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Guest Editors' Introduction to the Special Issue: Towards the Prevention of Genocide

This issue offers an overview of recent developments in genocide prevention that are taking place in our international and intellectual landscapes. It is dedicated to analyzing the latest debates, trends and dynamics in an effort to appreciate a more systematic outlook of the field as well as to reflect upon more effective genocide prevention strategies. There is a need for linking knowledge of genocidal violence indicators and a proper course of action. There were two important moments when human collective consciousness reaffirmed its dedication to *Never Again* in the form of international consensus and commitment. First was when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. The second took place in September 2005, when the UN General Assembly adopted its Outcome Document acknowledging the sovereign responsibility for protecting the populations from mass atrocity crimes. These are the two key documents that underlie any discussions on genocide prevention, as an expression of our collective human will trying to overcome our unfortunate propensity to willfully neglect our responsibility to prevent genocide. This issue starts with these two special contributions, highlighting how we are making progress in this regard by practicing and implementing the agreed upon norms.

At the nexus of knowing genocidal risks and taking proper actions, it is important to highlight the efforts by Adama Dieng, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and Jennifer Welsh, United Nations Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, who present in this issue the conceptual overview and the practical application of the *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes*. The original *Framework* was released in 2009, and the current edition is a significant contribution to our attempts to operationalize the prevention work. While the strength of this instrument will ultimately hinge on its consistent and widespread use, both in the UN systems and national governments, the close scrutiny of the *Framework* signals the need for consistent investment in data gathering and verification both by the national and interactional actors. The genocide prevention can be effective only if it is predicated on sharing knowledge, tools and practices in networks of actors. The recent testimony of this orientation is the growth of the *Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes* (GAAMAC), which concluded its second successful gathering in Manila in February 2016. It is a state-led initiative to prevent mass atrocity crimes (not only the crime of genocide), serving as a platform for exchange and dissemination of learning and good practices in order to develop national strategies and mechanisms for atrocity prevention.

Another contribution comes from Ernesto Verdeja who complements the *Framework* by the Office of the UN Special Advisers by providing an overview of the current forecasting models that are used to predict the onset of genocide and mass killings. He surveys the increasingly sophisticated field of risk assessment and early warning practices, while evaluating how accurate they actually are, a question that is of particular interest in this issue. Prevention is deeply linked to a particular form of knowledge: politically relevant knowledge. Who is creating this knowledge? Who is making it relevant? To know accurately the early warning signs of violence in complex situations, and understand them not only early but also properly so as to employ swift and decisive measures, is a challenge Verdeja revisits. Both the risk assessment and early warning approaches are part of the prevention paradox: *we can prevent only what we know and understand*. His article situates discussions on the current forecasting models in terms of their applicability to actual prevention.

Essential to the understanding of any risk is the use of language and especially the highly charged formulation of words aiming at or contributing to violence. The nuances of language and its use in highly hostile environments is at the core of the paper of Susan Benesch and Jonathan Leader Maynard. While distancing themselves from an oversimplified link of hate and violence by elaborating on the "dangerousness" of the speech, their contribution enhances both the theory and practice of mass atrocity risk monitoring and prevention. They combine the two existing frameworks that they have independently formulated, offering an understanding of the *contextual* and *content-based* risk factors associated with dangerous speech and ideology.

Kjell Anderson and Ingjerd Brakstad analyze the role of the media in shaping discourse around mass atrocities. Their discussions are underpinned by an overarching question that is deeply

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ethical—how can people be bystanders to atrocities happening in distant places and how can they exercise their responsibility to act and help their fellow human beings. They argue that the media, in some cases, encourages passivity in response to mass atrocities, providing justifications for inaction. They also tackle the important topic of how people tend to engage with distant suffering in superficial ways when it is perceived as inevitable, alien, and outside of their control.

Bridget Moix examines recent research and evolving practice of community-based approaches to preventing and mitigating mass violence. Local communities need to be supported as key agents in prevention of mass violence as they are an alternative to the external, military interventions that only create a fertile ground for long term grievances and renewed cycles of violence. Moix argues for conflict-resilient local actors and drawing the attention of the policymakers to make the shift towards a more constructive context-specific approach to genocide prevention.

