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**Memorial Sites as Centers for Public Memory, Space, and Healing: The Case for the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial Center and Cemetery to the Victims of the 1995 Genocide**

While the carnage wrought by armies and militias during the 1992-1995 Bosnian War may have ended, the conflict over human rights, remembrance, history, and memory continue to be waged in the fragile socio-political terrain that defines contemporary Bosnia i Herzegovina (BiH). This painful contradiction is most apparent in the communal and national battles over the creation of memorials at former sites of atrocity.

Specifically, I explore the contested memories of the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial Center and Cemetery to the Victims of the 1995 Genocide (SPMCC) and the claims, in the forms of mnemonic lenses, made by the victims and perpetrators. This vigorous and contentious debate includes whether or not the killings at Srebrenica, were in fact, genocide or a mass atrocity committed by soldiers against soldiers within the traditional realm of war. Other key questions center on the symbolism of the site of atrocities themselves. Can Bosnian sites of atrocity address socio-political issues and reconcile the meaning of identity as it relates to the ongoing hatred and ethnic partition that divide BiH's citizenry? Can past atrocities at these sites help BiH reconcile the complex and bloody narrative of its wartime history amongst both victims and perpetrators? What are the constructive and destructive aspects of memorialization especially in communities where victims and perpetrators live alongside one another?

Through the lens of memorialization, I review the SPMCC's successes, failures, opportunities, and challenges in its role as 1) a public memorial connecting its violent past to its tentative present (focusing exclusively on the Bosniak narrative of the genocide); 2) a societal healing mechanism; and 3) an international and educational research center.

**Laura Cohen** is a second year Ph.D. student in Rutgers University's Division of Global Affairs. Her research focuses on sites of atrocity as centers of public memory, space, and healing and their role in connecting the past to the present in contemporary post-conflict societies. Her broader areas of scholarly inquiry also include genocide prevention, human rights and transitional justice. She was also selected as a History Education Network Graduate Student Scholar at Mount Royal University's conference *Understanding Atrocities* (Canada; February 2014).