,000 and 850,000- about eleven percent of the population (Prunier 1995).

As a result of the high population density and limited land availability, Rwanda developed into a country that had a highly centralized political authority and a high

degree of social control. These two elements later become important when considering the way in which the genocide was carried out.

Ethnicity Debates in Rwanda

Ethnicity has been defined to mean differences “between individuals and groups in skin color, language, religion, culture, national origin/nationality, or sometimes geographic region” (Nagle 2003: 6). Incorporated in this view of ethnicity is nationalism, which can be seen as a specific kind of ethnicity based on social identity. Nationalism is an “ideology that professes a common history, shared culture, and rightful homeland, and often marked by ethnocentrism where nationalist assert moral, cultural, and social superiority over other nations and nationalisms” (Nagle 2003: 148).

It has been theorized that Hutu and Tutsi do not in fact represent distinct ethnicities, because they share language, religion, territory, foods, etc. That being said, ethnicity is seen as a social construction, a construction that needs to account for how the perpetrators of the genocide conceived ethnicity. “So is ‘ethnicity’ a viable concept? Yes, because the *belief* in its salience is part of the situation in which we are engaged. We must look, however, to the manner in which all actors define and deploy the *notion* of ‘ethnic’ distinction rather than fall back on our own independent, insulated, abstract concepts” (Eltringham 2004: 12). While the Tutsi and Hutu may not conform to a definition of separate ethnic groups, in their worldview, experiences, and practices they conceived of themselves as such.

In their prosecution of individuals responsible for the genocide, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda constructed their definition of ethnicity in a manner that understood and acknowledged the role of the perpetrator’s definition. “An ethnic group is

one whose members share a common language and culture; or, a group which distinguishes itself, as such (self-identification); or, a group identified as such by others, including perpetrators of the crimes (identification by others)” (Eltringham 2004: 31). In effect, this genocide occurred because of perceived racial differences, and it can be argued that the Tutsi were not asked how they defined themselves, it was decided for them, and they were thus targeted as an ethnic group (Eltringham 2004: 31-33).

Certain preconditions existed in Rwanda that allowed the genocide to occur in combination with the political climate. Rwanda, before the genocide, had a well-organized civil service, a small tightly controlled land area, a disciplined and ordered population, adequate communication, and a coherent ideology. A small group organized the genocide- the regime’s political, military, and economic elite that shared a common ideology of radical Hutu domination. The efficiency with which the genocide was carried out indicates that the genocide was planned. Planning alone could not have made the genocide successful. Large numbers of people willing to kill and moral support from the majority of the population were both needed and present. What was it about Rwandese culture that allowed for the majority to support and for large numbers to participate in the genocide? (Prunier 1995). It is often assumed in the West that ethnic conflicts occur when there is an absence of a strong state. This is not true in Rwanda. The Belgian and German colonizers left a legacy of a tightly controlled state- if an authority told a person to do something they did it. In reality, this strong state facilitated, more than prevented the genocide (Newbury, 1998). “Good genocides are always organized by governments, and the better organized the government, the more successful the genocide” (Prunier 2001: 113). Additionally, in Rwandan culture, a man is not solitary- he is part of a family,

a clan. Similar to a group think mentality, when those around you, members of your family or clan, are complying with orders, it is hard to refuse (Prunier 1995).

Two main motivations have been identified that explain the genocide. The first centers on the ideology of a democratic majority. Although Hutus are the majority in Rwanda, the German and Belgian colonizers historically placed Tutsi in positions of government and power. A hierarchy was established that favored the Tutsi in terms of access to education, jobs, and government positions (Newbury, 1995). The second motivation is one of competition for shared resources. The landmass of Rwanda is small, about the size of Massachusetts, and is unable to accommodate both the Hutu farmers and Tutsi herders (Temple-Raston 2005). Rwanda, in the early 1990s, faced some serious economic troubles. In the post cold war years, international aid sharply decreased, and this fact, paired with global coffee prices falling, and the tin market failing, contributed to the economic crisis mainly because tin and coffee were the main exports of Rwanda. Additionally, Rwanda had one of the highest population growths in the world, 3.5%, and a scarcity of land- every inch was being used. The situation was so bad that Hutus were killing each other over well-paid jobs in the private sector (Prunier 2001:114).

The French played a role in the events leading up to the genocide in 1994. The French, still present in Africa, felt threatened by the RPF- the RPF came from Uganda, spoke English, and saw their incursions into Rwanda as a threat to French authority in Africa. In an effort to maintain their authority, the French sent troops to protect the Hutu government. During their presence in Rwanda, the French were tolerant of small massacres and Hutu extremism. It has been speculated that if the French had put a stop to

these massacres, then the 1994 genocide would have been prevented (Prunier 2001: 114-115).

Chapter 4: Literature review on wartime rape

Sexual violence in war occurs on a large scale, affecting many women in the past and present. This chapter will examine the literature relevant to rape, rape in war, considering the ways international law addresses the needs of women and at times, prevents justice.

Examples of rape in war- Historically and contemporary

In this section, I will discuss in limited detail three cases of mass rape- “The Rape of Nanking”, genocidal rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990’s, and the way that sexual violence is currently being used against women in Darfur.

Nanking, the capital of China, surrendered to the Japanese army on December 13, 1937. In the months following the surrender, 300,000 civilians and soldiers were massacred, and the number of women raped is estimated to be as high as 80,000. For the most part, the world ignored the rape of women, focusing instead on the torture and cruelty of the Japanese army during their occupation of the city. Torture, abuse, and violence were directed at the Chinese population of Nanking, and the immense violence targeted towards women is torture in its own right (Kirby 1997: IX-XI). A Japanese soldier, Takokora Kozo, describes the treatment of women as follows: “Women suffered the most. No matter how young or old, they all could not escape the fate of being raped. We sent out coal trucks from Hsiakwan to the city streets and villages to seize a lot of women. And then each of them was allocated to fifteen to twenty soldiers for sexual intercourse and abuse” (Chang 1997: 49).

It is difficult to assess actual numbers of women raped, primarily because women were often killed after the assault. The Japanese military officially outlawed rape and consequentially, the women were most likely killed after being raped. Another soldier, in

describing how women were gang raped explained “we always stabbed and killed them. Because dead bodies don’t talk” (Chang 1997: 50). Another account provides a similar example: “One company commander unofficially gave [us] instructions for raping as follows: ‘In order that we will not have problems, either pay them money or kill them in some obscure place after you have finished’” (Brownmiller 1975: 62).

Age was not a factor to the soldiers- females of all ages were vulnerable- young children, old women, and everyone in between. Pregnant women were raped, often resulting in harm to the unborn child and the mother. Mothers were raped in front of their families, or fathers were forced to rape their daughters. In such situations, humiliation appeared to be the goal (Chang 1997:92-93).

Somehow, despite the atrocities committed against women, the “Rape of Nanking” became a phrase used to describe the invasion of the Chinese capital by the Japanese army. While all the people of Nanking suffered cruelty and depravation, the suffering of women is overlooked. The Tokyo tribunal, established to punish war crimes, excluded rape, even when faced with testimonies and evidence (Brownmiller 1975: 57-64).

Reports of mass rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina began to surface in 1992. Bosnian Muslim women in refugee camps reported their rapes by Serbian men. In the investigations that followed, the generally accepted number of women raped is 20,000. This instance of mass rape gained attention for many reasons, but one is because of the detention camps in which women were held. It has been estimated that 80% of women were raped in detention camps (Engle 2005: 784-785).

The majority of the rapes were gang rapes. Gang rapes “represent not a primarily sexual act, but rather an aggressive act that has as its purpose the destruction of the victim’s dignity, her injury and humiliationWhen gang rapes take place in large numbers, they represent a systematic attempt to break and annihilate the political and military enemy” (Folnegovic-Smalc 1994: 174-175).

The events in Bosnia have been labeled genocidal rape and have been prosecuted by the international tribunal as such. Beverly Allen has identified three ways in which rapes has functioned as genocide in Bosnia. The first way is the public rape of women. Public rape insures the departure of the occupants from the area, essentially insuring that they will not return. With the transportation of the specific population, ethnic cleansing has been accomplished (Allen 1996: 62).

The second way Allen identified rape functioning as genocide is through Serb concentration camps. Women were held in these concentration camps and chosen at random to be raped. Rape was used as torture before women were killed. The third way rape functioned as genocide was through rape/death camps that held women for an extended period of time, and these women were raped over an extended period of time. These rape/death camps served a few purposes. One purpose was to rape women until they became pregnant. Women were raped systematically until they became pregnant, and they were then detained until their pregnancy had progressed and abortions was no longer a safe option. Women who did not become pregnant were often killed (Allen 1996: 62-63).

The frequently reported intent of Serbian soldiers to impregnate Muslim and Catholic Croats, the presence of gynecologists to examine the women, and the

intentional holding of pregnant women until it was too late legally or safely to procure an abortion all point to a systematic, planned policy to utilize rape and forced impregnation as a form of ethnic cleansing (Salzman 2000: 74)

A current example of rape operating as genocide is found in Sudan. Sudan is the largest country in Africa, and also has the largest population of displaced persons- almost six million, due to the increasing conflicts that center around ethnicity, religion, and availability of land (Wagner 2005: 195-196). An escalation in conflict since 2003 has displaced an additional two million people. U. S. Secretary of State Colin Powell concludes: “genocide has been committed in Darfur and that the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed bear responsibility, and that genocide may still be occurring” (202).