Timothy Williams points to the need for a proper knowledge-action nexus through a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of the 40 genocide cases and 100 non-genocidal incidents which occurred between 1955 and 1998. This approach builds on data from the Political Instability Task Force's State Failure Problem Set, a seminal contribution to the field led by Barbara Harff. QCA is a method for capturing the "configurations of conditions" leading to the occurrence and non-occurrence of the outcome, thereby highlighting that there are some *combinations* of conditions that are more pertinent to genocide occurrence. QCA can systematically analyze interactions among the conditions - not just conditions individually - and therefore it can potentially provide us with a framework of identifying more genocidal combinations of conditions.

Similarly, James Snow's article moves away from the essentialist framing of genocide, but more toward identifying the affinities of complex genocide phenomena. He does this from the epistemological angle, recasting, yet again, the definitional debates on what constitutes genocide in the field of genocide prevention. Snow argues that the original definition of genocide, as coined by Raphael Lemkin, along with its criticisms and calls for another definition, share an all-too-familiar presumption about what a definition should be, going as far back as Socrates and Plato. According to the Socratic conception, people share an orientation that seeks an essential form, a general template, of the things they define, reducing their complexity to a "general idea." However, Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances provides an alternative, and perhaps more effective—for prevention purposes—way of looking at genocide by highlighting patterns of similarities of genocidal acts and events as described by the language users. Such crisscrossing analysis of patterns of intent by perpetrators of mass atrocities can be conducive to understanding and acting on new shapes and forms of genocidal violence today and beyond.

Sharing this pattern-based inquiry into the causation of genocidal violence, Stephen McLoughlin and Maartje Weerdesteijn analyze Zambia and Zimbabwe, where similarities abound, and yet, one case resulted in mass atrocities while the other did not. Their article aptly contributes to the overarching theme of knowing properly and effectively, in terms of the role of leadership in setting the stage for violence or peaceful coexistence. It is also a contribution to the critical examination of risk factors from the agentic perspective. While it is important to remind us that no condition alone—even the decisive role of leaders—is capable of causing genocide, there is a dimension of humans choosing that makes genocide conceivable and actual. The cases of Zambia and Zimbabwe point to the need of disaggregating the pattern of behavioral and strategic choices made by leaders, within similar structural risk factors involved. Conversely speaking, leadership is needed at multiple levels to secure the emergence of a genocide prevention system that will be inclusive and effective, and therefore the Zambian style of leadership is worth noting.

Matthew Levinger contributes through an in-depth analysis of the Rwandan case and buttresses the need of a cognitive frame that can see not only a set of destructive risk factors, but also a pattern of their destructive interactions. Levinger's analysis challenges our own cognitive framework between knowing, understanding, and acting and provides a far reaching implication to other cases such as Libya, South Sudan, and Syria, with prescriptions for action for decision makers and policy makers.

It is essential to see the task of genocide prevention as a collaborative effort, a learning and practice-oriented investment that uncovers trends, patterns, and dynamics of genocide with a view to taking concrete and decisive action when such risks emerge. Prevention of any form of

systematic violence is not only the responsibility of political actors, but also of all those faced with the challenges of human coexistence. No state and no human group are immune from genocidal violence. Warnings make sense to those who are interested in heeding them. Prevention is predicated on the process of knowing—the capacities for inquiry and verification of such knowledge—and this process must be more inclusive and transparent so that we can make more robust linkages between what we know and which action to take. These movements are political in nature and can be accomplished by legitimate, credible processes that involve academic, political, and diplomatic engagement. We hope that this special issue is a step in that direction.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge Laurel Stone and Thomas Hill who helped us with coordination and administrative aspects of the special issue. Also, the special issue would not be possible without the help, support and keen attention to detail from Christian Gudehus, Editor-in-Chief of the *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*.

