



INTRODUCTION

Women's storytelling serves as a powerful tool for bringing justice to atrocities involving sexual exploitation, specifically Comfort Women, Holocaust survivors from World War II, and modern-day human trafficking survivors. By analyzing firsthand accounts, memoirs, and written stories, this study aims to understand how personal experiences provide a voice for survivors of sexual exploitation and enact meaningful change in government laws about exploitation. It is crucial that the voices of marginalized women survivors gain recognition and justice from the governments involved. **Stories have the power to survive through time and silence, giving power to the voiceless, and inciting change at a local or global level. In conclusion, this study will highlight the importance of storytelling as a method for justice.**



RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

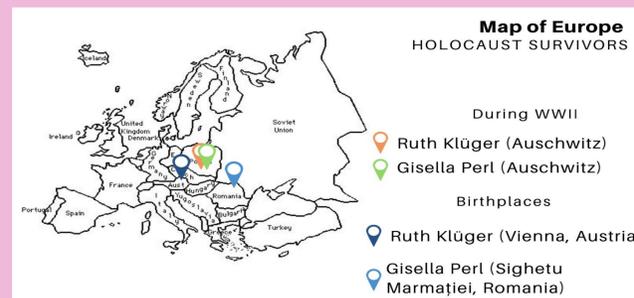
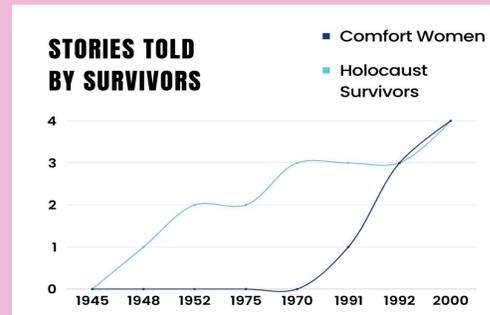
The data collected in this study was not done using survey or experiment, but was a large culmination of qualitative data into a complete picture or meta-study. The population is three Comfort Women in Japan and two women Holocaust Survivors during World War II. Qualitative data was collected through reading testimonies and listening to interviews. Quantitative data was observed when documenting the number of women impacted by lawsuits against the government.

- Step 1: Research the history of each country in which the women were born (pre-war, during war, independence *if applicable, and the society/culture) and find the goal of the oppressor (Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany)
- Step 2: Case study on 5 women (East/Southeast Asia and Europe) through their stories and testimonies: Pre-war, During war, Post-war, Impact of Story, and Specific testimonies on stories
- Step 3: Compare the women from the different regions. Understand the similarities and differences in their experiences, complexities with sharing stories because of cultural stigma, and cross-analyze their stories with historical events.
- Step 4: Demonstrate how effective storytelling brought justice to the victims across multinational contexts. Also, evaluate modern-day law for modern sexual exploitation survivors.

DATA AND FINDINGS

Vulnerabilities Faced by Survivors

- Poverty ●
- Pre-war Japanese occupation ●
- Death in family ●
- Foster child ●
- Faced antisemitism ●



SURVIVOR	REGION	CONTRIBUTING VULNERABILITIES	STORYTELLING	LAWS CHANGED
Ruth Klüger	Vienna, Austria	●	Memoir: <i>Still Alive</i>	her book is in high school curricula in Austria and Germany
Gisella Perl	Sighetu Marmatiei, Romania	●	Published: <i>I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz</i> ● also 9 nine papers on vaginal infections	paint a picture of SS officer Grese when the notorious guard was put on trial and subsequently executed
Maria Rosa Henson	Pasay, Philippines	●	First Filipino woman to share her story ● LILPA Filipina	Japan created the Asian Women's Fund (AWF)
Kim Hak-soon	Jilin, China	● ●	First public testimony of survivors	her testimony - contributed to discussions at the UN and international human rights forums
Yong-soo Lee	Daegu, Japanese Korea	● ●	Testified: United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs	led to the House passing a resolution which asked the Japanese government to apologize formally to former comfort women

Comfort Women Kim Hak-soon



Holocaust Survivor Ruth Klüger



CONCLUSIONS

The overwhelming challenges faced by women when coming forward with their stories were universal. Starting in the 1990s, the comfort women attempted to share their stories; however, judges dismissed their cases on the Statute of Limitations. Finally, there was progress, the most notable case was the 2000 War Crimes Tribunal, where they found Emperor Hirohito and Japan guilty and responsible for violating international laws, and ordered a range of reparations to acknowledge survivors. Yet, by coming forward, many survivors faced rejection from their own communities upon returning home. Comfort women did not share their stories earlier because they faced stigma and rejection. In Europe, the women shared their stories, but their stories were minimized. The stories of women Holocaust survivors focused on their survival rather than the exploitation during the war. Today, survivors of modern-day human trafficking share their stories as a way to heal, regain their dignity, and demonstrate their strength. As a result of survivors coming forward, in 2000, the U.S. Congress passed a law that identified exploitation as human trafficking.

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

Imperial Japan was attempting to colonize Asia into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, with the vision of liberating countries from European colonization and the Japan leading Asia as the superior race. Yong-soo Lee, Maria Rosa Henson, and Kim Hak-soon were three survivors of the Comfort Women System established by Japan. Growing up in vulnerable communities, all three women were taken by Japanese soldiers and forced to serve as Comfort women, and raped against their will by soldiers. Years later, they came together to fight for retribution for these atrocities and became members of a large movement against the Japanese government in the early 1990s into the 2000s.

*Key impact of these women coming forward with their stories:

- U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution formally asking the Japanese government to apologize to former comfort women.
- Japan reversed its historical stance, publicly accepting responsibility and admitting their military's role in managing comfort stations.

In Europe during World War II, Hitler was attempting to expand *Lebensraum* for the superior Aryan race. During the Holocaust, women were subjected to sexual violence, exploitation and often raped by German officers. Ruth Klüger and Gisella Perl were survivors who shared their stories. As a gynecologist, Perl provided life-saving care for women who became pregnant from this abuse, to prevent them from being murdered for their pregnancies. After the war, Klüger was determined to become an academic.

*Key Impact of these women:

- *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz*, a paper, was published, supported the prosecution of a Nazi officer.
- *Still Alive*, a memoir, was implemented into the European curriculum for lessons on the Holocaust.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

***Special thanks to

- Dr. Richard Matthew (UCI)
- Helen Stiver (Everfree)
- Jennifer Lusser (IAEA)
- Jun Shen (LBHS)
- Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (Tokyo, Japan)

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