

University of Mary Washington

**Eagle Scholar**

---

Student Research Submissions

---

Spring 5-1-2020

## **Challenging Bosnian Women's Identity as Rape Victims: The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in Post-Conflict Discourse**

Rebecca Jacobi

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholar.umw.edu/student\\_research](https://scholar.umw.edu/student_research)



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [International and Area Studies Commons](#), and the [International Relations Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Jacobi, Rebecca, "Challenging Bosnian Women's Identity as Rape Victims: The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in Post-Conflict Discourse" (2020). *Student Research Submissions*. 311.  
[https://scholar.umw.edu/student\\_research/311](https://scholar.umw.edu/student_research/311)

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by Eagle Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Research Submissions by an authorized administrator of Eagle Scholar. For more information, please contact [archives@umw.edu](mailto:archives@umw.edu).

**Challenging Bosnian Women's Identity as Rape Victims:  
The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in Post-Conflict Discourse**

Rebecca Jacobi  
University of Mary Washington  
rjacobi@mail.umw.edu

## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Roadmap
3. Thesis Statement
4. Methods
5. Literature Review
  - 5a. Women and War
6. Methodological Case Studies
  - 6a. Eritrea and Ethiopia
  - 6b. Rwanda
7. Women and War in Bosnia
  - 7a. Introduction
  - 7b. Use of Rape
  - 7c. Perpetrators
  - 7d. Women-Led NGOs
  - 7e. Positive Sex
  - 7f. Male Victimhood
8. Meger's Three Steps of Fetishization of Sexual Violence
  - 8a. Three Steps and the Bosnian War
9. Media Representation of Bosnian Women
10. Conclusion
  - 10c. Solutions
11. Works Cited

## 1. Introduction

How does one call attention to the gender dimensions of war violence or postwar inequalities without reproducing images of passive female victimhood and support for patriarchal notions of the protection of women? In the case of the Bosnian War, because of the large scale of sexual violence and the attention focused on this violence, Bosnian women have been stereotyped and relegated to the role of rape victim. Although women suffered from grave violations of human rights, including sexual violence, this stereotypic portrayal is unhelpful because it ignores women's agency and the multiple roles women played during the conflict. It neglects women's roles as activists, peace builders, sole supporters of their family, or political elites in a war effort. It is, perhaps, also equally important to focus on the perpetuation of violence by some women. When scholars include and examine these salient roles, a more nuanced understanding of conflict is provided, one that portrays women as multi-dimensional and independent beings capable of accepting positions that provide them with agency. It is important to examine these varying roles because the idea of war as a male domain is increasingly out of touch with the way that war is fought today and whom it impacts. Across the globe, "conflicts are primarily fought not by well-trained armies at the behest of their governments but by non-state groups with complex motivations and little incentive to obey the laws of war."<sup>1</sup> When our understanding of a given war focuses so overwhelmingly on its male soldiers, a larger context is missed-- namely, the many roles women can and do play is underestimated which makes it harder to create durable peace as only a fraction of the actors are considered.

---

<sup>1</sup> Diana Wueger. "Women in War, Women in Peace." *The Atlantic*, November 8, 2011.

This project seeks to identify how existing scholarly literature about the Bosnian War has contributed to the victimization of women. Most of the literature on women and warfare, or women and gender, analyzes the role of women from a victim-centered perspective. Although research shows that the majority of perpetrators are men, women too have been involved in the perpetration of war crimes. Examining the women as perpetrators role is important because this position has not been thoroughly acknowledged by the international community, specifically the ways in which women's roles in combat correlate with empowerment and self-determination. In addition to being established in a dichotomous relationship with perpetrators, victims are often understood to lack agency. Yet, female perpetrators as well are shorn of their agency by the lack of portrayal and acknowledgement in scholarly discourse. This project utilizes scholarly material, interviews with volunteers and Bosnian women, and newspaper articles to make the case that only discussing Bosnian women in terms of their sexual assault victimizes and enhances the invisibility of women in post-conflict discussions.

## **2. Roadmap**

First, I present my thesis statement and discuss my methodology, specifically why I chose to use Bosnia as my primary case study and news articles as my primary evidence. I then examine the relevant literature on women and warfare in order to lay the groundwork for the discussion on women in the Bosnian War, as it is important to understand what past and current scholars have researched about women in warfare in general. I will then review the methodological case studies of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Rwanda to make the case that women have been involved in warfare in many ways, and Bosnia is not the exception. I will then discuss women in the Bosnian War, specifically how rape was used as a weapon of war and how the attention of this rape has led to victimization. I will also discuss women as perpetrators, women

as leaders of NGOs, positive sex in Bosnia, and male victimhood to provide a more holistic narrative of the war. I will then define what Dr. Sara Meger's three steps of fetishization of sexual violence is, and then I will analyze the Bosnian War through the lens of this framework. I will then provide an analysis of news articles that draws comparisons from the three steps of fetishization, as well as from the victimhood trope. Lastly, I will conclude and offer potential solutions for scholars and journalists so that the victimization of Bosnian women is not perpetuated and women's roles in warfare in general are not erased from the collective narrative of war.

### **3. Thesis Statement**

While increased scholarly discourse and media representation of rape during the Bosnian war is important, the issue lies in the fact that these representations have been constructed largely without the voices of Bosnian women themselves, or in ways that downplay their agency, leaving intact an image of silenced, shamed, and powerless victims of patriarchal culture.

### **4. Methods**

In order to understand how women in warfare and conflict are narrowly represented in scholarly literature and the media, I decided to focus on the Bosnian War as a primary case study due to the amount of attention that has been given on sexual violence which portrays Bosnian women in a limited manner. This attention has inadvertently caused Bosnian women to be defined through a lens of victimhood in which sexual assault is their primary source of identity. Even women who were not sexually assaulted are still in danger of being classified as victims because the vast scale of reporting has portrayed the war in such a way that one can assume that a majority of Bosnian women were sexually assaulted in some capacity. While sexual violence is

rarely focused or reported on in other major wars, the Bosnian War is exceptional in that the heightened amount of coverage and media pressure caused the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to classify rape as a war crime. Also, multiple feminist scholars began analyzing sexual assault in warfare as a result of the victim reports and stories which was a catalyst for understanding sexual assault in warfare and its effects. A strength of focusing on only one case study is that it allows for the investigation and exploration of the gendered nature of the conflict more thoroughly and deeply. The literature on women and warfare in general that is found in the literature review section can be applied to understand the Bosnian War in a more intensive manner, and finding relationships between scholarly work on gender and warfare and the Bosnian War was simpler with one case study. However, the weakness of only using one case study is that there is a limited explanatory capacity. While a thesis could be rendered, it is constrained in scope as it only focuses on women from one specific conflict. Thus, the virtues of using multiple case studies is that parallels can be made between them, creating stronger evidence for an assertion.

I decided to use Meger's fetishization of sexual assault steps as a framework for the discussion on the Bosnian case study because it provides a clear structure for how the media and scholars alike participate in the fetishization of sexual violence in Bosnia. By using this framework, I was able to identify examples of fetishization within American news articles written during the time of the Bosnian War and use that analysis as evidence, demonstrating that the framework has applications for conflict. The framework also provides a clear summation of the research and can be applicable to other conflicts besides Bosnia.

This research project also relies on newspaper articles as primary evidence. I decided to use newspaper articles over other forms of media because they provide a snapshot of what the

general public was thinking towards a subject at that point in time. While news articles are by no means representative of every opinion, they are indicative of how the American public viewed an event when it happened. News articles also allow for an examination of the issues in the context of their time. Hence, I chose news articles so that I could understand how Bosnian women were being represented in Western media and the ways in which they perpetuated the victimhood trope. A strength of analyzing representations of Bosnian women in American media is that it provides an interesting model of how the West viewed and understood the Bosnian War. For the purposes of this study, three major American newspapers (The New York Times, Washington Post, and Chicago Tribune) were used as symbols of larger Western commentary on Bosnia, specifically how the articles supported the victimhood trope and exemplified some of Meger's fetishization of sexual violence framework. I also chose American news articles because the United States was involved in the conclusion of the Bosnian War with the Dayton Agreement and has been heavily criticized for not intervening in the genocide sooner.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the American perspective matters because it is a wealthy, Western country commentating on a developing, war-torn country in which the former was involved in. The weaknesses of using news articles is that there is bias involved with which articles get chosen and which are excluded. There is a danger that while the articles chosen may provide compelling evidence for the thesis, there is an omittance of articles that disprove the thesis. The criteria for which articles were chosen and which were not was as follows: the articles had to come from either the Washington Post, The New York Times, or the Chicago Tribune, they preferably had to have a photograph, and they had to be about Bosnian women during the war in some capacity. Using these three criteria, I

---

<sup>2</sup> Ivo H. Daalder. "Decision to Intervene: How the War in Bosnia Ended." Brookings. Brookings, July 28, 2016.

was able to narrow my scope and choose three articles from each of the three newspapers for my analysis.