In the genocide in Darfur, women are experiencing sexual violence on a large scale. Violence against women is being used as a tactic to create terror, and also to populate the area with Arab children. As was seen in Bosnia, rape is used as a tool to impregnate women, “a number of victims have been specifically told by their rapists that their goal was to produce Arab babies and weaken African ancestral lines” (Wagner 2005: 205). Also similar to the rapes in Bosnia, women are raped in public, with the intent to humiliate and dehumanize the population.

Women are easy targets for this violence because of cultural traditions that place the responsibilities of childcare and care of elderly on women, making it harder for women to flee violence. Women are also being raped while they are engaging in their everyday activities (Human Rights Watch 2005). Doctors Without Borders, while working in Darfur between October 2004 and February 2005 report that of 297 women they treated as a result of their rape, almost 90% of them said they were raped outside of

a populated village. Eighty-four percent of those women reported that they were raped while engaged in everyday activities, compared with four percent reporting being raped during times of active conflict. Of the women interviewed, eighty-one percent indicated that their rapists were members of the militia or military, “who used their weapons to force the rape.” The report by Doctors Without Borders also indicates that, "Almost a third (28%) of the victims reported that they were raped more than one time, either by single or multiple assailants. In more than half of the cases, physical violence was inflicted beyond sexual violence; women are beaten with sticks, whips or axes" (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2005). This conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan has not ended and as a result of continued violence, women are still being targeted with rape.

Reporting rape

In the United States and Canada, rape is the least reported violent crime, only 1-4 in every 10 rapes being reported (Williams 1984: 459). The 1999 National Crime Victimization Survey reports that 28.3% of rapes are actually reported to the police. Under some circumstances women are more likely to report than others. Older women are more likely to report than younger women. Rapes that result in injury, involve a weapon, the perpetrator is unknown, and that occur in unfamiliar places are more likely to be reported to the police. Rape victims are also more willing to report if they believe that reporting will result in a positive outcome (Fisher, Daidle, Cullen, and Turner 2003: 7-10).

Why do so many women choose not to report their rape? Reasons vary, but common reasons include: fear of retaliation from assailant, the woman is embarrassed or

ashamed, fear of rejection by families, and because they blame themselves for the rape (Williams 1984: 460). This feeling of shame and fear of rejection is also described by women in varying social and cultural groups. Women who were raped in Bosnia were reluctant to speak about their experiences because they feared rejection by their families and communities. These women also felt shame as it related to their rape (Niarchos 195: 659). In addition to fear, embarrassment, and shame, many women also suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research shows that most women experience symptoms of PTSD two weeks after an assault, and for 30-50% of survivors, PTSD can continue through the rest of their life. If symptoms persist for 3 months or more, this is called chronic PTSD, and in addition to symptoms of PTSD, women may also experience anxiety, depression, and substance abuse. Physical symptoms may include chronic pain, sexual dysfunction, headaches, upset stomach, back pain, and indigestion. Women who were injured during the attack, were threatened, have a history of assault, or had a negative interaction with family or law enforcement are at a higher risk for chronic PTSD (Hensley 2002: 331).

War Rape in International Law

Historically, wartime rape has not been mentioned in international tribunals, and has not been prosecuted. The Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 27, effective October 21, 1950, mandates that states have the obligation to protect women in conflicts “against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault” (Charlesworth, 1999). This language demonstrates that the value of a woman is her honor, and that a woman requires protection from a violation such as rape

based solely on her honor. This ignores the intrinsic violence associated with rape, instead emphasizing that women are the property of men (Green 2004; Charlesworth, 1999). Since a community places such high value on a woman's honor, and because she is viewed as property, violations such as rape are considered a crime against the community. This perspective blames women for loss of honor even though it is out of her control, and takes the blame away from the rapist (Hoglund 2003; Thomas and Ralph 1994). The language used by the Geneva Convention also places violence against women in terms of protection from violence, rather than as a prohibition against violence. In failing to frame violence as a prohibition, it becomes evident that women's voices are markedly absent from this law making and law-enforcement process (Gardam, 1997; Charlesworth, 1999).

The Geneva Convention, Protocol I, removes the clause relating to a woman's honor, and instead deems women "object of special respect", making reference to a woman's role in childbearing. This language fails to protect women as individuals, instead, offering women protection in relation to others (Gardam, 1997).

The Rwanda Tribunal is also significant because it highlights the differences in consent between a wartime rape case and a civilian rape case. In war, lack of consent-apparent submission, or apparent consent brought about by threat or fear, is not real consent. In war, there is a difference between submission and consent. Civilians are subordinate to soldiers, and must submit, but this cannot be seen as consent. The courts, when deciding if rape occurred, saw women as not being able to exercise consent, and did not judge a woman by the amount of physical violence used against her but by the position that did not allow her to exercise her right to consent (Bergoffen 2003).

Women's Silence and International Law

When the limitations and shortcoming of international law are considered, it is not difficult to understand why women, survivors of the genocide, are reluctant to talk about their rapes. Jeanne, a young survivor interviewed by Human Rights Watch believes that "Rape is a crime worse than others. There's no death worse than that. The problem is that women and girls don't say what happened to them" (Human Rights Watch, 1996). A closer examination of circumstances under which women are expected to speak about their rapes illustrates why there is unwillingness to document. A rape victim talking to a female investigator, with a female interpreter will be more comfortable relating her experience than she would be to a male. The investigators need to be sensitive to the trauma that the victim has experienced, and to be aware of the culturally imposed shame, guilt, and stigma that is associated with rape. While this is a consideration for all victims of sexual assault, it is especially true for survivors in Rwanda. "Women survivors feel guilty for having survived. One woman said, 'It is assumed that most survivors were raped, that if you survived, you were raped . . . the returnees say, how did you survive? Women often feel guilty for surviving. They feel responsible'" (Human Rights Watch, 1996).

The criminal tribunal poses an obstacle all its own. Human Rights Watch reports,

Sexual violence against women and girls in situations of armed conflict or systematic persecution constitutes a clear breach of international law. Under international law, perpetrators of sexual violence can be held accountable for rape as a war crime, as a crime against humanity, or as an act of genocide, if their actions meet the definitional elements of each. Yet, although rape and other forms of

sexual violence have long been used as weapons of conflict, they have seldom been denounced or punished. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, ‘rape remains the least condemned war crime; throughout history, the rape of hundreds of thousands of women and children in all regions of the world has been a bitter reality’ (Human Rights Watch, 1996). For women to break the silence, to speak about their experiences, a need exists for women to feel protected and safe, and for the perpetrators to be held accountable.

Justice for women in Rwanda

The Rwandan government, in an effort to punish those responsible for genocide, has prepared over 4,000 cases for trial and has hundreds of investigators working on gathering evidence. Unfortunately, few of these cases are for charges of rape. Women are facing many obstacles in their efforts to obtain justice. Mainly, there is a lack of attention paid to rape, and the information and investigation required to gather evidence is lacking. There are reports of women being turned away when they come to file claims, and some of the judicial investigators are unaware that rape is a prosecutable crime. One survivor relates her experience:

I went to report what happened to me to the local authorities in Taba in March 1996. I spoke with the judicial police inspector and told him that I knew the names of some of the men who had raped me. He told me that rape was not a reason to accuse a person and that there are no arguments to bring those sorts of offenses before the courts. I have not reported by case elsewhere because I don’t have the money to go anywhere else (Human Rights Watch, 1996).

The lack of female judicial investigators precludes many women from openly speaking and reporting their rapes. Often, women will report the death of family members and injury, but omit their rape, but say that if it were a woman asking the questions, they would have reported it. In reporting the death of her daughter to authorities, one woman recounts her experience:

I lost my daughter in a horrible way. There is nothing I can do, there is nothing to believe in now. The man who killed my daughter was arrested in November 1995. I tried to find the others responsible for killing my family, but they have all left the country. I did not mention the rape of my daughter because I considered the whole thing as a killing. If rape is by force, then it is just like killing. I have never heard of a woman accusing someone of rape. I didn't know that rape could be prosecuted. I was only asked about the way my daughter was killed and if I saw it myself. I was crying. It was not worth it to say that she was raped (Human Rights Watch, 1996)

Chapter 5: Feminist Theory

This is ethnic rape as an official policy of war in a genocidal campaign for political control . . . It is specifically rape under orders. This is not rape out of control. It is rape under control. It is also rape unto death, rape as massacre, rape to kill and to make the victim wish they were dead. It is rape as an instrument of forced exile, rape to make you leave your home and never want to go back. It is rape to be seen and heard and watched and told to others: rape as spectacle. It is rape to drive a wedge through a community, to shatter a society, to destroy a people. It is rape as genocide (MacKinnon 2006:187).

In this chapter, feminist theory as it relates to sexual violence in war will be examined. Leading feminist theorists, both past and present, and their contribution to understanding will be explored.

Feminist theorists have increased our understanding of how rape functions as a tool of war, even as a form of genocide. In her landmark work, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, Susan Brownmiller highlights the significance that rape has held in conflicts. Historically, wartime rape was dismissed as a regrettable, but recurrent aspect of war. Instances of war excused the rape of women and the actions of men, because rape has been viewed as an inevitable consequence of war (Brownmiller 1975). Brownmiller asserts that if rape occurs in every conflict, across all centuries, it must persist because it serves a function (1975: 15). Rape in war serves a strategic function, as a means to demoralize and dominate a society. One way to achieve this is by showing a population that they lack control. Women are generally expected to rely on males for protection, especially in patriarchal societies, so when the male population of one society is unable to protect their women from rape, it sends a clear message of the powerlessness of men (Card 1996). It has been theorized that all patriarchal societies evaluate themselves by

their ability to control and protect the sexual purity of their women. The rape of a society's women clearly demonstrates the inadequacies of men in maintaining that control. The message conveyed to women is that they have no control over anything, including their bodies (Thomas and Ralph 1994). This also produces compliance through fear (victim) and shame (her family) (Card 1996). Rape is generally the act of a conqueror, and it is through rape that the victim and community submit (Brownmiller, 1975).