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Assessing the Risk of Atrocity Crimes

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United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

Jennifer Welsh
United Nations Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect

Background

The Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes is a tool developed by the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect to guide the assessment of the risk of atrocity crimes[1] worldwide. This document builds upon the previous Framework of Analysis for the risk of genocide that was developed in 2009 by the then United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, in order to fulfil its early warning mandate. That tool was based on the foundation laid by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan when he launched his plan of action to prevent genocide in April 2004. In the Secretary-General's words on that occasion:

> If we are serious about preventing or stopping genocide in the future, we must not be held back by legalistic arguments about whether a particular atrocity meets the definition of genocide or not. By the time we are certain, it may often be too late to act. We must recognize the signs of approaching or possible genocide, so that we can act in time to avert it. We badly need clear guidelines on how to identify such extreme cases and how to react to them. Such guidelines would ensure that we have no excuse to ignore a real danger of genocide when it does arise.

The initial framework of analysis for the prevention of genocide became obsolete when, in 2010, the Secretary-General decided to link the complementary mandates of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect through a joint office. Since then, the early warning work undertaken by this office has covered the risk not only of genocide but also of war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

The present Framework thus provides an integrated analysis and risk assessment tool for genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The revision also reflects recent developments and new research into the processes that lead to these crimes. It was subject to consultations within and outside the United Nations system for a period of almost two years. The result is a Framework that serves as a working tool for the assessment of the risk of atrocity crimes in all parts of the world and for identifying those countries most at risk. It can be used to develop a basic risk assessment, as well an assessment of how a situation is changing over time and the kinds of events that can trigger change, or prevent a situation from deteriorating.

The Framework is based on the premise that, to be effective, assessments require the systematic collection of accurate and reliable information based on a number of risk factors and indicators. The broad risk factors and the more specific indicators reflect definitions of the crimes in international law, case law from the work of international courts or tribunals, and empirical analysis of past and present situations.

The elements required to assess the risk of genocide and crimes against humanity are directly influenced by the legal definition of these crimes. With respect to war crimes and ethnic cleansing, however, the approach is slightly different. First, given the absence of a conceptual definition common to all war crimes, such as that which exists in the case of genocide and crimes against humanity, the Framework focuses on those war crimes that have the greatest impact on the protection of human life. In addition, given the focus of the Responsibility to Protect on the protection of populations from the most serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, the Framework covers war crimes that assume a more systematic or widespread pattern of conduct. Second, given that ethnic cleansing does not have a distinct legal definition as

[1] The Office uses the term atrocity crimes to refer to the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as to ethnic cleansing even though the latter does not constitute an independent crime under international law.

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an international crime, but includes acts that can constitute other atrocity crimes or elements of them, it has been integrated into the analysis of the risk factors for those crimes.

This Framework is a public document. The Office encourages and welcomes its use by international, regional and national actors as a tool either for early warning mechanisms, or for other mechanisms used for monitoring, assessment and forecasting. In addition, the Office recommends that Member States use the Framework to help identify both areas of success as well as gaps in atrocity prevention capacities and strategies at the national level. In the foreword of the document, the United Nations Secretary-General urges Member States, United Nations colleagues, civil society actors, media, and all persons dedicated to prevention and protection efforts, to disseminate and make use of this tool. In the end, sounding the alarm, mobilising preventive action and promoting resilient societies constitute tasks for all of us.

Common and Specific Risk Factors

This Framework defines risk factors as the *conditions that increase the risk of or susceptibility to negative outcomes*. They include behaviours, circumstances or elements that create an environment conducive to the commission of atrocity crimes, or indicate the potential, probability or risk of their occurrence. This requires assessment of a range of factors related not only to the risk of armed conflict but also to other types of situations that put a State under stress and create an environment conducive for atrocity crimes to occur. This means, for example, looking at the capacities and motivations of potential perpetrators; monitoring the human rights situation; assessing strengths and weaknesses of key state institutions; identifying gaps in societal resilience, or sources of mitigation; and anticipating a variety of possible triggers.