I decided to include three supplementary case studies on women in warfare in other countries to demonstrate that women all over the world take on varying roles in times of conflict, and Bosnia is not the anomaly. The case study of Eritrea and Ethiopia show that women not only took combat positions, but they were essential in providing morale for the men who had to fight. Thus, even when women were not allowed to be in combat, they still took on other roles which were just as salient. The Rwandan case study is important because the Bosnian War and Rwandan Civil War are often used as complementary case studies in other research papers because of the similarities between them. Both are genocides, had high rates of sexual assault, and Western countries were hesitant to intervene which has since led to new research on Western intervention. Most importantly, many Rwandan women served in combat positions, yet their stories are rarely identified and discussed. Hence, these case studies supplement the research found in the literature review and establish the point that women are not only victims in war but are constantly being active participants. While not considered a methodological case study on par with the beforementioned studies, the case study of women in the American Revolutionary War is used to demonstrate that even developed countries such as the United States has had a history of women in combat positions that has been erased from the historical narrative. This case study is thus included in the literature review section because it is not a contemporary study.

## 5. Literature Review

The number of books and articles that seek to describe and explain women's involvement in warfare throughout history is large and growing. As the field expands, there is increasingly room to show how women have been represented as soldiers, symbols, victims, motive and followers in warfare, and move beyond the conventional emphasis of women as passive participants. Approaches to the subject are diverse. Some scholars, such as Linda Grant De Pauw, analyze women's involvement in warfare based on an overview of the subject ranging across continents and centuries. For example, in De Pauw's article "Women in Combat: The Revolutionary War Experience," women's involvement in the American War for Independence is discussed, specifically the women who were involved in active combat. De Pauw divides women in combat into three categories: "those serving in a distinct branch of the Continental Army referred to as 'women of the army' or 'army women'; those enlisted as regular troops fighting in uniform side by side with male Continentals; and those serving as irregular fighters affiliated with local militia companies or committees of safety."<sup>3</sup> De Pauw states that these women have long been misunderstood by historians, as nineteenth and twentieth century historians accurately assumed that these women were prostitutes.<sup>4</sup> Hence, De Pauw acknowledges that there is a gap in the literature that exists between women either passively staying at home or women serving as prostitutes. De Pauw also upends the dogma that women only did chores for the men in the army, stating, "women did of course wash, sew, and cook—but they did this for themselves and occasionally for an officer who could afford to pay out of

---

<sup>3</sup> Linda Grant De Pauw. "Women in Combat: The Revolutionary War Experience." *Armed Forces & Society* 7, no. 2 (1981), 209.

<sup>4</sup> De Pauw. "Women in Combat: The Revolutionary War Experience," 210.

pocket.”<sup>5</sup> Hence, women were also entrepreneurs who recognized a need within the ranks and took advantage of the situation for their own personal gain.

One constant trope in the scholarly discussion of women in warfare is the chivalric discourse of rescuing defenseless and downtrodden women from rapists and pillagers that has served to justify warfare.<sup>6</sup> Despite the fact that the civilian population faced as much danger as the armed forces, war continues to be presented as a male institution, as something that men attended to in order to protect women at home. Within these popular discourses masculine accounts of war creates narratives of male heroism, and if women are included, their femininity is problematized. Male heroism becomes toppled, however, when the idea of women as perpetrators of wartime violence is introduced. Women as perpetrators is an interesting discourse because it is a role that is so rarely discussed in scholarly literature. An underlying factor for why scholars sometimes have a difficult time grappling with the idea that women can be rapists and murders is that women are still viewed as the “purer” and more virtuous gender. In actuality, women are violent people, who, like all people, violent or not, live in a gendered world. Discourses on wartime sexual violence frequently employ gender tropes that are fixated onto a binary that ascribes femininity to women, and masculinity to men. In the book *Women as Wartime Rapists: Beyond Sensation and Stereotyping*, feminist scholar Laura Sjoberg claims that this in turn renders the female perpetrator of wartime sexual violence a “discursive impossibility,” leading to problematic representations of female perpetrators as non-existent, or alternatively as aberrant nonfemale “monsters,” or as dupes and victims of violent men.<sup>7</sup> In a

---

<sup>5</sup> De Pauw. “Women in Combat: The Revolutionary War Experience,” 213.

<sup>6</sup> Kristin L. Hoganson. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, 44-45.

<sup>7</sup> Laura Sjoberg. *Women as Wartime Rapists: beyond Sensation and Stereotyping*. NY, NY: New York University Press, 2017, 13.

study conducted by scholars Laura Sjoberg and Coron E. Gentry, the mother, monster or whore stereotypes are introduced. They propose that “women today are continuously being idolized as pristine and pure objects incapable of mass murder and genocidal behavior,” and they argue that convicted female perpetrators, instead of becoming representations of female capabilities in the perpetration of genocide, “tend to be stripped of agency, with the severity of their actions reduced to pure coincidence, or the result of male manipulation or previous abuse.”<sup>8</sup>

Alternatively, these women may be characterized as mentally disturbed or wicked, with a deviant sexual appetite. In short, female perpetrators are not portrayed as real women. It is important to replace this image with a more accurate portrayal: women committed these acts of violence for a multitude of reasons as people are independent and their autonomy is relational. Thus, women who commit crimes against humanity can be victims of circumstance the same way that male perpetrators can be, and women should not be considered biologically or psychologically different from their female counterparts who are not in active combat and committing violent acts. In summation, contrary to the framing of violent women as impossible, women commit conflict violence, including but not limited to sexual violence, and women who do are not anomalous.

Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies James Waller has suggested that there is no evidence that women are any worse at killing than men are.<sup>9</sup> While it is normally undesirable to be “good at” killing, Walker’s point stands: “while women’s violence is often less frequent, and often less noticeable, than men’s violence, it is no less competently committed, and no less

---

<sup>8</sup> Caron E. Gentry, and Laura Sjoberg. *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Womens Violence in Global Politics*. London: Zed Books, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> James Waller. *Becoming Evil How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2007.

possible.”<sup>10</sup> Women and men are “both gendered actors in gendered conflicts, beset by and situated in a number of other factors that account for sexual violence in war and conflict.”<sup>11</sup> However, joining the ranks of a militia can provide a level of agency for some women as the opportunities for women during wartime are limited compared to their male counterparts. Thus, women “live in a world of gendered structures and gendered expectations that shape what opportunities they have, what they are expected to do, and how their choice are reacted in the public space.”<sup>12</sup> For some women, joining an army that commits acts of violence is a way for them to take control of their situation and advance their status, because the alternative is a life of destitution and victimhood. Conflict and gender analyses must not only pay attention to the so-called gender characteristics of women and men respectively but should also consider the diversity among women and their different roles and positions in armed conflict. Women are a heterogeneous group of social actors, who on the one hand are determined to take on certain positions and roles in conflicts, but on the other hand deliberately choose to fulfil certain roles based on their strategies and goals.

When scholars seek to understand female perpetrators in times of intense and bloody conflict, the questions that frequently come up are “does women’s violence expose feminism’s weaknesses? Or does it provide another area for the application of feminism’s strengths?”<sup>13</sup> However, “feminism at its best is not about claiming that women are less violent than men, or that women’s judgement’s is better than men’s.”<sup>14</sup> Instead, in this context, feminists are claiming that the reasons for why women are not typically considered to be violent does not stem from

---

<sup>10</sup> Sjoberg. *Women as Wartime Rapists: beyond Sensation and Stereotyping*, 126.

<sup>11</sup> Sjoberg. *Women as Wartime Rapists: beyond Sensation and Stereotyping*, 189.

<sup>12</sup> Sjoberg. *Women as Wartime Rapists: beyond Sensation and Stereotyping*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Caron E. Gentry, and Laura Sjoberg. *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Womens Violence in Global Politics*. (London: Zed Books, 2015), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Gentry, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Womens Violence in Global Politics*, 1.

any innate goodness. This dogma supports the trope that women and men are different to the extent that one is completely unable to carry out acts of violence unless they are under extreme or abnormal circumstances. An underlying factor for why scholars sometimes have a difficult time grappling with the idea that women can be rapists and murders is that women are still viewed as the “purer” and more virtuous gender. Philosopher Jean Elshtain has extensively discussed the ways that both women and men are often pigeonholed by gender expectations about the ways that people of their sex behave in war and conflict. She saw that the “stereotype of ‘just warriors’ is often applied to men, under which they are expected on the basis of their manliness to fulfill a duty to protect women and defend righteous causes.”<sup>15</sup> Women, on the other hand, are often expected to behave as “‘beautiful souls’ in need of protection and justifying the defense of the state or nation.”<sup>16</sup> When men and women do not fall neatly into those two categories, they are viewed as committing a crime against their gender and are typically forced to comply with their gender’s expectations. It is only when one defies these expectations that they are written about, but typically only as a case study to show that some individuals did revolt. Women fill various roles in wartime as “whether they are organizing attacks, leading insurgent groups, perpetuating martyrdom, engaging in sexual violence... women can be found among the ranks of insurgent, rebel, terrorist and illicit economic groups across the world.”<sup>17</sup> This image of women runs counter to traditional images of women as pure, maternal, emotional, innocent and peace-loving. Women have been “subordinated in global politics, which impacts their social and political options and frames of reference. It also impacts how women and their actions are

---

<sup>15</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain. “On Beautiful Souls, Just Warriors and Feminist Consciousness.” *Womens Studies International Forum* 5, no. 3-4 (1982): 343.