Dorothy Q. Thomas and Regan E. Ralph propose that rape functions as a means of destroying the culture of a specific group. Rape is very successful in breaking the spirit of a community and destroying the culture because if a woman is raped, patriarchal societies blame the victim. The woman is also blamed for the loss of a community's honor, and banish her from the community (1994), in turn, destroying the infrastructure of the society (Hoglund 2003).

A function served by rape in war is to "attack the particular group genocidally through the women" (Farwell 2004). In certain instances, impregnation is the goal of wartime rape. This was clearly demonstrated in Bosnia (Thomas and Ralph 1994), where the goal was to achieve ethnic cleansing through forced impregnation (Watts and Zimmerman 2002). These women were rejected within their own society, and were not accepted and continue to suffer continual abuse at the hands of conquerors. As a result, high rates of infanticide follow widespread rape (Russell-Brown 2003).

One reason why sexual abuse is directed towards women in wartime may be because they often remain silent. Shame, fear, and guilt prevent women from discussing their experiences, as well as culturally imposed taboos that blame the victims. This

shame, fear, and guilt are what make rape the means of achieving domination, submission, and ethnic cleansing (Skjelsbaek 2001). Rape is abuse that is directed at women. Rape then becomes the vessel through which feelings of ethnic, religious, cultural or state hatred are expressed (Koo 2002). Rape in war is acceptable as long as it is directed against women, regardless of age, and only if it is a woman from the opposing side of the conflict (Green 2004).

Catherine MacKinnon's contribution to the theory of sexual violence in war has been significant as she identifies how rape is used as a form of genocide, a way to eliminate a population through the sexual assault of women. International law has viewed mass rape and other atrocities committed against women as either genocide or rape, but not rape as a practice of genocide (37). MacKinnon theorizes that rape as genocide operates under some unique and significant conditions. These conditions include: rape as an official policy, rape with the intent to "defile, torture, humiliate, degrade, and demoralize", rape to make the target population leave their homes, rape as spectacle, and rape to destroy a community. The intent to destroy a specific people is a necessary component in defining rape as a practice of genocide (38).

MacKinnon grounds many of her discussions in the belief that "Human rights have not been women's rights- not in theory or in reality, not legally or socially, not domestically or internationally" (MacKinnon, 2006: 180). A double standard exists, one that separates violence against women in a domestic realm, and violence against women in war. While many of the same abuses that women suffer in times of "peace" are suffered in times of war, there is a lack of recognition that these are indeed severe violations in "peace times", and only currently are they beginning to be recognized as

violations in war. Mackinnon deconstructs existing human rights laws, and posits that women are treated in international law much the same as in domestic law- that is, excluded, subordinated, and marginalized (35). Her main thesis on this topic is that if rape in times of peace, so-called everyday rape, was not permitted to exist and continue virtually without impunity, then it would not be possible for it to escape punishment as it currently does on the international scale. While these two acts, everyday rape and rape in war are similar in that they both represent intimate violations of a women's person, they also have some significant differences that cannot be neglected (221-223).

In theorizing about rape's function in war, Ruth Seifert asserts that in order to understand these acts, they must be grounded in an understanding of the "social and cultural context" in which they occur. While it is undisputed that rape is a gross violation of a woman's body, what that violation means is different and by no means universal. Keeping that in mind, Seifert proposes five theses: 1. Rape is part of the rules of war, 2. Rape of women is a symbolic expression of male humiliation and defeat, 3. Rapes are the result of the military establishment that encourages and supports masculinity, 4. The goal of war rape is to destroy the culture of the opponent, and 5. Rape in war would not be possible if not for a culturally rooted contempt for women (Seifert 1994: 58-65).

Historical accounts show how rape has always been present in conflict and employed as a weapon of war (Hoglund 2003: 347). While war is viewed as a public form of violence, rape is still relegated to the private sphere, resulting in continued injustice for women. Feminist theorist Anna T. Hoglund presents an argument "for women's rights to justice in war" (2003: 347). This argument is one that seeks to transcend the distinction between public and private, distinctions that are heavily

influenced by power. “The theoretical model . . . is a contextual and narrative theory of justice that starts in people’s concrete stories of experienced injustice” (Hoglund 2003: 351) She includes the voices of women in her analysis to clearly demonstrate the variety of their experiences, giving a voice to the suffering experienced. A case is made to challenge the public/private distinction that has long existed, because it is this distinction that fails women when they seek redress for crimes committed against them in war and in peace. War in rape can no longer be placed in the private realm, because in doing so, women are silenced and denied justice (Hoglund 2003: 358-361).

In this proposed research, feminist theory will be used as a lens through which I interpret and make sense of women’s accounts with sexual violence. The feminist theorists in this section have provided me with a framework from which I will begin my analysis, providing an understanding of how rape is used in war, and how it operates as a means of genocide. As a feminist, I begin this research with attention to patriarchy, to the way rape functions as a tool of control, and as a way to destroy a population. In summary, feminist theory guides me to analyze rape within the context in which it occurred. This theory will also allow for analysis of the effects of rape on the women and the larger cultural context in which they live.

Chapter 6: Methods

Feminist scholarly practices are inscribed in relations of power-relations which they counter, resist, or even perhaps implicitly support. There can, of course, be no apolitical scholarship (Mohanty 1984).

This chapter will describe an overview of the methods that will be used to answer the following research questions:

1. How do women raped in the Rwandan genocide describe and explain their experiences with rape and its aftermath?
2. What are the implications of rape for the women who experienced it and for their families, communities, and their cultural group?
3. How did the intersection of gender and ethnicity contribute to violence against women during the genocide?

Research Approach

The proposed research on genocidal rape was approached from a critical feminist theoretical perspective. Critical researchers see social science “as a critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves” (Neuman 2003: 81). Using a critical approach enabled me to take a value position, proposing a critique of society that allows rape in war to exist while ignoring the suffering experienced by women. As a feminist analysis this research seeks to understand how women in Rwanda are affected by their experiences with sexual violence and the way these experiences are influenced by ethnicity, class, and gender. Feminist researchers have attempted to give women a voice, making them active participants (to the degree possible) in the study (Sprague 2005: 169). One way to achieve this is to include the words of the women in the study, making their voice and experience the focal point of the

analysis. In so doing, I, as the researcher, will be less inclined to make assumptions from my position of privilege.

Data

My data were found in a publication from the human rights group African Rights. Their publication, *Rwanda: Death, Despair, and Defiance* is based on seven weeks of research conducted between April and June 1994, and an additional three months of research conducted from January to April 1995. All events described in the publication occurred before September 15, 1994. While the genocide was occurring, the researchers of this work conducted interviews and gathered information, as an attempt to show the world the reality of the situation as it was unfolding. All of the perspectives and stories published in *Rwanda: Death Despair, and Defiance* are first hand accounts: “For the first time, Rwandese speak, in moving and compelling detail, about the experiences they have undergone” (xviii). This work contains sixteen accounts from women who describe their experiences with sexual violence during the genocide. Although it was impossible to obtain the original transcripts from the interview, African Rights has extensively published the words of the women. The sixteen accounts comprise 45 pages.³

³ I looked to other sources as I searched for data to use in this project. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have published extensively on the topic of women and wartime rape. Although published documents contain women’s voices to a limited extent, none were as complete as the African Rights document. When I contacted these organizations, asking if I could use their original transcript data in my research, I was told it was impossible for them to share those with me.

Representation in Feminist Research

The notion of giving women a voice in feminist research is a complex and debated idea with no easy solution. Questions such as: Whose voice will be heard? Who is silenced in the research process, either intentionally or unintentionally? How do women speak for themselves? What is the voice of the researcher? These questions, and many others are at the heart of this issue of feminist representation.

Even though African Rights has extensively published the narratives of women, to some extent these narratives have been edited. Since I do not know the extent to which they have been edited, I am left with some questions. What is the effect of their potential target audience and funding sources on this filtering? What was the process by which narratives were collected by African Rights? What was the original language? Who did these women talk to? How did African Rights help these women? Did the aid given affect the story told? What has been the effect of this editing on voice and representation? I will never completely know the answer to this question, as I did not participate in the data gathering process, nor was I present for the transcription and translation of the narratives. It is also likely that the women filtered their stories to some extent. Although I do not know how much editing occurred, I can imagine that some things would have been too personal to reveal to a stranger and other details may have been omitted.

One issue that has to be resolved in analyses such as this is whether pseudonyms should be used. In some cases, the decision to use pseudonyms is easy to resolve, other cases, it is more complex. For my research, I did not have to struggle with that decision; the editors made it for me. In the introduction to the section on rape and abduction, the editor of *Rwanda; Death, Despair and Defiance* writes: “Contrary to experiences

elsewhere, many of the women who were willing to talk to us insisted that we use their full names and other relevant details. Their argument was ‘the people whose opinions we care about, and whose views affect our lives know we have been raped. What do we care if people in Europe and America know’” (African Rights 1995: 749). Despite this insistence on their names being included, a decision was made to use pseudonyms; the reasoning was “months or years later, these women’s attitudes may change. They may no longer want to have their suffering as public knowledge. Or they may feel that they have succeeded in putting their experience of rape behind them, and do not want to be permanently stigmatized as rape victims” (African Rights 1995: 750).