Risk factors are not all the same. Some are structural in nature, such as the weakness of State institutions, while others pertain to more dynamic circumstances or events, such as triggering factors. Triggers and other dynamic elements transform general risk into an increased likelihood that atrocities crimes will be committed. The indicators included in this framework are different manifestations of each risk factor, and therefore assist in determining the degree to which an individual risk factor is present. The particular indicators identified in the Framework have been drawn from past and current cases, but are not intended to be exhaustive.

In summary, the Framework contains two main analytical tools for assessing the risk of atrocity crimes: (a) a list of fourteen risk factors for atrocity crimes; and (b) indicators for each of the risk factors.

Among the fourteen risk factors outlined, the first eight are common to all crimes, reflecting the fact that atrocity crimes tend to occur in similar settings and share several elements or features. They are: (1) situations of armed conflict or other forms of instability; (2) record of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law; (3) weakness of State structures; (4) motives and Incentives; (5) capacity to commit atrocity crimes; (6) absence of mitigating factors; (7) enabling circumstances or preparatory action; (8) triggering factors.

In addition to these common factors, the Framework identifies six additional risk factors, two specific to each of the international crimes – namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The risk factors specific to the crime of genocide are: (9) intergroup tensions or patterns of discrimination against protected groups; and (10) signs of intent to destroy in whole or in part a protected group. The risk factors specific to crimes against humanity are: (11) signs of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population; and (12) signs of a plan or policy to attack any civilian population. The risk factors specific to war crimes are: (13) serious threats to those protected under international humanitarian law; and (14) serious threats to humanitarian or peacekeeping operations. The chart on the next page provides a summary of risk factors and indicators.

The common risk factors are aimed at supporting the identification of the probability of atrocity crimes overall, without necessarily identifying the type of crime. The assumption is that in the initial stages of monitoring, it is not always possible to identify which specific crime is most at risk. This becomes clearer as the process leading to atrocity crimes progresses. For example, weak State structures put populations or groups at risk of any of these crimes. In addition, different kinds of atrocity crimes can occur concurrently in the same situation, or one crime might be a precursor to another form of atrocity crime.

COMMON RISK FACTORS	
Risk Factor 1	Situations of armed conflict or other forms of instability
Risk Factor 2	Record of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law
Risk Factor 3	Weakness of State structures
Risk Factor 4	Motives or incentives
Risk Factor 5	Capacity to commit atrocity crimes
Risk Factor 6	Absence of mitigating factors
Risk Factor 7	Enabling circumstances or preparatory action
Risk Factor 8	Triggering factors
SPECIFIC RISK FACTORS	
Genocide	
Risk Factor 9	Intergroup tensions or patterns of discrimination against protected groups
Risk Factor 10	Signs of an intent to destroy in whole or in part a protected group
Crimes Against Humanity	
Risk Factor 11	Signs of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population
Risk Factor 12	Signs of a plan or policy to attack any civilian population
War crimes	
Risk Factor 13	Serious threats to those protected under international humanitarian law
Risk Factor 14	Serious threats to humanitarian or peacekeeping operations

The specific risk factors, on the other hand, result from the fact that each crime has elements and precursors that are not common to all three crimes. This is clear in the elements that are specific to the crime of genocide, particularly the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. The evidence of such intent points to a higher risk of genocide. In this way, the specific risk factors identified in the framework reflect the legal definitions of the crimes, even though they are not strictly limited by them, nor intend to be criminal evidence of them.

The risk factors are elaborated as follows:

1. Situations of armed conflict or other forms of instability

   Atrocity crimes often take place against a background of either an international or non-international armed conflict. Armed conflicts are periods characterized by a high incidence of violence, insecurity and the permissibility of acts that would otherwise not be acceptable. In addition, the capacity of States to inflict harm is usually at its peak during periods of conflict. If armed conflict is a violent way of dealing with problems, it is clear that the risk of atrocity crimes acutely increases during these periods. However, other situations that do not constitute formal armed conflicts can also put a State under such a level of stress that it becomes more prone to serious human rights violations and, eventually, to atrocity crimes. In fact, genocide and crimes against humanity can also occur during times of peace. This is most likely when there are serious levels of political instability, threats to the security of the country or even volatility in economic or social affairs. Although situations of instability, or even of armed conflict, will not necessarily lead to the occurrence of atrocity crimes, they highly increase the likelihood of those crimes.