<sup>16</sup> Elshtain. “On Beautiful Souls, Just Warriors and Feminist Consciousness,” 344.

<sup>17</sup> Gentry, *Beyond, Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Womens Violence in Global Politics*, 3.

perceived—meaning their violence has been hidden or unseen.”<sup>18</sup> Because violent women go against strict gender norms, historians, scholars, and journalists alike have been hesitant to accurately and adequately report on these women. Yet, men who engage in wartime violence get reported on daily in multiple mediums of print with no hesitation.

An ample and growing literature continues to document when and where women fought alongside men as soldiers. Such research is both useful and important, as women’s presence in combat situations necessarily affects the way warfare is conceptualized and fought. When war is conceptualized in scholarly discourse, fighters are almost exclusively men, with the near-total exclusion of women from combat. Notably, this constant holds despite two significant facts. First, “neither men nor women have a natural predilection for killing; societies in general must work hard to convince any of their members to kill, whether male or female. Second, women who do manage to participate in war seem to function on a par with men.”<sup>19</sup> If neither women nor men want to kill, and there are many of both sexes who are equipped to do so, why is combat almost wholly the domain of men? In his book *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*, scholar Joshua S. Goldstein seeks to answer this question. Goldstein derives multiple hypotheses primarily from feminist theory, and he focuses on masculinity (“tough men”) and femininity (“tender women”), as well as men’s domination (sexual and economic) of women.<sup>20</sup> He concludes overall that the best explanation for gendered war roles is the combination of small but significant biological differences in average size, strength, and rough-and-tumble play, and the socialization of men for war, paired with the tendency to

---

<sup>18</sup> Gentry, *Beyond, Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Womens Violence in Global Politics*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew Brown “Review Essay Women and Warfare: Recent Literature and New Directions in Research.” *Feminist Review* 79, no. 1 (2005): 173.

<sup>20</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009.

demonize the enemy through feminization as a marker of dominance.<sup>21</sup> This book makes a significant contribution to the political and larger social science literature on war and international relations, in many ways providing a bridge between mainstream and feminist international relations theory and research.

Akin to Goldstein's analysis of how masculinity and feminism influenced women's participation in wartime, scholar Philomena Goodman also discusses how war caused a major upheaval of everyday social life which impacted traditional notions of femininity and masculinity. In her book *Women, Sexuality, and War*, Goodman uses a combination of oral histories, archival research, and published material to explore the gendered complexities beneath the public rhetorics that accompanied the so-called 'People's War' of 1939. According to Goodman, "in the discourses of war, images and notions of masculinity and femininity were constructed, mobilized and stretched where necessary to protect gender differences."<sup>22</sup> Part of the complexity that Goodman discusses arises out of the fact that "women are not an undifferentiated mass but have class (and other) identities as well as gender identities."<sup>23</sup> Women were just as traumatized by the idea of war and had to come to terms with their lack of control within the war; hence, many women went against traditional feminine jobs and instead became integral members on the warfront.

Scholars and historians have examined the way that women's involvement in warfare contributed to larger and more fundamental changes in society. While war caused misery and hardship to men and women alike, "it profoundly affected women's personal well-being, their status and role in the family, and their access to economic resources, and their political

---

<sup>21</sup> Goldstein. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*.

<sup>22</sup> Philomena Goodman. *Women, Sexuality and War*. New York: Palgrave, 2002, 25.

<sup>23</sup> Goodman, *Women, Sexuality and War*, 23.

participation.”<sup>24</sup> During wartime, women were often put under tighter scrutiny as the “politics of marriage, the politics of femininities, the genderings of racial and ethnic identities, and the working of misogyny each continue.”<sup>25</sup> While bombs and missiles kill men and women indiscriminately, other aspects of war affect women and girls disproportionately. Women are “affected directly as casualties of attacks, and as victims of the upheaval of war, but also indirectly through the economics of militarism.”<sup>26</sup> During the Iraq War in 1991, women interviewed stated that the increased burden they suffered as men’s roles within the household did not change, but “women’s duties expanded to include securing water and firewood for their families on a day-to-day basis.”<sup>27</sup> Thus, women during wartime had to shoulder more responsibility and provide for their families on top of their original household duties. Women thus became a primary pillar of support for children and the elderly, a role typically taken on by the head male in the family.

## 6. Methodological Case Studies

### 6a. Eritrea and Ethiopia

Various factors, such as biological and social, mitigated the degree of the involvement of women in war in traditional societies. However, these factors did not exclude women from warfare. Young women are combatants in contemporary African wars and participate in a whole array of different roles. In countries such as Ethiopia, where war had been a way of life, the role of women was quite significant.<sup>28</sup> For some women, the prime role of women in warfare “begins

---

<sup>24</sup> Krishna Kumar. *Women and Civil War: Impact, Organisations and Action*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Cynthia Enloe. *Nemo's War, Emma's War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War*. University of California Press, 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Barry S. Levy, and Victor W. Sidel. *War and Public Health*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 186.

<sup>27</sup> Levy, *War and Public Health*, 187.

<sup>28</sup> Minale Adugna. *Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: a Case Study of Their Role during the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: publisher not identified, 1997, 4.

with encouraging their menfolk to join military expeditions in person or through songs performed every night in villages following the mobilization order. On such occasions they sang songs praising the brave and belittling the coward.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, men who may have been hesitant to join the war in fear of abandoning their families or death felt emboldened by the women’s songs of derision. As a rule, pregnant women were not allowed to join military expeditions yet “some pregnant women are also reported to have joined military expeditions by hiding their pregnancy in order to avenge the death of their husbands or relatives or to ensure their rights of land inheritance.”<sup>30</sup> After mobilization and during the course of the war, some women in Ethiopia “guarded the camp with some soldiers so that it would not fall into the hands of the enemy.”<sup>31</sup> Other women could play pivotal roles in the intelligence services as they were less suspected by the enemy so they could sneak behind enemy lines and gather information.<sup>32</sup> Thus Ethiopian women used their gender to their advantage in order to become integral members of the war. As with the Eritean case, Ethiopian women also “were also known to encourage soldiers in the midst of battle, emboldening them to achieve greater feats.”<sup>33</sup> These two case studies demonstrate that women did not have to completely reject gender norms and could instead utilize it to their advantage, whether that is using song to boost morale or their perceived lack of threat to steal intelligence.

---

<sup>29</sup> Richard Pankhurst, and Girma Selassie Asfaw. “An Amharic War-Song of Emperor Tewodros’s Soldiers.” *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 18, no. 1 (1985), 17.

<sup>30</sup> Adugna, *Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: a Case Study of Their Role during the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96*, 5

<sup>31</sup> Adugna, *Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: a Case Study of Their Role during the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96*, 6

<sup>32</sup> Adugna, *Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: a Case Study of Their Role during the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96*, 6

<sup>33</sup> “Pedagogical Unit.” Taytu Betul pedagogical unit 4 | Women, n.d. <https://en.unesco.org/womeninafrica/taytu-betul/pedagogical-unit/4>.

## 6b. Rwanda

The Rwandan case study offers an interesting analysis into how women combatant leaders were able to rise to power and then utilize that power to incite violence. Women “often model their notions of power on male institutions” and in many instances, despite the notion that women are able to share power because of their perceived compassion, “women's power has to be acceptable to the men in power.”<sup>34</sup> If women’s power subverts male power, then the women risk harassment of various forms by the state and can be subjected to the same violence that they are instigating. This shows that while women may have joined armies to gain a semblance of power, that power was still checked by male the patriarchy. As explained by Odette Kayirere, executive secretary of the nonprofit AVEGA Agahozo, and Sabine Uwasi, staff attorney at AVEGA Agahozo, the crimes of women who participated in the genocide in Rwanda fell into three unofficial categories.<sup>35</sup> Ranked according to the frequency and intensity of the crimes, these were: “exposing those in hiding by ululating when Tutsi were found in order to draw the Interahamwe; stealing resources and looting; and murdering Tutsis, often children.”<sup>36</sup> Based off of these rankings, it can be concluded that Rwandan women mostly participated in indirect crimes such as stealing and revealing those in hiding versus the direct crimes of murder and sexual assault. It is possible, however, that women participated in direct crimes to a lesser extent solely because they were denied entrance due to their sex into the primary groups tasked with mass murder.