As I reflect on the many issues present in this research, considering problems of representation, I am reminded of my outsider status. I have struggled and continue to struggle with this issue. I cannot adequately answer the charge that because of my privileged status, I should not be doing this research. My only response is that yes, I am enormously privileged; I can read and write about this violence because I have never experienced such violence. In addition to never having had to face violence on a personal level, I have had opportunities and experiences that resulted from my privileged social position. I am in a graduate program because my family’s social position and circumstances afforded the opportunity for an undergraduate degree, allowing me to gain the knowledge and experience that has been necessary to my work today.

I have a responsibility to answer the how’s and why’s of my research- to be accountable. Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes about feminism without borders, and it is her perspective that I have tried to integrate into this project. She writes:

Feminism without borders is not the same as “border-less” feminism. It acknowledges that there is no one sense of a border, that the lines between and through nations, races, classes, sexualities, religions, and disabilities are real- and that a feminism without borders must envision change and social justice work across these lines of demarcation and division. I want to speak of feminism without silences and exclusions in order to draw attention to the tension between the simultaneous plurality and narrowness of borders and the emancipatory potential of crossing through, with, and over these borders in our everyday lives (Mohanty 2003: 2).

What this says to me is that this feminism without borders is a feminist research practice that is aware of national and geo politics, attentive to economic and structural systems, and the influence of these on individuals being studied. Accompanying this awareness is a consciousness of language. This attentiveness to language is critical of Western terminology, with an avoidance of words that reinforce oppression and objectification.

Analysis

In this research I provide a detailed analysis of the words of the women that helped me comprehend the way that they experienced sexual violence during the genocide, and the ramifications of that violence in their lives.

Qualitative methods are especially appropriate forms of analysis for situations in which women’s voices have ordinarily been overlooked or disregarded. Often, qualitative methods allow access into the thoughts, ideas, and feelings of individuals in the study, using their words to describe their experiences. Achieving understanding is a process of

discovery, one that should not be based on assumptions made by the researcher (Ezzy 2002: 45).

What is the voice of the researcher in this process? In my research, no one voice will be heard, instead, the end document will contain multiple voices, including my own. Realistically, there is no way for me to avoid this. The multiple voices present in the end will contribute to understanding the obstacles women face when speaking about experiences of sexual violence (Leavy 2007). At least, that is my hope. Susan E. Chase has proposed three potential voices that the researcher adopts. The first voice is the authoritative voice. This voice relies on the interpretation of the researcher to make connections and to separate the voice of the narrator from the voice of the researcher. It is probable and expected that the voice of the researcher will be different from the voice of the narrator. This can be understood as the researcher “making visible and audible taken-for-granted practices, processes, and structural and cultural features of our everyday social worlds” (Chase 2005:664). The second voice is a supportive voice, and this voice is in direct contrast to the authoritative voice. In this voice, it is the narrator’s voice that is privileged, to the extent that the researcher’s voice is nearly absent. The focus is completely on the story being told by the narrator (665). The third voice is termed the interactive voice. From this position, “researchers examine *their* voices-their subject positions, social locations, interpretations, and personal experiences-through the refracted medium of narrators’ voices” (666). This position highlights specific aspects of a story being told, and places it in the context of a larger frame, especially aspects that are particular or unique. The researcher is expected to be present in the work, to discuss the ways in which the story being told has influenced them, their thoughts, actions, and

emotions. This is done with the understanding that “researchers need to understand themselves if they are to understand how to interpret narrators’ stories *and* that readers need to understand *researchers’* stories” (666).

This research has blended the authoritative, supportative, and interactive voice. My role was to make connections between the narratives that I read, placing them in a context to facilitate understanding. I employed the supportative voice when I presented the women’s narratives. While it is important for the voices of the women to be present, mine cannot be absent. I cannot fully remove myself from what I am reading, analyzing, or writing, nor should I. But I have to acknowledge and be honest about my thoughts and emotions about the work that I am doing.

Coding

I approached this analysis with specific research questions to guide my efforts. Still, a benefit of qualitative methodologies is that they are flexible and allow for modification as the research progresses. Thus, as I conducted the analysis, some research questions that I have developed previously had to be dropped, because of lack of information, while I added another question. Thus, the content of the interviews determined the domain of questions that were addressed, with the clarification that these were filtered through my lens of what is considered important.

The analysis was iterative. I used different types of coding strategies. First, I used open coding. Open coding “pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of the phenomenon though close examination of the data. During open coding the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and

differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data”
(Strauss & Corbin 1990: 62).

I began open coding by coding the first interview, labeling (coding) any pieces of the interview that I thought would be useful during my analysis. I started coding the first interview in Microsoft Word, but soon had too many themes. After that realization, I printed the narratives and used colored pencils instead. I also used the tools available in Microsoft Word to make notes of any ideas or thoughts I had related to this research. Notes were also made using the Stickies Note program available on Mac computers.

Upon the completion of coding this first interview, I proceeded to the second. The difficulty in coding this interview, and those that follow, is that I simultaneously tried not to be influenced and to be influenced by what I coded in the previous interview. That is, I attempted to be open to things I did not code in the previous interview, as well as code interview sections that related to the previous interview. Upon the completion of the second interview, I returned to the first one and recoded it, building upon and looking for what I may have coded in the second interview. This process was repeated time and time again, constantly comparing each interview with those that preceded it. Even though the initial coding was influenced by my awareness of my research questions, I attempted not to let them guide the coding, although I consciously coded text relevant to them.

Before I proceeded to the second stage of coding, I attempted to organize the ideas and themes I had from initial coding. The way that I accomplished this was to create a word document in which I placed the excerpts from the interviews organized by theme. For example, I began by looking at the narrative for Juliana, and making a list of

the themes that I found in her narrative. Then I copied and pasted from my original document the sections of her narrative as they related to the specific theme. I did this for all sixteen narratives.

In the second stage of coding, I coded looking specifically for instances that were relevant for my first research questions. Although I attempted to focus on just this first research question, I noticed elements and questions that were useful for others. Again, constant comparisons among interviews were made.

In the third stage of coding, I coded specifically looking for insight into my second research question. This process was repeated until all interviews are coded for all research questions.

It was during these stages of the coding process that code sheets were the most useful. In addition to coding on the interview transcripts, the utilization of code sheet provided me another perspective on the data. By examining all the code sheets simultaneously, I was able to see patterns that might otherwise have remained invisible. That is, once I have identified what I thought to be all the themes within a particular domain of interest (i.e. health), I was able to see if there were any patterns between two domains (i.e. health and family). Ultimately, then, the research questions were not just examined individually but in relationship to each other.

The second type of coding I used was axial coding. During axial coding I focused on making connections in the narratives, attempting to pull together text that began to address my research questions, while generating other questions. During this process, I was not just looking for words related to health, for example, but pulling together through this type of coding, all the elements that might be related to health concerns. I focused on

the words that the interviewee uses to describe experiences, while paying attention to the context. For example, I looked for instances of discussions of health, but did so in light of what else is said in the interview. Did health, for example, dominate the interview or was it an aside. Although only briefly mentioned, could it be as important as other points made in the interview? Thus, I analyzed each sentence, paragraph, etc. within the context of the larger interview.

It is in this stage that I started to analyze themes within a large domain of interest. For example, once I coded all that I thought was relevant to the issue of health, then I coded for themes within this category. By doing this, I was able to make distinctions between physical and mental health, and to look for specific health concerns such as pregnancy or AIDS.

During this stage, in an attempt understand and recognize the distinctions and differences within themes, I printed off multiple copies of the interviews, and cut out all the sections that I had coded as relating to a specific, broad theme. I was careful to number each section, so that I knew which interview I was examining. Then, I was able to read through the excerpts, and group examples according to differences within the larger theme. An example would be to take the broad category rape, and then separate the specific sections of the interview that addressed group rape, or forced marriage. I was left with piles that all had a very specific theme relating to a larger theme. This was useful when I went to write up what I found, because it helped to ensure that I had found all relevant examples.

In all cases, I coded what was said while examining the implications of it for the larger context within the women's lives, even though this might not have been explicitly

mentioned. I took into consideration the factors that influence the words used, examined culture (or references to elements of culture), circumstances, experiences and the like, and tried to understand how they worked together and resulted in a narrative (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 96).

During this three step coding process I also considered manifest codes, identifying specific terms used by women as they describe their experiences, and latent codes, looking for implied meanings present in the text (David and Sutton 2004: 204). Consideration of latent coding is significant in my analysis because “ people communicate meaning in many implicit ways that depend on context, not just in specific words” (Neuman 2003: 313). Latent coding examined, for example, gender, but went beyond noting references to gender. If gender was mentioned, further analysis examined the context- what was the impact of gender? How was the significance of gender described- or was the significance not noted? Important in latent coding was that I could infer significance when a theme such as gender was absent from the account, or described and not named.

Finally, I used selective coding to determine the core category, “Systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 116). It was during selective coding that I systematically returned to the data looking for “confirmation” of my own ongoing analysis. I attempted to target questions that remained. In contrast to trying to be open to everything, I attempted to comb the data for things of specific interest for the analysis.