2. Record of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law
Societies that have already experienced serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law or atrocity crimes, or where these are currently taking place, can be more prone to further atrocity crimes. As history has demonstrated, atrocity crimes in general and genocide in particular are preceded by less widespread or systematic serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. These are typically violations of civil and political rights, but they may include also severe restrictions to economic, social and cultural rights, often linked to patterns of discrimination or exclusion of protected groups, populations or individuals. This risk factor is also relevant where the legacies of past atrocity crimes have not been adequately addressed through individual criminal accountability, reparation, truth-seeking and reconciliation processes, as well as comprehensive reform measures in the security and judicial sectors. A society in this situation is more likely to resort again to violence as a form of addressing problems.

3. Weakness of State structures
The risk of atrocity crimes can be increased by a State's lack of capacity to prevent these crimes. A State protects its population through the establishment of frameworks and institutions that are guided by the rule of law and good governance principles. However, when such structures are inadequate or simply do not exist, the ability of the State to prevent atrocity crimes is significantly diminished. As a consequence, populations are left vulnerable to those who may take advantage of the limitations or the dysfunction of State machinery, or to those that may opt for violence to respond to real or perceived threats. This is even more the case in a situation of armed conflict, when it is paramount that those resorting to the use of force are fully aware of and respect the rules that aim to protect populations from such force, and have the necessary means to do so. The weakness of State structures will not necessarily be a cause of atrocity crimes, but it undoubtedly decreases the level of protection and, when analysed in conjunction with other risk factors, increases the probability of atrocity crimes.

4. Motives or incentives
The motives or incentives that lead perpetrators to commit atrocity crimes are not elements of the legal definition of those crimes and are therefore not relevant to determine individual criminal responsibility. However, from an early warning perspective, it is extremely important to identify motivations, aims or drivers that could influence certain individuals or groups to resort to massive violence as a way to achieve goals, feed an ideology or respond to real or perceived threats. Doing so not only allows for a higher degree of prediction of the likelihood of those crimes, but also opens up the opportunity to develop prevention strategies aimed at neutralizing or curbing those motives or incentives. No one specific motive or incentive will automatically lead to atrocity crimes, but certain motives or incentives are more likely to do so, especially those that are based on exclusionary ideology or the the construction of binary identities of "us" and "them".. The historical, political, economic or even cultural environment in which such ideologies develop can also be relevant.

5. Capacity to commit atrocity crimes
The systematic and large-scale violence that marks atrocity crimes requires a substantial level of planning that, in most cases, is sustained over a period of time. To be able to engage in such conduct, actors aiming at committing atrocity crimes must have at their substantial resources and support, either internal or external. However, the fact that States or groups have the capacity to perpetrate atrocity crimes does not imply that they will commit them – for that, it is also necessary that they have the intention to make use of that capacity against a protected group, population or individual. . In contrast, those who do not have the capacity to commit atrocity crimes, i.e., where one or more of the indicators

mentioned above are not present, will most likely not be able to put any plan into action, or will face serious challenges in its attempt to implement it.

6. Absence of mitigating factors
Atrocity crimes result from a convergence of elements, as demonstrated in this framework. Among those elements, some point more directly to the likelihood of atrocity crimes, while others might have a more indirect effect and seem secondary, or even too broad to merit consideration. However, even if indirect, these elements can contribute to preventing an escalation of violence or even to ending it and can therefore reduce the probability of atrocity crimes. Presence of strong and representative civil society organizations; operation of free, diverse and independent media; and access to the country by international or regional actors, constitute examples of factors that can mitigate the risk of commission of atrocity crimes. While some of these elements can exist prior to the development of tensions, crises or conflict, their impact may weaken as a situation escalates. It is therefore important to strengthen mitigating factors as a way of increasing resilience against the risk of atrocity crimes. A determination of the strength of mitigating factors in each given situation is also essential for early warning purposes.

