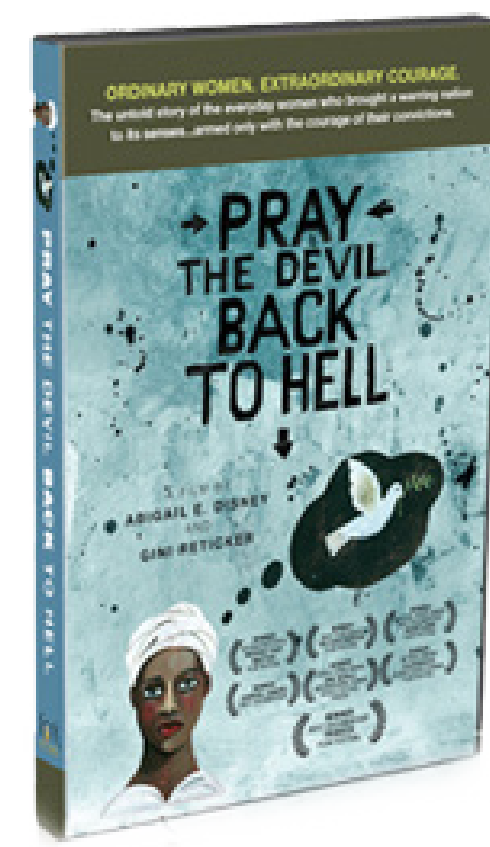


The **[HIDDEN]** Costs of War: Rape Culture Awareness and The Effects of Transitional Justice on Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

MorganAnn Malone '23 | Advisor: Dr. Michelle Leiby | Major: Political Science



Abstract

This independent study project examined the following research question: Does the robustness of transitional justice programs have an impact on the level and quality of redress for victims of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)?



The subsequent hypothesis crafted for this project reads as follows: **The more robust a transitional justice program is in terms of countering rape culture, the higher the level and quality of victim redress will be.** The methodology for this project includes a case selection process by which I examined various case studies that experienced severe levels of conflict-related sexual violence between 1989 and 2019, followed by a narrowing-down process that eventually led to my comparative case selection. After selecting the case studies – Sierra Leone and Liberia – I then examined both countries' truth and reconciliation commissions (TRC) after their respective civil conflicts with a set of data schema, evaluating whether each TRC was robust in terms of its level of rape culture awareness. I then used a similar coding schema for the dependent variable, in which I examined levels of CRSV victim redress and reform in the years after the truth commissions' completion. Finally, I found that while both countries had significant margins of error in terms of a robust, fleshed out truth commission, **Sierra Leone saw slightly higher levels of victim healing and redress post-civil war as compared with Liberia.**

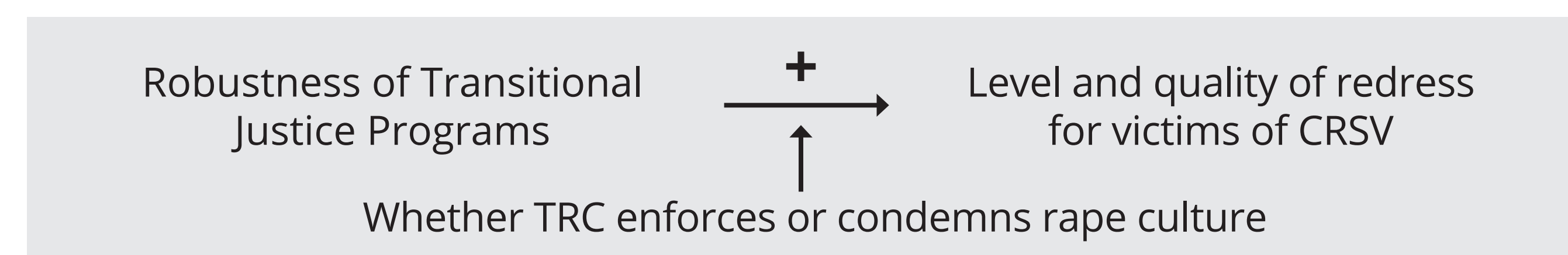
Why I chose this project:

- Passion and interest about the rights of women on an international level
- Case study selection also rooted in College of Wooster Political Science Class
 - War and Politics on Film w/Dr. Jeff Lantis
 - Film: *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* about the Liberian Civil War period  
 - The film discussed the grassroots efforts that women in Liberia started to ultimately end the decades-long era of war in the country, specifically through the movement entitled the "Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace" founded by Leymah Gbowee in 2003.

Key Terms:

- **Conflict related sexual violence/CRSV:** "rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys within the context of ongoing war or conflict" (United Nations Peacekeeping)
- **Transitional Justice:** "the conception of justice associated with periods of political change, characterized by legal responses to confront the wrongdoings of repressive political regimes" (Rubli 2012, 4)
- **Rape Culture:** a social, political, economic, and governmental system that allows and continues the normalization of rape and sexual assault within a society (Gaskin 2020, 137)

Hypothesis



Research Design and Methodology



Independent Variable Questions: IV → robustness of transitional justice program [in accordance w/awareness of Rape Culture – whether Rape Culture is enforced or condemned] (Data schema)

- Prioritization level of victims' voices
- Validation level of victims' voices
- Whether perps or victims are stereotyped based on various demographical characteristics
- Whether there is a designated team w/in TRC for specific focus of combatting CRSV

Dependent Variable Questions: DV → level and quality of redress for victims of CRSV

- High/Medium/Low rating based on level of reported victim redress
- Data schema questions
 - What would be observed evidence of victims of CRSV who have gotten redress and healing?
 - In contrast, what would be the observed evidence of victims who have not received redress and experienced healing?



Case Studies: Sierra Leone and Liberia

War	Victim Redress	Years of War	#SVAC 3 yrs	Robustness Truth Comm	Regime type	GDP Per Capita	% Female Legislators	% Women in Labor Force	% Women w/ Secondary Education
 Sierra Leone Civil War	Yes - TC	11 years, 1991- 2002	5 years (1997- 2001)	Less robust	Dictatorship (during war)	\$180	13% (national level)	49.9%	34%
 Liberian Civil War	Yes - TC	4 years, 1999- 2003	2 years (2001- 2003)	More robust	Dictatorship (during war)	\$161.56	13% (national level)	46.9%	44%

Findings

Summary

- Null hypothesis rejected – that there is no impact on the robustness of transitional justice programs on CRSV victim redress
- Alternative hypothesis supported – that there is a higher level and quality of victim redress found with transitional justice programs that are more robust
- Comparative case studies conclusion
 - Sierra Leone - Medium
 - Liberia - Low
- Overall, Sierra Leone saw higher levels of more concrete results in terms of victim redress due to higher levels of follow-up on policies, as well as higher reports of social integration and resilience mechanism

Case Study	Safe access to TRC	Challenging Victim Stigma	Investments/ Recommendations for victims of CRSV	Overall High/Medium/ Low rating
 Sierra Leone	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
 Liberia	Medium	Low	Medium	Low

Lingering Questions

1. What can we infer about sexual violence advocacy on the global stage?
2. For a modern example → how then can we use this data to examine and make inferences about the cases of conflict-related sexual violence against women during the current Ukraine-Russia conflict?