Chapter 7: Biographies

Through it all, the humanity of each woman, each person is ignored. Ignored, too, is the quality of daily life that follows for such women, who will never be free of the excruciating memories of their attacks, nor the ongoing pain and embarrassment of fistula, mutilation, or HIV infections that relegate so many needlessly to lives of outcasts, beggars, or prostitutes. Yet, when war ends, women are the first to pick up the pieces . . . Through their stories, women help us understand the real costs of war, the interruption to the basic commerce of daily living, the way it upends families and downsizes even the most modest dreams. Through their stories, we also learn how to rebuild a country, a community, and a family. Perhaps it is time to listen (Salbi, 2006).

The women, whose stories I will attempt to tell in the following chapter are real- they exist, have a life, and a story to tell. While I do not have much information on their everyday lived experiences, I believe that it is important to include as much information about them as I can. All biographical information comes from African Rights, as a means of introducing the women before their stories were shared⁴.

Juliana, when she shared her experiences with African Rights, was a nineteen-year-old fifth-year student at a secondary school on the Gitarama side of Nyabisindu. In her immediate family, Juliana is the only one who survived the genocide. On April 14, her parents, three sisters and two brothers were killed in Nyanza, Gitarama. She escaped when the killing started, with her two other brothers and her fourteen-year-old sister. From her narrative, we learn of her abduction, the death of her younger sister, and rape.

⁴ African Rights was only able to provide limited information and this chapter seeks to present as much context as possible. Additionally, some information was not consistently provided, such as age or marital status.

Caritas is a thirty-four-year-old peasant, and mother of three children from Musambira. Her three children did not survive the genocide, but she was later reunited with her husband, who she assumed was dead. Her narrative tells of repeated rape by men she knew.

Chantal, was from Mara, in the commune of Gishyita, Kibuye. In the March following the genocide, Chantal was nineteen-years-old. She was living in an orphanage because her parents, most of her siblings, and extended family had been killed. Chantal, with the help of her aunt and brother, actively sought to identify and provide evidence against the men who raped her.

Maria Gorette tells interviewers of the experiences of her daughter, Mukaruziga, because the fourteen-year-old girl “could not come to terms” with what happened to her.

Mukaruziga would only say that she had been beaten and threatened, but her mother, Maria, told of her daughter’s rape and captivity.

Louise, described as a “beautiful seventeen-year-old”, was living with her mother in Nyamata, Bugesera, and was in her second year at secondary school before the genocide. Her grandmother, mother, and two of her brothers were killed in the genocide. When Louise told her story to African Rights, she was hospitalized in Nyamata, for injuries including a ruptured uterus, and paralysis- results of the rape and abuse she endured during the genocide.

When Marie Christine was interviewed, she did not know if her husband was alive. A twenty-four-year-old peasant from Rubona, commune Ntongwe in Gitarama, she witnessed the murder of her two-year-old daughter by a neighbor. She is afraid that she might have diseases from the men who raped her.

Catherine, a twenty-year-old student, in her fourth year of secondary school at Kabuga, Greater Kigali, was one of twelve children. Her entire family had gathered for the wedding of her brother, to take place on April 9th. On April 8, while Catherine was out of the house, her whole family was murdered- more than forty people, including her parents, six sisters, and five brothers.

Dr. Andrew Carney and Dr. Peter Hall of Physicians for Human Rights recorded the story of Violeta, documenting her experiences with sexual slavery. At the time of the interview, Violeta was twenty-four-years-old, and lived in Nawe in the commune of Bicumbi in Greater Kigali.

Pelagie, a “soft –spoken and exceptionally attractive sixteen-year-old”, was interviewed on June 11, in Tambwe, Gitarama by African Rights. Her brother was killed during the genocide, and she is still unsure of what happened to one of her sisters. The wounds Pelagie suffers from have left her unable to walk without assistance, and hours before she gave the interview, she learned that she was pregnant- a pregnancy resulting from rape.

Therese and Christine, friends who attended secondary school together in Musambira, Gitarama, were raped by men they previously counted as friends. They were interviewed in Tambwe, Gitarama, on June 16, 1994.

Odette, from Winteko, commune Cyimbogo in Cyangugu, gave a lengthy account of her experiences, but was unable to finish because she broke down in tears. The interviewers learned that many of her family members were killed, as was a man who wanted to marry her.

Josianne worked in Rukoa in Nyanza commune Stake, before the genocide. Twenty-years-old, she was abducted by men she knew.

Vestine, mother of two small children, was twenty-three-years-old when she gave her interview. Before the genocide, Vestine lived with her husband in Rukumberi, and they were well-off peasants. Her husband, Ildephonse Rutayisire and her two-year-old son were killed- she was forced to witness the death of her son. Vestine believes her family was targeted because of her husband's political activities in organizing a defense in 1992. Vestine and her four-and-a-half-month-old daughter live in Nyamata, Bugesera with relatives of her husband.

Rose, mother of two children, hid for a few weeks at the Belgian Red Cross, but was not safe from sexual assault. During the genocide, Rose's house was destroyed, many of her

family members were killed-including her father, older brother, brother-in-law, and more than seventy relatives from her mother's side of the family.

Beata, a seventeen-year-old student living at a boarding school in Butare, was home in Gitarama for the school holiday when the genocide started. She was living in a camp in Ruhango when she was interviewed.

Alexia, a fifteen-year-old, was living in an orphanage in Kamembe, Cyangugu when African Rights interviewed her. Before the genocide, Alexia was a student in her first year of secondary school.

While there is not an abundance of research specifically on group rape in Rwanda, much has been published in the United States about this phenomenon. Research that analyzes group rape in Western countries can possibly contribute to understanding of the way group rape functions in this context. Group rape is primarily a way for men to engage in social bonding that contributes to the creation and sustaining of a masculine identity. The woman's role in group rape is largely reduced to that of an object. Franklin asserts that women are "reduced to nothing more than a dramatic prop through which the assailants simultaneously prove their heterosexuality and bond with each other through the sharing of fear and danger" (Franklin 2004: 29).

Women as a prop in this collective display of male violence speaks to the status of women and the way in which women are treated as the "other". This violence that attempts to demonstrate masculinity by using aggression to prove toughness and bravery can be interpreted as an outward expression of male contempt for women (Franklin 2004: 29).

Group dynamics make group rape more likely. The influence of the group is significant because certain group processes make violence possible such as de-individuation or diffusion of responsibility. These terms describe a state in which a person experiences loss of self-awareness and is caught up in the actions of the group (Franklin 2004: 26). Performance is also a crucial element in group rape in that the members are performing for each other- to demonstrate their own masculinity. "The performance aspect is central, as group rapists ritualistically take turns, converse about taking turns, watch each other, and engage in simultaneous sex with the victim. The

When they came to rape us, they used the pretext of being out on patrols. But even those who were not on patrols came. Anyone who wanted a woman came. They took all of us into the bush. The same man would take me today, my daughter the next day and my sister-in-law the next day. Several of the men did this. We could not move because they said that we would be killed if we moved.” In reflecting on why the men did these horrible things, Maria says, “They knew us and they knew our husbands. Why did they do it? I don’t know. Perhaps it was their chance to embarrass us.

Theresa and Christine had a particularly difficult experience despite their rescue.

Two brothers who they should have been able to count as friends- the sons of their Godmother raped them.

The two brothers proposed to save us by hiding us in their home. That is where they raped us, saying that they would marry us when the fighting finished. We remained in that house, which was near the parish, until the arrival of the RPF two days ago. My Godmother thought her sons were hiding us from the other interahamwe. She did not know what was going on and we did not tell her. What could we say? Your sons are raping us? They were her sons and our lives were in their hands. They could either kill us or save us.

she was yelling so hard, everybody got to know I was there. I started running and her brother and husband chased me. They caught me and beat me up.

Another woman identified Caritas and she experienced violence as a result. Ethnic ties seem to have been stronger than gender. Rose reinforces this idea:

There were also Hutu women there who fled the war between FAR and the RPF. These women pointed out the Tutsi women whom they described as ‘accomplices’ of the *Inkotanyi*.

Alison Des Forges explains that Inkotanyi means member of the RFP, and is a term that “recalls the important armies of nineteenth century Rwanda” (1999). In the above two examples, ethnicity was more important than gender.

Importance of Gender in Genocide

Understanding gender and how gender operated during the genocide, provides insight for comprehending the violence directed towards women. In order to recognize the role gender played in the genocide, it is necessary to understand how gender was constructed in Rwanda in the months and years leading to the genocide, and the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and nationalism.

In the years prior to the genocide, there existed a great many similarities between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda - they shared a common culture, language, and religion. Attention to the differences between the groups were magnified, allowing Hutu extremists to perpetuate an ideology and understanding that was viewed in purely ethnic terms. However if the genocide is viewed in ethnic terms exclusively, ignoring other considerations such as gender, we are left with an incomplete understanding.

Ethnicity and sexuality work together in war and contribute to violence against women. Sexual ideologies define the practices of “Others” as inferior to their own and justify violence based on the belief of the inferiority or impurity of “Others”. Rape in war functions to re-establish or define ethnic boundaries. This is accomplished by a deliberate policy that is present in most conflicts that defines one group from another, deciding which group has rights and which group does not. The rape of “enemy women” demonstrates very clearly the lack of rights and power (Nagel 2003: 14-30).

Nagel argues that “Rape in war is at its core an ethnosexual phenomenon” because it uses ethnicity to determine which women are acceptable targets of rape -- men do not usually rape their own women in war, unless they suspect them of having sexual relations with “enemy” men, then rape and humiliation is used to punish them. Instead, raping “Other” women is used to dominate, control, humiliate, and reestablish boundaries, making clear their dominance and ethnic superiority (Nagel 2003: 177-199).