7. Enabling circumstances or preparatory action
Atrocity crimes, and in particular genocide and crimes against humanity, are processes that take time to plan, coordinate and implement. The creation of militias, imposition of emergency laws or acquisition of large quantities of ammunition, which we consider as indicators in this risk factor, constitute steps that could point to preparatory action. Atrocity crimes, therefore, cannot be explained as isolated or spontaneous events that perpetrators decided to commit without some level of preparation. As mentioned in connection to risk factor n.5 (capacity to commit atrocity crimes), perpetrators also need to possess sufficient resources to be able to commit massive or widespread acts of violence. . It is possible to identify events, actions or changes that point to the likelihood that certain actors are taking steps towards a scenario of mass violence and possibly atrocity crimes. Such events, actions or changes can also serve to create an environment that favours or even encourages the commission of such crimes. Recognizing such indicators and establishing a causal link to the probability of atrocity crimes is not always easy, but it is of great relevance. As with all risk factors, analysis of this risk factor should take into consideration a context in which other risk factors might also be present.

8. Triggering factors
The dynamics of atrocity crimes are not the same in all cases. In fact, they can vary considerably. The commission of atrocity crimes may progress at a faster pace if the perpetrators have a clear plan and the immediate capacity to implement it. In other situations, the commission of atrocity crimes might unfold at a late stage of a situation of on ongoing crisis. It may also be that unpredictable events or circumstances aggravate conditions or spark a sudden deterioration in a situation, prompting the perpetration of atrocity crimes. This is particularly the case for on-going armed conflicts. An adequate early warning assessment should thus be mindful of all such events or circumstances and consider their potential impact, even if they appear to be unrelated to more direct or structural risk factors.

Risk factors that are specific for each of the crimes are as follows:

9. Intergroup tensions or patterns of discrimination against protected groups (genocide)
Genocide is an extreme form of identity-based crime. Whether real or socially constructed, identity can be subject to manipulation by elites, including as a deliberate tactic for personal or political gain, and may be used to deepen societal divisions. Identity-based conflict, which may give rise to the crime as defined by the Convention on the Prevention

and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, can be rooted in differences between national, ethnical, racial or religious groups, whether real or perceived. It can also be rooted in other differences, such as those of a political or even geographical nature, that eventually develop along national, ethnical, racial or religious lines. However, the risk factor is not the existence of diversity within the population of a country, nor is it those differences per se that cause conflict between groups. Instead, it is discrimination based on such differences, and persistent patterns of it, that establish divisions within society which serve as both a material cause and a perceived justification of group violence. Without group-level discrimination, even deeply seated grievances are unlikely to transform into the patterns of abuse that give rise to genocide.

10. Signs of an intent to destroy in whole or in part a protected group (genocide)
The intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnical, racial or religious group is both one of the most fundamental and one of the most difficult elements of the crime of genocide to prove. It is also a challenging element to predict from an early warning perspective. Frequently, the intent only comes to light after a crime has taken place, typically during accountability processes, or sometimes when it might be too late to take preventive action due to the advanced level of the violence. However, there are some early indicators that can serve as a warning sign. Those indicators are unlikely to be explicit, but they can also be inferred from conduct that would reasonably lead to the belief, even if not the certainty, that the intent of or a plan for annihilation could exist. Indicators can include overt methods of destruction, or otherwise covert or indirect methods that in practice lead to the same ultimate result. In addition, case law has associated intent with the existence of a State or organizational plan or policy, even if the definition of genocide in international law does not include that element. As genocide is not a spontaneous act, it is unlikely that it will be committed in the absence of such a plan or policy.

11. Signs of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population (crimes against humanity)
Crimes against humanity involve either large-scale violence (quantitative element) or a methodical type of violence (qualitative element). This excludes random, accidental or isolated acts of violence that, in addition, could be difficult to predict. Instead, the type of violence that characterizes crimes against humanity will most probably require a level of preparation that can be revealed through different indicators. Such indicators can, for example, relate to the means and methods used to engage in violence, or to patterns of violent conduct during the early stages of a conflict that can help predict an aggravation of those patterns and, consequently, the potential for crimes against humanity. Other indicators can point to patterns of conduct – even outside of a conflict situation – that manifest earlier, such as the building up of capacity for large-scale or systematic violence, or the use of alternative means to target civilian populations or particular groups within them. Identifying early stages of pattern manifestation is crucial to be able to devise strategies to stop them.