---

<sup>34</sup> Rekopantswe Mate. "Rwanda -- Not so Innocent: When Women Become Killers." *Southern African Feminist Review* 3, no. 2 (Dec 31, 1999): 95.

<sup>35</sup> Sara E Brown. *Gender and the Genocide in Rwanda: Women As Rescuers and Perpetrators*. (Routledge, 2017), 95.

<sup>36</sup> Brown. *Gender and the Genocide in Rwanda: Women As Rescuers and Perpetrators*, 95.

## **7. Women and War in Bosnia**

### **7a. Introduction**

The identification and acknowledgement of women's role in conflict and post conflict has been studied extensively by scholars, filmmakers, and journalists alike who have investigated the conditions and consequences of wars through the lens of gender. The issue arises, however, when the discourse about women in conflict is one-sided and the trope of women as victims is given more attention than women in other roles and positions. The idea of war being a strictly male versus female endeavor paints war as black and white and contributes to the notion of passive female victimhood. This is problematic because both men and women were noncombatant civilians at the same time as men and women were both soldiers on the ground committing crimes against humanity. To state that men participate in wars and women do not means that there are no male victims but there are only female victims, and this dogma severely restricts our understanding of warfare and its effects. Regarding the Bosnian War, literature for the most part focuses solely on victimhood in the war, yet scholars and journalists do not explicitly acknowledge that their research and studies are only enforcing the victimhood trope. Thus, this study fills the gap in the literature by adequately discussing victimhood in relation to the other dimensions of the Bosnian War, specifically women as perpetrators, peacekeepers, male victimhood, and positive female sexuality to make the point that the Bosnian War is an important case study for other reasons than just sexual assault.

Through extensive media coverage and pressure by the international community to hold those who committed sexual assault accountable, the stories of women in Bosnia set a precedent in legal history. The international attention surrounding the widespread and systematic reports of rape in Bosnia led to rape being prosecuted as a war crime before the ICTY, and many feminist

scholars hailed this as an achievement. While this was an important legal turning point, the preoccupation with the rape of Bosnian women has reinforced the identification of “The Rape Victim” that frames Bosnian females as uniquely vulnerable and “rapable.”<sup>37</sup> While rape in war is by no means a new occurrence, the international and domestic attention received by this particular aspect of the Bosnian war is extraordinary. Because of the attention, there has been a heightened degree of openness about a phenomenon that has historically been hidden and ridden with shame. As it is widely recognized that systematic use of rape took place in Bosnia, and because numerous victims are willing to talk about their ordeals, the Bosnian conflict has thus opened a new possibility for research on this form of violence. The rest of this section has been divided into subsections that reflect the main themes of this case study.

### **7b. Use of Rape**

It is commonly believed that, when utilized in ethnic conflicts, as in the Bosnian case, sexual violence is employed as a weapon of demoralization against entire societies.<sup>38</sup> The demoralization is characterized by a violent invasion of the interior of the victim’s body, which thereby constitutes an attack upon the intimate self and dignity of the individual human being.<sup>39</sup> Wartime rape has also been an essential tactic of ethnic cleansing as the pregnancies that result from the rapes lead to a child of mixed race.<sup>40</sup> Katya Stevens, a former volunteer in a Bosnian refugee camp during the war, believes that while sexual violence against women served “a duality of purposes, at the root it is men exhibiting their power over women in a way to

---

<sup>37</sup> Dubravka Zarkov, “War Rapes in Bosnia: On Masculinity, Femininity and Power of the Rape Victim Identity”, *Tijdschrift voor Criminologie* 39, no. 2, 1997, 140-151.

<sup>38</sup> Vesa Nikolic-Ristanovic, *Women, Violence, and War* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 124.

<sup>39</sup> Sarah Kenyon Lischer. *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 362-3.

<sup>40</sup> Albrecht Schnabel, and Anara Tabyshalieva. *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (New York, NY: United Nations, 2013), 81.

demoralize men on the opposing side. Women get caught in the middle of male power struggles.”<sup>41</sup> With this statement, women become tools by which men can exert their position over the other, and whosever woman gets violated first or the most becomes the winner. However, scholar Karen Engle points out that rape was sometimes a motivating factor for women to join the army as they sought to take revenge against their perpetrators.<sup>42</sup> Journalist Alexandra Stiglmayer quotes a woman who explained her reasons for wanting to join the army after being raped: “I think the main reason I put on a uniform is to get revenge... [W]e have to get even somehow.”<sup>43</sup> Hence, for some Bosnian women, their rape became a impetus to change their circumstance and join a position of power.

### **7c. Perpetrators**

Historical accounts show that women have been a part of warfare since the beginning, and the Bosnian war is no different. While the exact numbers are not known, the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosniak-led wartime force “had 5,360 women in its ranks; some were engaged in logistics and some were fighters.”<sup>44</sup> However, because these women are not written about, their lives have been erased from the collective narrative and understanding of this conflict. Although the ICTY has indicated a fairly large number of alleged war criminals in connection with the Bosnian war, women are rarely mentioned as having played a political or military role in the war. The lack of indictments against women facilitates the perception “that women, with few exceptions, were victims rather than perpetrators of the war... focusing on women as victims—if only as victims of the ‘propaganda machinery’ – could deflect attention

---

<sup>41</sup> Katya Stevens. Interview by Rebecca Jacobi. Research Interview. Vienna, VA, December 18<sup>th</sup> 2019.

<sup>42</sup> Karen Engle. “Feminism and Its (Dis)contents: Criminalizing Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina” in *The American Journal of International Law* 99, no. 4, 2005, 795.

<sup>43</sup> Alexandra Stiglmayer. *Mass Rape: the War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

<sup>44</sup> Jovana Prusina, “Female War Criminals: Untold Story of the Balkan Conflicts,” *Balkan Insight*, November 30, 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/11/30/female-war-criminals-untold-story-of-the-1990s-conflicts-11-29-2018/>

from any extent to which they might have been responsible for the war.”<sup>45</sup> Bilijana Plavšić, a former member of the presidency of the Republika Srpska, has been described as “renowned throughout the 1990s as an uncompromising apologist for ethnic cleansing.”<sup>46</sup> As a former Dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University of Sarajevo, Plavšić “used her knowledge of biology in order to support ethnic extermination arguments... contended that Bosnian Muslims were ‘genetically deformed Serbs.’”<sup>47</sup> From February 28<sup>th</sup> 1992 to May 12<sup>th</sup> 1992, Plavšić was also one of the two acting presidents of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>48</sup> Plavšić is a prime example of a woman who committed terrible and cruel acts against humanity and yet still was covered in the media through a feminine lens. Even though Plavšić’s toughness is often emphasized in media coverage of her behavior during the Bosnian war—for example, most articles point out her nickname of “iron lady”—“her femininity is always present in accounts of her personal and political choices.”<sup>49</sup> Most of the articles about Plavšić “call her ‘Mrs Plavšić,’ despite the fact that the titles of both ‘Doctor’ and ‘President’ would be used if Plavšić was a man, former president and possessor of an academic doctorate.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, even when the world acknowledges that a woman is a violent person capable of acts akin to a man, the media still feminizes her and does not put her on par with men. It is worth noting that Plavšić was the only woman to be indicted and convicted by the ICTY.<sup>51</sup>

There are several examples of women being convicted by domestic courts in the former Yugoslav states, although not nearly as many as the number of men who have been found guilty

---

<sup>45</sup> Engle, “Feminism and Its (Dis)contents: Criminalizing Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 84.

<sup>46</sup> “Biljana Plavsic: Serbian Iron Lady.” *BBC News*, February 27, 2003.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1108604.stm>.

<sup>47</sup> P. Fitzpatrick. “It isn’t easy being Bilijana” in *Central Europe Review* 22, no. 2, 2000, 35.

<sup>48</sup> “Biljana Plavsic: Serbian Iron Lady.” *BBC News*

<sup>49</sup> Gentry et al. *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Womens Violence in Global Politics*, 15.

<sup>50</sup> Gentry et al. *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Womens Violence in Global Politics*, 65.

<sup>51</sup> Prusina, “Female War Criminals: Untold Story of the Balkan Conflicts.”

of war crimes. Maja Bjelos, associate researcher at the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, explained that “most women did not have command and political responsibility.”<sup>52</sup> Because “they were mostly serving as ‘boots on the ground’ and in special units, providing logistical support, et cetera,” they had a better chance of escaping undetected from prosecution.<sup>53</sup> One of the few women to have been tried for war crimes was Azra Basic, a former member of the Croatian Defense Council. Basic was sentenced to fourteen years in prison for crimes against Serb civilians in Derventa in 1992. During the war, “Basic had nicknames such as ‘Azra Two Knives’ and ‘Bloody Azra’ bestowed for the cruelty of her crimes.”<sup>54</sup> Survivors from camps under her command testify that “Basic made them lick blood from the military boots of a detainee who had been killed, eat Yugoslav banknotes, kiss the Croatian flag and crawl over glass on the floor.”<sup>55</sup> According to one testimony, she also “engraved a cross and the letter ‘S’ on [prisoners’] backs and foreheads with knives, put salt on their wounds and forced them to lick it, punched them in their genitals and threatened to circumcise them.”<sup>56</sup> Cases such as Basic’s clearly show that women are more than capable of committing unspeakable brutality during wartime.