An examination of gender in pre-genocide Rwanda sheds some light on the level of violence used against women in the 1994 Genocide. In previous conflicts between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, specifically in 1959, 1964, and 1973, women were not the targets of violence. Women’s status as non-combatants was for the most part protected. Even though women were mostly non-combatants in the 1994 genocide, this status was no longer respected and women were killed in equal numbers or exceeding numbers compared to men. There is something different about the violence in 1994 and previous violence, and the construction of gender might lie at the heart of it (Taylor 1999: 154).

Based on his field research Christopher C. Taylor concludes that many changes had occurred in the years prior to the genocide, such as the increased dichotomy between

Hutu and Tutsi, and the distribution of sexually violent imagery found in Hutu extremist literature (1999: 152-154). Instances of rape in Rwanda were low in years of peace, but this changed with the 1990 invasion of the RPF. Following this invasion and the increase of Hutu propaganda, sexual violence against women increased. (1999: 157-158).

The narratives of women in this study show that women who were educated and successful were also targeted during the genocide.

Therese and Christine explain how after men and boys were killed, women with education were then targeted:

On 21 April, the killing of Tutsis began. At first they went for the men and little boys. Then it was the turn of the educated Tutsi women. They were also looting and burning homes, and slaughtering the cows of Tutsis. Then the raping began.

Josianne also describes the fate of educated women:

One of the women, a student aged about nineteen, was later killed. Her crime is that she was not only a Tutsi, but an educated Tutsi woman.

The reason why women with education might have been targets is because they breached traditional gender norms. Women who crossed this boundary faced severe repercussion and repression in the years before the genocide. Habyarimana's government established laws that restricted the movements of single Tutsi women- they were not allowed in bars after certain hours if they were unaccompanied by a male. Single women were harassed for wearing nail polish and hundreds of Rwandan women were charged with prostitution and held in detention centers where they were raped- mostly educated and successful Tutsi women, innocent of the charges (Taylor 1999: 160-161). "The most enduring consequence of the repression was to plant the idea in the minds of many

Rwandans that single Tutsi women were likely to be prostitutes. This image would resurface with a vengeance in the years before the genocide” (Taylor 1999: 162).

It is difficult, if not impossible to separate the repression that women faced from their ethnicity. The reason for this is because “ethnic boundaries are also sexual boundaries. Ethnicity and sexuality join together to form a barrier to hold some people in and keep others out, to define who is pure and who is impure, to shape our view of ourselves and others...ethnicity and sexuality blend together to form sexualized perimeters around ethnic, racial, and national spaces” (Nagel 2003:1). Joane Nagel speaks to the intersection of ethnicity and sexuality, using the conceptual framework of social constructionism, proposing that our understanding of ethnicity and sexuality are social constructions.

Sexuality becomes significant in the discussion of ethnicity because there exists in societies “a prevailing standard of sexual behavior, and that sexual hegemony will be enforced against those defined as sexually deviant-often these are members of other classes, races, ethnic groups, or nationalities” (2003:9).

Marriage

A standard of sexual behavior existed in Rwanda, and this standard was most evident in marriage- who it was acceptable to marry, and the changing status of this acceptability. In pre-colonial time and early colonial times, marriage to a Tutsi woman signified wealth- a Hutu man had to have a specific social standing that was dependent on wealth. Children from such a relationship were considered Tutsi; it is not until later years that the father determined the ethnicity of the children (Taylor 1999: 167). After the 1959-62 revolution and the reduced status of Tutsi to second-class citizens, intermarriage

declined, but marriage between Hutu and Tutsi continued. It is significant to note that almost all marriages between Hutu and Tutsi involve a Tutsi woman and a Hutu man. Some reasons for this may include that the status of Hutus in Rwanda would afford more protection for a Tutsi woman and her family, considering the outsider status that evolved after the 1959 war, and the belief perpetuated during colonialism that Tutsi women were more beautiful (1999: 167-171). One example from the narratives that illustrates this idea of protection that can potentially result for such a union comes from Vestine. She tells of her abduction and marriage, and the great lengths her abductor went through to ensure that he would be allowed to “keep” her.

Before he left Birindabagabo wrote me out a travel document according to which my father was a Hutu, which was not true, and my mother a Tutsi.

With these travel documents that altered her ethnicity on paper, Vestine was afforded a measure of protection, but was still not free or safe.

Hutu extremists who used propaganda to depict Tutsi women in a negative light were often caught in a contradictory position because of their relationships with Tutsi women. In 1990, four years before the genocide, the Hutu newspaper *Kangura* published what it called the “Ten Commandments of the Hutu”. It is significant that the first two “commandments” address Tutsi women:

1. Every Hutu should know that a Tutsi woman, wherever she is, works for the interests of her Tutsi ethnic group. As a result, we shall consider a traitor any Hutu who: marries a Tutsi woman; befriends a Tutsi woman; employs a Tutsi woman as a secretary or concubine.

2. Every Hutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as woman, wife and mother of the family. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest? (Power 2002: 338).

Not all Hutus agreed or practiced these “commandments.” Rose, married to a Hutu, illustrates how she and her husband were interrogated by the interahamwe because of their marriage:

Things changed with the death of Habyarimana on 6 April. On the 7th, no one could go out except the killers. Because we were new in the area, there were many ways to provoke us. A communal policeman nicknamed ‘Caporal’, accompanied by Ntazinda, an interahamwe par excellence, came to attack our house, armed with guns and grenades. They asked my husband for his ID card. They saw he that he was Hutu. They asked him why he had married a Tutsi woman. My husband could not find an answer to such a strange question. My young brother-in-law was also there. He too had a Tutsi wife and they had been married for a long time. The assassins left after a long period of negotiation with my husband and his brother.

Many of these extremists had Tutsi wives, and this is also evident in examples that women provide of being forced to marry Hutu men during the genocide. Vestine provides an example of this contradiction:

All these three men encouraging the killing of Tutsis are married to Tutsi women.

Many women in the narratives spoke of being forced to “marry” their rapists. This is significant, especially considering the history of Tutsi women marrying Hutu men, and the belief in the beauty of Tutsi women.

Odette was bought by a man named Sylvere for five thousand francs. Here is her account about how she was forced to become the “wife” of Sylvere, an interahamwe:

He took me to his house in Nyakanyinya and married me. When he went to the places of massacres, in other words when he went to kill people, he left me locked in his house. I spent the whole day crying. But who was there to soothe my tears?

Others determined Vestine's future and survival. Her survival depended on her

“marriage” to an interahamwe. She describes the meeting that determined her fate:

Birindabagabo had made himself a small king in the area. Women who had been abducted were brought to him; he decided whether to keep them for himself or give them back. He had many women he was keeping in his house. In the evening, they had a meeting to decide my destiny. My old abductors attended the meeting, I was also there. One of them bribed Birindabagabo so that he could officially declare me his wife at the meeting. The buyer was a man called Karinijabo. Birindabagabo told the gathering: ‘You have killed her son; there is no further reason to pursue her. From now on, she is Karinijabo's wife.’ The men who felt they had other claims on me left. Brindabagabo said that I should not leave because the other men who had wanted me and did not get me might kill me. So he provided a house for us and Kariniabo and I began living as man and wife.

The interconnection of gender and ethnicity provide a more complete understanding of the violence women experienced during the genocide. The concluding chapter provides an overview of the consequences of violence in the lives of women.

Chapter 10: Intersection of Physical, Emotional, and Economic

Human rights are not privileges but an inextricable part of being human. Indeed, because the attainment of health is dependent on the protection of all human rights, the status of women's health is a representation of the value of women's dignity in society. Therefore, the appreciation of women and their role in society is an affirmation of the value of human dignity (Levison and Levison 2001: 148).

This section will address the following questions: What health (mental and physical) concerns are women faced with? And what are the economic consequences of the rape? As a result of the violence that women experienced and witnessed, many suffer mental and/or physical consequences. These consequences are not separate or distinct, but often are intertwined. So, women who experience emotional consequences also suffer physical consequences.

Emotional Consequences

Psychological problems sometimes follow rapes. These include such things as posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, irritability, emotional instability, memory and attention difficulties, insomnia, nightmares, and feelings of fear, guilt, and betrayal (Arcel and Kastrup 2004).

After hearing about the death of her younger sister, Juliana expresses her lack of will to live:

I was completely distraught by the news of my sister's death. I did not consider it worth living anymore. I asked them to hand me over to the killers. I decided to go to the killers myself. I started walking towards Karege's house. An entrepreneur who had been building a house for my dad tried to dissuade me from giving myself up. He offered to hide me, I did not pay any attention to him. I was so sick of hiding I did not even want to hear the word. He kept following me, trying to convince me that it was wrong to allow my sister's death to decide the fate of my own life. But my sister was all I had left. Now that she was gone, I could not see what there was to live for.

tears? No one. I remember that one time I wanted to commit suicide. But then my human conscience told me that to kill oneself was a great sin. I don't believe anyone on earth has suffered as much grief as me.

Odette, like many rape victims, feels responsible for what happened to her:

After the genocide, I was ashamed to be with others. I felt responsible for what the interahamwe had done to me. I felt as if everyone was making fun of me since my story, that I was the wife of an interahamwe, was well known. It will be very difficult for me to find a husband. At least, it will be very difficult for me to find the kind of husband that I want.

Odette's statement illustrates one of the many long-term consequences associated with rape. Survivors of the genocide must contend with feeling of guilt, fear, and anger. Many women were faced with the choice between rape and death, and survival produces confused emotions.

