

Tillers of the Horizon: Projecting Public Spaces by Women in Post-Conflict Rwanda

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Abstract

In *Tillers of the Horizon*, we propose to investigate public spaces in Rwanda as a site of women's leadership in community planning. Rwanda's hilly earth, once farmed to the horizon and still the world's second most densely populated country, has more recently been converted to a landscape of migration and resettlement, mainly as a result of the 1994 genocide. This shift, combined with a dramatic change in demographics (women now constitute the majority of the population and the adult workforce, as well as holding nearly half the seats in Parliament) has markedly changed the gender-balance of Rwanda's post-conflict community-planning environment.

The first phase of this project compiled research done by team members regarding public space claims and definition in Beirut, Lebanon; Izmir, Turkey; Tijuana, Mexico; and rural El Salvador. In the second phase, team members will travel to Rwanda to present these findings for comment and examination in the Rwandan context. The team will travel, with Rwandan collaborators, to rural, suburban, and urban sites to investigate women's impact on public space definition. In the third phase, site inventories will be compiled, including annotated drawings and a media archive of oral histories and local commentary on public space in present-day Rwanda. The information gathered will be presented, along with projections for future models, in the form of graduate seminars, conference presentations, and ultimately, a book with accompanying digital media, to be published both in print and online. Of the total project budget of \$20,760, we are requesting BSA research grant funding of \$10,320 to partially support the second and third phases of the project.