Overall, the discussion about Bosnian women who were brought to trial after the Bosnian war for their crimes typically comes from press releases written in Serbian. According to one of those press releases, a Bosnian Serb woman named Visnja Acimovic was indicted in January 2017 for taking part in the killing of thirty-seven Muslim Bosniak prisoners of war during the 1992-95 war.<sup>57</sup> Acimovic was “accused of war crimes and acting against international

---

<sup>52</sup> Prusina, “Female War Criminals: Untold Story of the Balkan Conflicts.”

<sup>53</sup> Prusina, “Female War Criminals: Untold Story of the Balkan Conflicts.”

<sup>54</sup> Prusina, “Female War Criminals: Untold Story of the Balkan Conflicts.”

<sup>55</sup> Prusina, “Female War Criminals: Untold Story of the Balkan Conflicts.”

<sup>56</sup> Prusina, “Female War Criminals: Untold Story of the Balkan Conflicts.”

<sup>57</sup> Justin Cosgrove. “Bosnian Serb Woman Indicted for War Crimes.” *Jurist*, January 31, 2017.

humanitarian law by violating provisions of the Geneva Conventions.”<sup>58</sup> The prosecution claims that Acimovic “consciously and willingly” took part in the murder of thirty-seven Bosniaks in the eastern town of Vlasenica in June 1992. The information about Acimovic was only found in foreign newspaper articles, however, most of which came from Serbia. Thus, compared with the male perpetrators who committed sexual assault, Acimovic gets little to no discussion in American press.

#### **7d. Women-Led NGOs**

Fostering of civil society is vital in multiethnic, multicultural, multi-religious and post-conflict societies such as that of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and starting NGOs is one way that Bosnian women help to bridge the deeply divided ethnic groups. Before the war, NGOs such as “Women to Women, La Strada, the International Forum of Solidarity, Lara, Medica Zenica and the Future were helping women's victims by providing shelter, healthcare services, counseling and legal assistance.”<sup>59</sup> After the war, these NGOs gained more volunteers as women wanted to work for their community and help victims but were not sure where to start. These NGOs thus allow women to have leadership positions doing work that they are passionate about, all the while creating services for their communities. Although women are supposed to be the ones who are the natural compromisers and peace-loving, they are too often kept from the peace talks and negotiations at the conclusion of conflict; thus, it can be difficult for women to insert themselves in the rebuilding process when they are not a part of the initial discussion. To still make a difference within their communities without government help, some women decided to start their own NGO. After the Bosnian War, multiple NGOs were created by and for Bosnian women who

---

<sup>58</sup> Cosgrove.

<sup>59</sup> Muhidin Mulalic. “Fostering of Civil Society by Muslim Womens NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 34, no. 4 (February 2014): 439.

had been affected by the war as they were not receiving the services and support that they needed from their government. Many Bosnian NGOs that were created by women“ preferred to keep a low public profile and to get thing done behind the scenes” which challenges the idea of what feminist activism should look like.<sup>60</sup> While feminist activism in developing and war-torn countries often gets support from Western donors who sympathize with their plight, these NGOs prefer to operate at the grassroots level and work with individuals. Although the Bosnian NGOs that get the most publicity are ones that work for sexual assault victims and hence want to have their voices heard in the international community, a majority of women’s NGOs do work with local women to help them rebuild their lives. These NGOs “take a more effective course by moving slowly and less visibly, working for long-term change” by identifying a specific need within their community and targeting that need.<sup>61</sup> These less-known NGOs by Western standards have been successfully able to “influence legislation, social programs, and state practices in a number of important ways” by putting pressure on the Bosnian government internally to acknowledge the plight of Bosnian women.<sup>62</sup> These women-led NGOs show that after conflict, women feel empowered and determined to change the circumstances of themselves and those around them by creating an organization that fills a gap in social services.

### **7e. Positive Sex**

Because of an almost exclusive focus on mass rapes endured by Bosnian women during the war and a vast feminist literature focused on sexual violence, to talk about positive sex in times of war has become a challenging and, at times, almost impossible task. Scholar Olivera Simić discusses the need to “reinvent and re-construct Bosnian women’s multiple identities: as

---

<sup>60</sup> Helms. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 115.

<sup>61</sup> Helms. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 116.

<sup>62</sup> Helms. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 243.

marked by victimhood, but also by agency, resilience and utmost courage.”<sup>63</sup> While scholarship around sex during the Bosnian War is centered around trauma and shame, Simić alternatively challenges the notion of sex as nonconsensual and studies the positive and consensual relationships present during the Bosnian war. Simić’s research was prompted by the “recognition that many important narratives of women’s agency in times of war have become silenced and ignored” and that not all women in Bosnia were victimized.<sup>64</sup> What is happening to women during war? Rape, yes, but that is not the only thing. Simić states that “too much emphasis on the criminalization of sexual violence tends to diminish our understanding of women’s capacity to consensually engage in sexual activities and to present as impossible consensual sexual relationships between different ethnic groups in Bosnia, at least during the war.”<sup>65</sup> Simić thus challenges feminist thinkers who believe that they are representing the story of all Bosnian women when they are in actuality only contributing to the damaging stereotype of women as weak and passive through their one-dimensional storytelling. The discussion of positive sex during the Bosnian war also includes discussions on women’s bodily autonomy as they were still able to have consensual sex when they wanted, which gives them agency.

## **7f. Male Victimhood**

Men and boys have been historically and structurally rendered an invisible group of victims in international human rights and policy responses towards conflict-related sexual violence. The study of male victimhood is given little attention due to the latent gendered connotations that come with presenting men as the victim. Because historically men are the ones

---

<sup>63</sup> Olivera Simić. “Challenging Bosnian Women’s Identity as Rape Victims, as Unending Victims: The ‘Other’ Sex in Times of War,” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 13, no. 4, 2012, 23.

Simić. “Challenging Bosnian Women’s Identity as Rape Victims, as Unending Victims: The ‘Other’ Sex in Times of War,” 12.

<sup>65</sup> Simić. “Challenging Bosnian Women’s Identity as Rape Victims, as Unending Victims: The ‘Other’ Sex in Times of War,” 3.

who are fighting in combat and committing violence against women, the idea that men can also be victimized goes against masculine stereotypes. Scholar Natalia Linos questions whether male civilians have also been victims of gender-based violence during conflict. According to Linos, male victims have been “invisible due to stereotypes surrounding masculinity and a culturally permissive approach towards violence perpetrated against men, especially at times of war.”<sup>66</sup>

Scholar Nikolic-Ristanovic reported that the female victims she tried to interview about sexual assault were hesitant to speak about their experiences. Linos also reflects on that point but from a male perspective, and she includes commentary on Bosnian culture as a way to justify why male victimhood is rarely discussed. According to Linos, “given that perpetrators are often male, an extra level of stigma is added when heterosexual men are sexually violated, which may lead to underreporting and reduced health-service seeking behavior.”<sup>67</sup> Thus, Linos utilizes the strict gender norms in Bosnia as a basis for why male victims hardly ever report. Rather than undermine the important work on eliminating violence against women during conflict, this commentary identifies issues of concern for health practitioners working in these situations and highlights possible directions for future research. Because women from the opposite ethnic group were often raped to send a message of defeat to the women’s ethnic group, “it should therefore not be surprising that males from ‘undesirable’ ethnic groups were also assaulted.”<sup>68</sup> When men are assaulted, the intended message is that the masculinity of men forced into feminized roles is thereby diminished to a point from which it is difficult to recover.<sup>69</sup> Forced sexual acts between

---

<sup>66</sup> Natalia Linos. "Rethinking gender-based violence during war: Is violence against civilian men a problem worth addressing," *Elsevier* 68, no. 8, 2009, 3.

<sup>67</sup> Linos. "Rethinking gender-based violence during war: Is violence against civilian men a problem worth addressing," 9.

<sup>68</sup> Elissa Helms. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*. (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 57.

<sup>69</sup> Helms. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 57.

fathers and sons was “a deliberate attempt to break the continuity of the nation as imagined as an endless, and inexplicably female-less, line of male ancestors.”<sup>70</sup> The trauma that many men experienced during the Bosnian war is thus compounded by the fact that their assault is emasculating and dehumanizing. Non-recognition of male victimization is problematic because it has larger implications for not only the victim, his family and his community, but also for how resources are allocated, and judicial recourse is configured for sexual assault survivors. When male victims are ignored, it demonstrates that their trauma is not on par with women’s because they are supposed to be the assaulters, not the assaulted. This in turn not only increases the victimhood trope for women as they are the only ones who can get assaulted, but also enforces the fact that “real men” are not vulnerable or worthy of support following a trauma.