Physical Consequences

Immediate physical issues faced by rape victims in general include: risk of contracting AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, chronic headaches, backaches, fibrositis, fibromyalgia, structural injuries- lower lumbar and genital pain, menstrual disturbances, and sexual problems (Arcel and Kastrup 2004; Shanks 2000). Women in Rwanda also had limited access to medical care. Access to this much-needed medical care was particularly difficult for women in rural areas of Rwanda (about 90% of the population). As much as eighty-eight percent of Rwandan women had to walk an hour or more to reach a medical center, and many of these medical centers were short on supplies and necessary medications. Poverty seems to be one of the largest barriers to justice that women face (Eftekhari, 2004: 38-41).

Dr. Mubarutso, a doctor in Rwanda, in his experience treating hundreds of rape victims concludes,

These patients are very difficult to cure. Initially, they come in with infections, vaginal infections, urinary tract problems-problems that are sexually transmitted. You cure the direct illness, but psychologically, they are not healed. They continue to come back complaining of cramps or pain, but there is nothing physically wrong with them. These women are profoundly marked psychologically. Medically they are healed, but they continue to be sick. And there are no services that specifically deal with the problems these women have. There are some groups for widows, and the like, but there are no groups to help women who have gone through this rape (Human Rights Watch, 1996).

Many women who were raped also have to deal with the fear of contracting diseases and AIDS.

Chantal, after detailing her rape and abuse, adds that:

I am afraid of AIDS. I have wounds which leave me ill at ease. I am constantly worried that I have AIDS.

As a result of the rape, Odette became pregnant and suffered a miscarriage, and worries about AIDS:

Even if I am not absolutely sure, I think there is a 80 per cent chance I have AIDS. Nevertheless, I feel physically strong and I am not suffering from anything. But perhaps the virus is continuing its incubation.

Maria Gorette talks about her fear regarding her daughter who was raped:

Our biggest fear now is disease. My daughter is sick but I don't know with what. All I know is that she is ailing in a way that seems common to many of the young girls who have been raped.

In 2004 it was estimated by African Rights that 500,000 individuals in Rwanda are living with HIV/AIDS. Despite this large number, prevention, care, and treatment for those at risk remains inadequate at best (African Rights, 2004:6-7). Experiencing rape has a profound impact on the rest of a woman's life,

for some victims, there is no life after rape; they lose their health and happiness.

Women raped during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda lead a uniquely troubled existence and many feel their survival is its own form of torture. They are desperately impoverished, commonly infected with HIV/AIDS and are responsible for several children. They see their lives as 'finished' or 'another form of martyrdom'; one woman described herself as 'a living dead person' (2004: 6).

One of the most urgent needs for women who were sexually assaulted and who might have HIV is medical treatment (African Rights, 2004:30-32). The very act of being tested often presents as an insurmountable obstacle to many women. "Opportunities for victims to improve their lives are scarce and their problems are very real, but women are also debilitated by their state of mind. Their ill health prevents them from thinking about the future; instead their minds remain persistently focused on the genocide and the bitterness and pain associated with it" (2004: 55).

There exist almost no personal advantages to being tested, due to lack of treatment, and discrimination from community. Even if women begin taking anti-retroviral medications, they often cannot continue because of the costs of transportation to the hospitals and lack of funds due to poverty, "they are trapped in a downward spiral

with illness directly and unrelentingly reducing their ability to sustain themselves and their dependents” (African Rights, 2004:38). The reluctance of these women to be tested is also directly related to the negative stigma that is associated with HIV, in addition to the inadequate and inaccessible treatment. African Rights, though the interviews that they conducted, show how women fear that if they seek treatment, their community will know that they have HIV, resulting in further humiliation and embarrassment (2004:47). A medical doctor in Rwanda who treats rape victims at the Kigali Central Hospital reports that rape victims are reluctant “to come forward to seek medical treatment because of the fear of being judged because ‘society is looking at you’ and because of the shame of being raped” (Human Rights Watch 1996).

Women who are survivors of the genocide also express distress at the prospect of talking about personal problems that they face with male doctors. Bernadette tells African Rights in 2004: “I was scared to take the HIV/AIDS test for fear that I would be shattered by the news that I’m contaminated. I’m ashamed to visit a male doctor each time, to talk about my problems, and at home there’s no one else older than me from whom I could ask advice” (African Rights. 2004: 48).

In addition to fears of AIDS and other diseases, women also express fears of pregnancy, and uncertainty regarding whether they are pregnant or not.

Maria Gorette reflects on the consequences of her daughter’s rape:

I don’t know if she is pregnant. You can see for yourself that she is even too shy to say she has been raped. So she is unlikely to tell me, at least at this early stage, if she might be pregnant.

Although Pelagie was severely injured, her Hutu brother-in-law's younger brother raped her.

There was nothing I could do about getting pregnant. He didn't mind making me pregnant and I could not do or say anything. I knew he could kill me. I only learned a few hours ago that I am pregnant. I don't know what I can do about that. I can't say what he thought, but I don't think he saw what he was doing to me as rape.

Economic Consequences

In addition to the limitations women face in the form of physical and emotional problems resulting from rape, poverty seems to be one of the largest barriers to justice that women face. The extreme poverty that resulted from the genocide gave some women little choice but to enter into prostitution, putting women at risk for further violence and abuse.

Women and girls were targets for forced marriage, rape, polygyny and other forms of gender based violence. Many men were killed in the genocide, leaving female-headed household and orphans. Currently, sixty to seventy percent of Rwanda's population is made up of women (AllAfrica.com). Thirty –six percent of households in Rwanda are headed by women, as compared to twenty-one percent in 1992 (Eftekhari, 2004:10).

Ninety-seven percent of women provide for their families through subsistence agriculture, but women are denied equal rights to land, guaranteeing a precarious survival (2004:11-12). The Association for Widows of the April Genocide reports,

. . . women are alone. They have lost everything. But there are no programs for them. No-one speaks about the survivors. No one talks about their problems. We are watching what the world will do for the survivors and what it does for the returnees and the refugees. This is a problem for reconciliation. There needs to be assistance for victims, not just for refugees, prisons, and returnees. It's unbalanced. Concretely, there is nothing for the women and yet they constitute the bulk of the survivors (Nowrojee, 1996).

Odette is one woman who talks about the economic consequences of the genocide, and how the death of most of her family affects her:

Before the genocide, we had a big family that was well-off. Our house alone counted ten people. There are only two of us left, my older sister and me. We are not in a position to make investments in our land. Our future seems very problematic to us. We find it difficult to earn our daily bread.

Chapter 11: Conclusion and Discussion

In this chapter, I look at two theoretical models, the definition of genocide and Seifert's five theses on the function of rape in war. These two models helped guide this research, but I believe them to be inadequate in explaining the experiences of women who were raped during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In fact, I believe that by ignoring the affect of rape on women, these models prove to be insufficient. The following shows how and where the experiences related in the previous pages concur with these models and where I believe further explanation is needed, and in fact, necessary.

Function of rape in war

Ruth Seifert proposes five theses to explain the function of rape in war. One is that rape is part of the rules of war. Just as killing the "enemy" appears to be one of the goals of war, so does raping "their" women. Chantal illustrates how both rape and murder were present in the Rwandan genocide:

Even most of the other girls who were raped were subsequently killed.

This idea of rape as part of the rules of war is also played out in the experiences of women who spoke of having to choose between rape and death. In reality, this is a false choice. I would even argue that while this may have been presented to women as a choice, it was not something they were in the position to negotiate or control. Juliana's younger sister, when faced with this decision said

that she had no choice but to sleep with her abductor. He was a real killer and had she refused, she would have been killed.

The second thesis that Seifert proposes is that the rape of women is a symbolic expression of male humiliation and defeat. This second thesis, of the function of rape speaks more to the experience and reaction of *men* to the rape of women than to the

experience and reaction of *women* who are the ones suffering this violence. What rape in war communicates, “from man to man, so to speak, that men around the women in question are not able to protect “their” women. They are thus wounded in their masculinity and marked as incompetent” (Seifert 1994: 58-65). Although this may be true, I did not find evidence of this communication between men in my data. What I found was that many women were talking about how they were the sole survivors of the genocide in their family, how they were separated from husbands, or how they later found out that their husbands or family was dead. Women also talked about how in some cases, never learned what happened to the rest of their family. It was not clear how humiliation and defeat were being communicated to Tutsi men. What is clear from these narratives is that women have a reaction to the violence they experienced, they talked about the humiliation they felt as women and they spoke about the violence that other women experienced. Such an androcentric thesis, one that proposes that the rape of women should be understood as a symbolic expression of male humiliation and defeat, ignores women except in relation to the feelings of men. This is insufficient and renders women invisible while privileging the experience of men.

Seifert’s third thesis is that rape in war is the result of the military establishment that encourages and supports masculinity. Rape in war can be understood as a means of communication among men, speaking not just to the humiliation of the vanquished, but as a way for men to bond and sustain a masculine identity. This bonding and sustaining of masculine identity seems most apparent in group rape. Many women in the narratives spoke of experiencing group rape, primarily by men who were members of the interahamwe, militias used to carry out the genocide. Louise’s story illustrates this:

Then one of them suggested that they should rape me instead. The three of them raped me in turns. Each having finished, he walked away. As the last one finished, a new group of interahamwe arrived. They ordered the man who raped me last to rape me again. He refused. Then they threatened to burn both of us alive unless he raped me again. So he raped me again.

Violeta also talks about group rape by interahamwe:

Then the interahamwe took us, and shared us out among themselves. Some were raped, some were killed.

