



Public History and Memory-Making in Post-Conflict Gabon: An Analytical Framework

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Abstract

Public history and memory-making in post-conflict societies are critical for societal healing and reconciliation. In Gabon, a former French colony that experienced political instability and violence, understanding how public historians engage with memory can inform strategies for community cohesion. The study employs a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with historians, community leaders, and local residents to explore the narratives of historical events and how these are represented in public spaces. Additionally, archival research is conducted to gather primary documents related to post-conflict history and memory-making initiatives. Interviews revealed that while there were efforts to commemorate significant historical moments, there was a gap in inclusive representation, with some marginalized groups feeling excluded from the official narratives. The proportion of public spaces dedicated to historical events was found to be uneven across different regions. The analysis suggests that for effective memory-making and societal healing, it is crucial to involve diverse voices and ensure inclusivity in public history projects. This can help bridge gaps between communities affected by conflict and promote a shared understanding of the past. Public historians should prioritise inclusive representation in their work, ensuring that all segments of society feel acknowledged and included in historical narratives. Additionally, there is a need for more equitable distribution of resources to public spaces dedicated to history.

Keywords: *Postcolonial Studies, Memory Theory, Public History, Heritage Management, Cultural Heritage, Oral History, Indigenous Knowledge Systems*

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