### **8. Meger’s Three Steps of Fetishization of Sexual Violence**

The addition of conflict-related sexual violence to the security agenda reflects what Mathais Albert and Barry Buzan in the Copenhagen School call “securitization.”<sup>71</sup> It involves “constructing a particular political issue (wartime sexual violence) as a security threat, necessitating a militarized response, and proponents view such a move as a necessary step in the ‘widening and deepening’ of the concept of security.”<sup>72</sup> However, the securitization of sexual violence has unintentionally resulted in its fetishization as the conversation about the effect of war on women often stops after sexual assault. Professor Sara Meger offers an in-depth analysis into what it means to fetishize sexual violence and the three steps that occur in the fetishization process. At the end, this process takes the taboo subject and transforms it into something that

---

<sup>70</sup> Dejan Ilic. “Kruna od trnja.” *Pescanik*, March 1. <http://pescanik.net/2009/03/kruna-od-trnja/>.

<sup>71</sup> Mathais Albert, Barry Buzan. “Securitization, sectors and functional differentiation” in *Sage Journals* 42 no. 4. (August 2011), 413.

<sup>72</sup> Sarah Meger, “The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in International Security,” in *International Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (March 2016), 152.

becomes a shared experience between victim and the public. First, “sexual violence is decontextualized from local/global power relations and from the continuum of violence and homogenized as a discrete.” This decontextualizing can best be seen with the fact that wartime sexual violence is viewed as exceptional and more egregious than other forms of gendered violence. Second, it is “objectified as an abject ‘thing’ in media, advocacy, policy, and scholarly discourses, affecting international security agendas and practices.” Third, the “globalized objectification affects local security actors, perpetrators, and victims, often in unanticipated ways.”<sup>73</sup> Thus, sexual violence has become a key commodity in the competition among perpetrators, as well as victims, communities, states, NGOs, and academics, for status recognition and resources. In order to receive this recognition, sexual violence has become a means by which a variety of actors can stand apart from their counterparts. Rewards accrue for those who trade in ‘conflict-related sexual violence’ as a commodity in the political economy of security. Advocates, scholars, and policymakers accrue both political and material capital in its trade, while local perpetrators find increased incentives to use this violence to gain attention, recognition, and status while local victims find value in trading on sexual violence as an effective income-earning strategy. The fetishization and marketization of sexual violence has the ability to undermine effective actions to address this and other types of gender-based violence that occur in times of conflict because those who have the power to create effective action are the ones who are profiting off of it.

### **8a. Three Steps and Bosnian War**

Meger’s Steps of Fetishization can be used to better understand the current discourse surrounding the Bosnian War and why there is a large and uneven focus on the sexual violence

---

<sup>73</sup> Meger, “The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in International Security,” 149.

of women. First, when rape was classified as a war crime, many feminists hailed it as an achievement and a win for women across the globe. However, the approach of the United Nations and the ICTY at the urging of feminists has at times “treated women as part of the same concept of ‘women and children’ that has long been deployed as a mechanism to provide women with special protection they are seen to need during wartime.”<sup>74</sup> Thus, feminist advocates unwittingly denied much of women’s sexual and political agency in ways that have ultimately manifested themselves in the approaches taken by the Tribunal. Because the definition of wartime and genocidal rape was not clearly stated during the first trials at the ICTY, the nuances of wartime rape were overlooked and rape in general was considered to be egregious. This is not to say that rape should not be considered a war crime; on the contrary, this decision truly was a landmark case that made identifying cases of rape in other conflicts, like Rwanda, much easier to convict. However, the attention and rate of advocacy given by feminist scholars to rape in Bosnia mixed all rapes in Bosnia, and violence between and within ethnic groups was overlooked. Overall, a negative effect was that the political and religious aspects of the rapes were homogenized.

Second, sexual violence in Bosnia became a tool and a buzzword for Western media to garner attention and seem topical. NGOs and Western celebrities have long since teamed up to raise awareness for important issues plaguing the world. When these groups seek to tell the stories of victims, the stories may have the unfortunate effect of transforming the violence into an object for visual and intellectual consumption by Western audiences. Perhaps the most exemplary of these was the “Stop Rape Now” campaign initiated by UN Action. Their “Get Cross!” participation appeal “encourages Western audiences to photograph themselves making

---

<sup>74</sup> Engle. “Feminism and Its (Dis)contents: Criminalizing Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 778.

the campaign's signature 'X' gesture with their arms crossed in front of their chest."<sup>75</sup> Celebrities like Charlize Theron and Nicole Kidman are just some of the many celebrities who have posed for photographs with their arms crossed in front of them and encouraged viewers to upload their own images to help "make a difference."<sup>76</sup> Though it is unclear how this campaign or photographs work to address conflict-related sexual violence, the campaign does contribute to the commodification of this violence as something with which audiences can interact and consume. The way that journalists and media outlets reported on the sexual violence in the Bosnian war fashioned a black and white picture that has produced a biased approach in the study of the sexual abuse of women and encouraged fetishization and victimization. The "media's appetite for raped women sobbing out their tales of sexual violation has resulted in a new kind of violence against them and new suffering for these women."<sup>77</sup> For example, foreign journalists' way of approaching women in refugee camps, usually followed by the question "Anyone here who speaks English?" means that there is a clear discord between wanting to hear a woman's story in her own language and vocabulary and wanting to hear it sensationalized by someone who knows what the journalists want to hear.<sup>78</sup> Zejcevic, a Bosnian woman interviewed by scholar Elissa Helms, added that she blamed local media as much as foreign outlets for the perpetuation of the image of oppressed rural women: "All they show are poor Bosnian women with nothing but suffering in this patriarchal world of the village."<sup>79</sup> Because the everyday person is more likely to get their information about what is going on in the world through a news article or television news, it is very important to be aware of the types of images that is being

---

<sup>75</sup> Meger, "The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in International Security," 152

<sup>76</sup> "Stop Rape Now," United Nations Action, accessed January 11, 2020, <http://www.stoprapenow.org/>.

<sup>77</sup> Nikolic-Ristanovic, *Women, Violence, and War*, 42.

<sup>78</sup> Nikolic-Ristanovic, *Women, Violence, and War*, 42.

<sup>79</sup> Helms. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 26.

produced by media outlets. The simplistic narrative of “rape as a weapon of war” employed by media, advocacy, and policy contributes to the objectification of sexual violence. Within this narrative, there are clearly delineated “good guys” and “bad guys,” victims and perpetrators.

Third, there seemed to be a rush among NGOs and journalists over who could report on the sexual violence in Bosnia first. After the ICTY deemed sexual violence a war crime, the attention on sexual violence was less about why the rapes had occurred and what was being done to prevent future sexual violence in wars across the world. Instead, multiple NGOs were created for the sole purpose to get money from Western citizens so that they could “help the victims of Bosnia find their feet once more.”<sup>80</sup> Additionally, “reports on wartime sexual violence seem to compete for ever more graphic and outrageous stories of the brutality of sexual violence, focusing on the scale of the violence (for example, how many hundreds, thousands, or hundreds of thousands of women have been affected).”<sup>81</sup> Though highlighting the scale of sexual violence brought the issue to the attention of governments, the intent of these reports has been to present sufficiently brutal and descriptive stories of the violence without considering its underlying causes. The rewards that were accrued as a result of the fetishization of sexual violence can be identified in multiple ways. For journalists, those that used sensationalized and graphic writing were more likely to get more views and reads on their articles than those that focused on the history of sexual violence in war or wrote about the Bosnian War in general. Thus, for at least that point in time, that newspaper was more profitable than its counterparts. Local victims of sexual violence in Bosnia have also been able to go to their local NGOs or petition the Bosnian government for money or resources if they were sexually assaulted. While the ability to get restitution for sexual assault is a positive thing, “there has been an influx of Bosnian women who

---

<sup>80</sup> Helms. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 28.

<sup>81</sup> Meger, “The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in International Security,” 152.

have claimed to have been sexually assaulted and now are demanding money from NGOs that cannot support every woman.”<sup>82</sup> When this happens, sexual violence becomes a method for women to earn an income and it has the potential of hindering their ability to get jobs or other income-earning strategies.

### 9. Representations of Bosnian Women in Western Media

Because many Americans get their daily news from their newspapers, both digitally and in print, it is important to analyze the content of these newspapers and the ways in which they present Bosnian women. The images presented and the vocabulary can have a large influence over how Americans view and understand the conflict and can influence whether they view Bosnian women through a victimhood lens. In order to carry out this analysis, newspapers from three major companies were chosen: The Washington Post, the New York Times, and the Chicago Tribune because of their large readership and popularity.