Maria Christine provides a clear example of group rape and the escalation in violence that often accompanies this specific form of violence:

They beat me until they had really pounded me. They left me naked. At the end, one of them told the other that instead of finishing me off, they should 'liberate' me- meaning they should rape me. They took me into the bush; the two of them took turns during the night.

The fourth function of rape in war is that the goal of war rape is to destroy the culture of the opponent. This can be accomplished in many ways. One way to destroy the culture of another group is to physically destroy them- either immediately or in the future through disease, starvation, etc. The way that women in this study conveyed this idea was by talking about the implications that rape had in their life. Chantal speaks to one such implication:

I am afraid of AIDS . . . I am constantly worried that I have AIDS.

For others, the shame and humiliation that women feel as a result of rape works as a way of destroying a society. Odette speaks about the social ostracism that some women who are raped felt:

After the genocide, I was ashamed to be with others. I felt responsible for what the interahamwe had done to me.

Such social ostracism prevents and limits the choices women have and the opportunities available to them.

The last thesis proposed by Seifert is that rape in war would not be possible if not for a culturally rooted contempt for women. There were many examples that illustrated this point. One way this cultural contempt for women is evident is in the way ethnicity, class, and gender were constructed to identify which women were acceptable targets of rape. The narratives show many Tutsi women as the targets of rape, and how specific women, those with education or who had successful jobs were especially targeted. One possible explanation for this is that these women may have been viewed as challenging the dominant construct of masculinity, or taking the jobs of men in an already precarious economic climate.

Another way in which this culturally rooted contempt for women is evident is in the experiences of women who were treated as objects, as a commodity to be purchased.

Violeta provides one such example:

But Bugimulunje wanted me, and he paid a thousand francs to the other man so that he could have me instead. There was another girl called Therese, she was taken too, and one other girl. The men had to pay, to give money to those guys who were holding them, to drink.

Essentially, in the eyes of these men, Violeta was worth the price of a drink. I believe that this extends beyond men being presented with an opportunity to rape and instead speaks to a larger issue, namely the way in which women are treated and the way in which women are not valued or respected, but exchanged for other material items. Odette also speaks to the exchange of women:

The interahamwe from my sector asked him to pay five thousand francs. The guy did not hesitate in giving the sum, a five thousand note. Since the first two had satisfied their own needs, they granted me to this guy, Sylvere.

This example specifically addresses how after men used women to satisfy their own purposes, a profit was made by selling women to other men. I believe that these two examples demonstrate more than an opportunity available to men to make money from selling women and instead speaks to the larger issue of the way women are viewed as objects to be bought and sold.

In looking at the above five theses, Seifert clearly outlines how men and communities are affected by war rape and she proposes an understanding of reasons why this practice continues. What this model fails to explain or address is the question: what is the direct effect of rape in war on women? To that end, I argue that an additional function of rape in war is the impact it has on women who are experiencing this violence. Rape is used to hurt women; it is not “just” sex or “just” violence. It is an additional level of violence that has implications for both the emotional and physical well-being of women. This goes beyond rape as a function of male bonding, women as symbolic expression, and the rules of war. Instead, the function of rape is to inflict pain, humiliation, suffering, and lasting consequences such as AIDS and pregnancy on *women*. The function of rape should first be understood on an individual level before it is applied to families, communities, or men. The women in the narratives did not speak to the implications of sexual violence on their families, communities, and cultural group. It could be theorized that at the time they told their story, due to the total disruption of the society, they did not yet know what those implications might be. Or, an alternative understanding of this could value their silence on this topic and instead theorize that the experience of sexual violence is so personal in that rape represents a personal invasion of a woman’s body, and instead make that the focus. Then, an additional function of rape in war would be that

wartime rape affects women on a personal level, not allowing them to look beyond the personal to the community or cultural group. This seems to be borne out in the narratives. Juliana says:

I could not see what there was to live for.

Catherine, expressing hopelessness says:

I realized that neither death nor the thought of dying any longer had a meaning for me. I wanted to be killed and get this nightmare called life over and done with.

Odette, after suffering rape and physical abuse illustrates the personal nature of the violence women experienced:

I don't believe anyone on earth has suffered as much grief as me.

I believe that a modification of Seifert's model will result in a more complete understanding. Women's experiences and the implications of rape for women should be privileged. The primary focus should be how rape in war affects women and this has been previously overlooked. Rape in war functions as a way to harm men indirectly through women, but gender specific effects of violence that is directed towards women deserve to be the focus of attention and analysis. Ultimately, it is women who are being hurt.

Genocidal Rape

A second model that has been a useful guide in this research is the definition of genocide as articulated by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. This model has the potential to be more useful than Seifert's five theses on the function of rape in war in understanding the experiences of women with sexual violence during the genocide. Like Seifert's model, I believe some additions are necessary.

The ICTR defined genocide to

mean any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (Statute of the International Tribunal for Rwanda 1994).

This definition highlights the unique way children experience violence and also addresses how the group as a whole can be destroyed. What is missing in this definition is an analysis of the unique type of violence that is directed towards women in genocides and how that violence, specifically sexual violence, has the same ability to destroy a group as does killing members of the group.

While certain elements of this definition were not present in the narratives that I looked at for this research, other elements were. For example, one of the acts that constitute genocide is “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group”. Of the sixteen narratives in this study, many women outlined the emotional and physical costs of the violence in their lives. Women expressed a desire to be killed because they no longer wished to live after their families are killed; being haunted by dreams of the traumatic events; feeling ashamed and responsible for being raped; wanting to commit suicide; and having no hope for the future. Undoubtedly, such depression and despair is

difficult to overcome, and this is further complicated by the limited access women have to medical treatment and counseling.

Another component of this definition that is present is “killing members of the group”. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 resulted in the death of between 800,000 and 850,000 people. Women’s narratives spoke of this killing. Catherine talks about how some women were killed:

So he handed me over to the interahamwe who came to fetch me. There were five other women who they had collected from other houses. They beat us very badly. Three of the women died from their wounds.

Maria Gorette talks about how death was not immediate, but followed other types of physical violence:

What they did to the woman they killed is just too terrible. They were literally beaten to death with sticks and *masus*. They stripped them down to their underwear before they killed them. Some were left completely naked and then paraded. Some were forced to walk several kilometers while naked on their way to being raped or killed or both. Some of the older women who they did not take far from the house were beaten severely before they were raped. Mukabutera, about seventeen, was taken by a certain Francois nicknamed ‘Inzirabwoba’ because he had killed so many people. He kept her for two weeks before killing her.

I would also argue that the above examples also encompass another act that constitutes genocide: “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”.

What is lacking in the model of genocide proposed by the ICTR and what I believe the contribution of this study can be is an acknowledgment of the way in which women are affected by genocide when they experienced rape as genocide. While it is significant that the ICTR identified the way genocide occurs by forcibly impregnating women, the violence should be understood as affecting women beyond their reproductive

capacities. So, when genocides are analyzed, the gender component as it extends beyond reproduction is often ignored. Genocide, as defined in international law, is gender neutral. “Yet genocide has gender-specific affects. Girls and women are far more likely than are men to be the targets of sexual violence used as a component of genocide, but it is rare that analysts perceive rape to be a component of genocide” (Sharlach 2000, 92). Men in genocide are beaten and killed and I do not mean in any way to lessen the brutality or horror of such experiences, but my purpose is to highlight the fact that women are beaten and killed like men, but that often they are raped as well.

To this end, I believe that it is important to identify instances of mass rape that have components of genocide as genocidal rape. I believe that it is important to recognize how rape is a form of genocide. In the not so distant past, rape was viewed as a crime of honor and as a crime not against the woman, but against her husband or father. It is only recently that rape is viewed as a violation of human rights; however, even that acknowledgment is not far reaching enough (Sharlach 2000, 90).

The emphasis should be on women and their experiences. In general, I believe that rape in war deserves more attention. In addition to including women in the discussion of rape, when we talk about war, rape should be included. Women and their experiences should be at the center of the discussion regarding the function of rape in war as well as an understanding of how rape is a form of genocide. One way that I see rape functioning as genocide and what is missing from the literature that I examined thus far is the unique way women were treated during the genocide. For many women, this took the form of women being forced to marry their rapist. Women being forced to marry their rapists I would argue can be another dimension of rape as genocide and can be listed

under the “acts committed with in intent to destroy, in whole or in part”. What this shows is that rape is not a by-product of war, one that can easily be dismissed, excused, or ignored. Instead, I believe it shows the deliberate nature of this specific act of violence. These men understood that they were in a position to force women to do specific things, whether it is providing sex or household maintenance. This is an element of genocide, to use the words of the genocide definition, because it functions to deliberately inflict “on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”.

The story shared by Therese and Christine illustrates this:

Two brothers proposed to save us by hiding us in their home. That is where they raped us, saying they would marry us when the fighting finished.

Marie Gorette speaks to the impact of rape on her daughter and others:

My daughter is sick but I don’t know with what. All I know is that she is ailing in a way that seems common to many of the young girls who have been raped.

As illustrated by the above passages, rape has long-term consequences that can cause destruction.

Death does not need to occur immediately for physical destruction or genocide to occur. That is why it is significant to understand rape as genocide. It allows for other experiences of women who were targeted for sexual violence to be understood as an event that can cause destruction. Sexual violence is not a byproduct of genocide because it is genocide. It can destroy in a manner similar to killing people. It is a specific type of violence that largely targets women and carries with it consequences that are both immediately felt and continue far into the future.

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