A Washington Post article titled *Bosnian Women Wait for Men Who May Never Return* was written by Christin Spolar and published in 1996. During the interview with a widow, the Bosnian woman is described as “crying softly” and “standing small and shaking” as she describes how terrified she is at the possibility of being raped without a husband.<sup>83</sup> The accompanying image is of a woman standing in a field with a scarf wrapped around her head. The angle of the image makes it appear as if the woman is very small amongst the foliage of the field, and it gives the allusion that she is lost in the scenery. Another article titled *The Rapes in Bosnia: Muslim Schoolgirl Gives Her Account* states, “According to the Bosnian government, more than 30,000 women have been raped, with some as young as 12 years old.”<sup>84</sup> This statistic

---

<sup>82</sup> Nikolic-Ristanovic, *Women, Violence, and War*, 56.

<sup>83</sup> Christine Spolar. “Bosnian Women Wait for Men Who May Never Return.” *The Washington Post*, May 9, 1996.

<sup>84</sup> Peter Maass. “The Rapes in Bosnia: Muslim Schoolgirl Gives Her Account.” *The Washington Post*, December 1992.

is interesting to note because the Bosnian government has been infamous for refusing to provide accurate numbers for the amount of rapes that have occurred, in part because it is difficult to estimate and in part because the government does not wish to disclose that information. That statistic paired with the line “as young as 12 years old” almost sensationalizes it and makes it seem as if a majority of girls and women in Bosnia were victims of sexual assault. The article also states that “Serbs employed rape as a tactic to ‘boost morale’ among the victorious fighters,” and this statement enforces the fact that it was the Serbs who were the perpetrators and the Bosnians who were the victims despite both committing acts of violence against the other group.<sup>85</sup> Also, within the designation of “Serb” there multiple religious and ethnic factions; thus, it is not accurate to state that Serbs in general raped Bosnian women because that statement lacks nuance. This lack differentiation between ethnic groups matters because it overall demonstrates a lack of cultural and historical understanding of what it means to belong to one group over another. It also gives the reader a very simplified understanding of the conflict in which the war is seen as a strictly Bosnian versus Serbian war; however, there were multiple factions, countries, and paramilitary units involved that did not fall under the Bosnian or Serbian dichotomy. Another Washington Post article titled *Serbs Raped 20,000, EC Team Says: Assaults in Bosnia Part of ‘Cleansing’* written by William Drozdiak also only discusses the conflict as Bosnian versus Serbian, stating “Serb forces have raped up to 20,000 Slavic Muslim women and girls in Bosnia” as a way to promote ethnic cleansing.<sup>86</sup> The article also states that the methods used by the Serbian men has been “cruel, barbaric, and inhumane,” citing interviews with Bosnian women victims as evidence that the Serbian males are the perpetrators and Bosnian women are

---

<sup>85</sup> Maass. “The Rapes in Bosnia: Muslim Schoolgirl Gives Her Account.”

<sup>86</sup> William Drozdiak. “Serbs Raped 20,000, EC Team Says: Assaults in Bosnia Part of ‘Cleansing’.” *The Washington Post*, January 1993.

the victims.<sup>87</sup> By explicitly stating “Serbian males,” the article enforces the “men as perpetrators of all war crimes and women as victims” dogma that does not allow any overlap.

A New York Times article titled *Bosnian War Trial Focuses on Sex Crimes: Women Speak of Brutality, and Secret Shame, to a U.N. Tribunal* was written by Marlise Simons and published in 2001. The article focuses on the women who spoke out against Dragoljub Kunarac and Zoran Vukovic for sexual violence at the Hague. An interesting aspect of this article is that the word “victim” is used eighteen times to describe the different women who spoke.<sup>88</sup> Because their names were not used to protect their identity, the effect of the word “victim” being used so many times makes the word stick in the reader’s heads. This can cause them to associate the word “victim” with Bosnian women in general, especially if introduced to the word in other sources of media. Another New York Times article titled *In Death, Sarajevo Woman Becomes a Symbol* uses a picture of the deceased crying and sitting on the ground to provide a visual image for the woman that they deemed a “symbol.”<sup>89</sup> According to the article, she was “Tuesday’s representative image of thousands of people who have fallen victim to the shelling;” thus, a crying woman lying on the ground is seen as representative of every man and woman in Sarajevo.<sup>90</sup>

An article in the Chicago Tribune titled *Bosnian Tragedy* was written by Kim Hirsh and Abbie Jones and published in 1993. This article praises Western NGOs for “doing their part and seeking to help Bosnian women get the help that they deserve” and to “help unwanted babies resulting from those rapes in Bosnia.”<sup>91</sup> The article also states that over 20,000 women and girls

---

<sup>87</sup> Drozdiak. “Serbs Raped 20,000, EC Team Says: Assaults in Bosnia Part of ‘Cleansing’.”

<sup>88</sup> Marlise Simons. “Bosnian War Trial Focuses on Sex Crimes: Women Speak of Brutality, and Secret Shame, to a U.N. Tribunal.” *The New York Times*, February 2001.

<sup>89</sup> Chuck Sudetic. “In Death, Sarajevo Woman Becomes a Symbol.” *The New York Times*, January 1994.

<sup>90</sup> Sudetic. “In Death, Sarajevo Woman Becomes a Symbol.”

<sup>91</sup> Kim Hirsh and Abbie Jones. “Bosnian Tragedy.” *The Chicago Tribune*, February 1993.

have been raped; however, they provide no citation for that statistic and instead rely on large, eye-catching numbers to elicit emotions from readers.<sup>92</sup> By framing Western NGOs as the saving grace for Bosnian women, this article enforces the idea that the West, specifically the United States, are the only ones who can come in and solve the Bosnian women's problems. Another article from the Chicago Tribune titled *Shamed Muslims killing rape victims* states that "there has been an acceptance of rape because it is spreading so rapidly [in Bosnia]" and that "a brother will kill his sister if she has been raped."<sup>93</sup> While this article does describe how some women, due to their sexual assault, are being murdered by their families because of the shame brought upon them, there is no discussion on the affect that sexual assault has on Muslim family units or the larger connotations of families killing sisters and daughters. Instead, the article focuses only on the fact that instances of rape are spreading, so familial killings are also spreading. Without providing any context about the intersection between sexual assault and religion, this article portrays Muslim Bosnians in an extremely negative light by clearly stating that many families are killing the women who have been assaulted. This is problematic because it "others" the Muslim Bosnians and makes their plight less sympathetic when one reads about familial killings.

## 10. Conclusion

The news articles all reflect themes found in the earlier critique of the media in that they present Bosnian women through a lens of victimhood. The images chosen to accompany the articles for the most part portrayed women in signs of weakness, either crouching, crying, or lying down. While these women are by no means representative of all Bosnian women, when they are the images chosen in multiple Western articles it can enforce the idea that all Bosnian women are weak and emotional. Also, multiple articles that were analyzed used hyperbolic

---

<sup>92</sup> Hirsh, "Bosnian Tragedy."

<sup>93</sup> "Shamed Muslims killing rape victims." *The Chicago Tribune*, February 1993.

statistics that sought to catch reader's attention and make them gasp in awe at the atrocities happening in a country so far away. None of the articles discussed the political or religious reasonings behind the conflict; instead, the articles only discussed the war in terms of women and girls who had been sexually assaulted. This omission could be a result of bias due to the types of articles that were chosen for this case study. Because not every article could be included, only those articles that included a photograph and discussed Bosnian women specifically were chosen for this case study. Yet, despite this possible bias it is still important to acknowledge that these articles exclude any discussion of politics or religion, despite these two overarching topics being the basis of the conflict. This harkens back to the second step of fetishization in that media outlets use the sexual violence as clickbait for their Western readers, understanding that including discussions on Bosnian politics and religious factions may deter many readers from the article because of its seemingly dense nature. The downside of this is that only one side of the war is shown, and a reader may associate all Bosnian women with the victims that they read about because those are the only representations that are being presented. Overall, major news outlets have a responsibility to present articles that are factual and devoid of any stereotypical or Orientalized imaginaries that make their subjects seem "Other" to their readers. If this responsibility is not honored, these articles become carriers of misinformation and bigotry that can have lasting influences on the way that Americans understand Bosnian women.

Overall, this research interrogates the concept of war as a gendered construct. By not addressing women's various roles, particularly as perpetrators, in scholarly literature and the media, it makes war seem as a strictly male endeavor used to solve conflict. In actuality, both men and women engage in violence during warfare, some against their will and some of their own volition. With the Bosnian War, only discussing Bosnian women in terms of their sexual

assault victimizes them and forces their assault to become a part of their identity. Fetishization is typically the sexual fascination with things that are not inherently sexual; however, rape in the Bosnian war has been subjected to an increased level of fascination and obsession by scholars and the everyday person alike. When scholars and journalists fetishize sexual violence, they are decontextualizing the sexual violence and making these traumas accessible to foreigners who are drawn in to reports of the “hundreds of thousands” of women raped in Bosnia. Bosnian women are thus viewed as “Other” as the information about Bosnian women in the war is primarily framed around their sexual assault. Ignoring the other roles that Bosnian women held in the war has larger repercussions for how one understands women and warfare in general and can promote erasure of women from the historical narrative. When Bosnian women are not a part of telling their own story, their agency is stripped and their reputation on the foreign stage is at the mercy of journalists and scholars.

### **10a. Solutions**

While it is important to recognize the shortcomings of scholars and the media, it is also important to acknowledge that there are solutions so that the discourse surrounding sexual violence in Bosnia is one that includes the narrative of Bosnian women on their own terms. One solution would be for scholars to hold each other accountable and publish their critiques of other scholar’s work on the Bosnian war, specifically how they handle sexual assault. For example, in her book *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, scholar Elissa Helms actively calls out multiple feminist scholars including Slobodanka Konstantineovic-Vilic, for how they went about their interview processes with the Bosnian women. Helms stated that there is a lack of accountability as the entire interviews with the women are not published; thus, there is no way for readers to know if what they are reading

is coming from the women themselves or the interviewer's interpretation.<sup>94</sup> Because members of the public generally trust what they read in scholarly works as there is an insinuation that published work is always accurate, it is up to other scholars to take a stand and acknowledge when their peer's work is presenting a one-sided portrayal of Bosnian women.

Another solution would be for scholars to adopt a practice called "transformative dialogue" when conducting interviews. Transformative dialogue in interviewing is centered around letting the subject choose what they want to talk about versus the interviewer using specific and leading questions to obtain their desired responses. Transformative dialogue operates more like a public forum in which the interview is an open conversation instead of a strict interview format. With this approach, the power dynamic between interviewer and interviewee is diminished as the interviewee is given the opportunity to discuss what they think is the most pertinent about their experiences. This mechanism could prove useful with the Bosnian case study because it would allow for a more nuanced understanding of women's lived experiences during the war. The women are also in control of the conversation; thus, they have an active role in how their story is being told.

---

<sup>94</sup> Helms. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 65.

## 11. Works Cited

- Adugna, Minale. *Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: a Case Study of Their Role during the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: publisher not identified, 1997
- Albert, Mathias, and Barry Buzan. "Securitization, Sectors and Functional Differentiation." *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4 (2011): 413–25.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010611418710>.
- Barth, Elise F., 2002, *Peace as Disappointment: The Reintegration of Female Soldiers in Post Conflict Societies, a Comparative Study from Africa*, Oslo: International Peace Research Institute (PRIO)..
- "Biljana Plavšić: Serbian Iron Lady." *BBC News*, February 27, 2003.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1108604.stm>.
- Brown, Matthew. "Review Essay Women and Warfare: Recent Literature and New Directions in Research." *Feminist Review* 79, no. 1 (2005): 172–75.  
<https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.fr.9400214>.
- Cosgrove, Justin. "Bosnian Serb Woman Indicted for War Crimes." *Jurist*, January 31, 2017.  
<https://www.jurist.org/news/2017/01/bosnian-serb-woman-indicted-for-war-crimes/>.
- Coulter, Chris, Mariam Persson, and Mats Utas. *Young Female Fighters in African Wars: Conflict and Its Consequences*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2008.
- Daalder, Ivo H. "Decision to Intervene: How the War in Bosnia Ended." Brookings. Brookings, July 28, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/decision-to-intervene-how-the-war-in-bosnia-ended/>.
- Drozdiak, William. "Serbs Raped 20,000, EC Team Says: Assaults in Bosnia Part of 'Cleansing'." *The Washington Post*, January 1993.
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke. "On Beautiful Souls, Just Warriors and Feminist Consciousness." *Womens Studies International Forum* 5, no. 3-4 (1982): 341–48.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(82\)90043-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(82)90043-7).
- Engle, Karen. "Feminism and Its (Dis)Contents: Criminalizing Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *The American Journal of International Law* 99, no. 4 (2005): 778.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3396669>.

- Enloe, Cynthia. *Nemo's War, Emma's War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War*. University of California Press, 2010.
- Fitzpatrick, P. "It isn't easy being Bilijana." *Central Europe Review* 22, no. 2 (2000).
- Gentry, Caron E., and Laura Sjoberg. *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Womens Violence in Global Politics*. London: Zed Books, 2015.
- Goodman, Philomena. *Women, Sexuality and War*. New York: Palgrave, 2002
- Goldstein, Joshua S. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009.
- Grant De Pauw, Linda. "Women in Combat: The Revolutionary War Experience." *Armed Forces & Society* 7, no. 2 (1981): 209–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x8100700204>.
- Helms, Elissa. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.
- Hirsh, Kim and Abbie Jones. "Bosnian Tragedy." *The Chicago Tribunal*, February 1993.
- Hoganson, Kristin L. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, 44-45
- Ilic, Dejan. "Kruna od trnja." *Pescanik*, March 1. <http://pescanik.net/2009/03/kruna-od-trnja/>.
- Klingebiel, S., I. Gärke, C. Kreidler, S. Lobner & H. Schütte, Promoting the Reintegration of Former Female and Male Combatants in Eritrea, German Development Institute, Berlin, 1995.
- Kumar, Krishna. *Women and Civil War: Impact, Organisations and Action*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001.
- Levy, Barry S., and Victor W. Sidel. *War and Public Health*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Lindsey, Charlotte, "Women and War", *International Review of the Red Cross*, (2000):561-579.
- Linos, Natalia. "Rethinking gender-based violence during war: Is violence against civilian men a problem worth addressing," *Elsevier* 68, no. 8 (2009).
- Lischer, Sarah Kenyon. *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.

- Maass, Peter. "The Rapes in Bosnia: Muslim Schoolgirl Gives Her Account." *The Washington Post*, December 1992.
- Mate, Rekopantswe. "Rwanda -- Not so Innocent: When Women Become Killers." *Southern African Feminist Review* 3, no. 2 (Dec 31, 1999).
- Mazurana, Dyan, 2004, *Women in Armed Opposition Groups Speak on War, Protection and Obligations under International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law*, Geneva: Geneva Call
- Meger, Sara. "The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in International Security." *International Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2016): 149–59.
- Mulalic, Muhidin. "Fostering of Civil Society by Muslim Womens NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 34, no. 4 (February 2014): 438–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2014.984905>.
- Pankhurst, Richard, and Girma Selassie Asfaw. "An Amharic War-Song of Emperor Tewodros's Soldiers." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 18, no. 1 (1985).
- "Pedagogical Unit." Taytu Betul pedagogical unit 4 | Women, n.d. <https://en.unesco.org/womeninafrica/taytu-betul/pedagogical-unit/4>.
- Prusina, Jovana. "Female War Criminals: Untold Story of the Balkan Conflicts." *Balkan Insight*, May 8, 2019. <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/11/30/female-war-criminals-untold-story-of-the-1990s-conflicts-11-29-2018/>.
- Nikolić-Ristanović, Vesna. *Women, Violence and War Wartime Victimization of Refugees in the Balkans*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001.
- "Shamed Muslims killing rape victims." *The Chicago Tribunal*, February 1993.
- Schnabel, Albrecht, and Anara Tabyshalieva. *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*. New York, NY: United Nations, 2013.
- Simić, Olivera. "Challenging Bosnian Women's Identity as Rape Victims, as Unending Victims: The 'Other' Sex in Times of War," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 13, no. 4 (2012).
- Simons, Marlise. "Bosnian War Trial Focuses on Sex Crimes: Women Speak of Brutality, and Secret Shame, to a U.N. Tribunal." *The New York Times*, February 2001.

- Sjoberg, Laura. *Women as Wartime Rapists: beyond Sensation and Stereotyping*. NY, NY: New York University Press, 2017.
- Spolar, Christine. "Bosnian Women Wait for Men Who May Never Return." *The Washington Post*, May 9, 1996.
- Stevens, Katya. Research Interview by Rebecca Jacobi. December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Audio, 35:25.
- Stiglmayer, Alexandra. *Mass Rape: the War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.
- Sudetic, Chuck. "In Death, Sarajevo Woman Becomes a Symbol." *The New York Times*, January 1994.
- "UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict." Stop Rape Now, n.d.  
<http://www.stopraperow.org/>.
- Waller, James. *Becoming Evil How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Wueger, Diana. "Women in War, Women in Peace." *The Atlantic*, November 8, 2011.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/11/women-in-war-women-in-peace/248078/>
- Zarkov, Dubravka, "War Rapes in Bosnia: On Masculinity, Femininity and Power of the Rape Victim Identity", *Tijdschrift voor Criminologie* 39, no. 2, 1997, 140-151.