12. Signs of a plan or policy to attack any civilian population (crimes against humanity)
In addition to the requirement that attacks against the civilian population be widespread or systematic, crimes against humanity are committed in furtherance of a State or organizational policy. Even though this is not included in the definition of the crime under Article 7(1) of the Rome Statute, Article 7(2)(a) of the same document introduces this element. The plan or policy does not need to be explicitly stipulated or formally adopted and can, therefore, be inferred from the totality of the circumstances. Early signs of those circumstances, such as the indicators mentioned above, reveal planning, promotion or encouragement of violent acts, even if not explicitly presented as such. Conduct that manifests as widespread or systematic, as described in the previous risk factor, can be an indication of a plan or policy. On the other hand, a plan or policy can

point to the systematic nature of an attack. The distinction between both might not always be clear.

13. Serious threats to those protected under international humanitarian law (war crimes)
In contrast to the crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity, war crimes always take place in the context of an armed conflict. Consequently, indicators specific to war crimes surface at a late stage, when options for prevention are more limited. For earlier preventive action, common risk factors should be considered first. However, even if a conflict is already under way, there are still measures that can be taken to diminish the effects of hostilities and, therefore, to prevent war crimes. The list of war crimes is long and each has a specific definition. They can also vary according to different norms of international law. The indicators identified above attempt to include indicators relevant to as many war crimes as possible that are related to the protection of human life. However, they are far from exhaustive. Some of the indicators identified can also on their own be war crimes, such as attacks against civilian property, which can point to an increase in the threat to human life.

14. Serious threats to humanitarian or peacekeeping operations (war crimes)
International humanitarian law affords specific protection to those working for humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping missions in a setting of armed conflict, as long as they do not take direct part in hostilities, except for self-defense. These operations are particularly exposed to the violence that accompanies periods of conflict due to the key role they play in the protection of human lives and the alleviation of human suffering during those periods. A set of specific indicators can help in assessing the likelihood of attacks against this group that could constitute war crimes. As the focus of the Framework is the protection of human life, attacks against property of humanitarian or peacekeeping operations have been included only as indicators of an increased risk to the lives of their staff.

Methodology of Use

Assessments of the risk of atrocity crimes must be flexible and sensitive to context. Five points are particularly important to bear in mind when using the Framework.

First, not all risk factors need to be present for there to be an assessment that there is a significant risk of atrocity crimes occurring. For example, there are situations where information gathered has confirmed the presence of most of the risk factors, but atrocity crimes have not yet taken place. This could be due to the absence of a triggering event or the presence of a strong mitigating factor. In addition, it may not be possible to obtain sufficiently accurate and reliable information to confirm the presence of a particular risk factor. Nevertheless, this should not deter monitors and analysts from warning of the likelihood that an atrocity crime could be committed. Triggering factors are not always predictable and a strong mitigating factor might weaken or disappear. It is also important to bear in mind that common risk factors tend to be manifest sooner than specific risk factors. Information that confirms the presence of specific risk factors is sometimes more difficult to obtain at an early stage.

Second, the more risk factors (and the greater number of relevant indicators) there are present, the greater the risk that an atrocity crime may be committed. Also, the greater the number of indicators of a particular risk factor that are present, the greater the importance and role of that factor in a particular situation. For instance, a situation that presents motives and incentives (risk factor 4) and in which there is weakness of State structures (risk factor 3), is more prone to commission of atrocity crimes if there is context of armed conflict or other forms of stability (risk factor 1) and an absence of mitigating factors (risk factor 6). In this example, the absence of risk factors 1 and 6, in principle, would lower the risk of atrocity crimes. Likewise, we can assume that weakness of State structures (risk factor 3) is more pronounced if all indicators within that risk factor are present than if only some are. For instance, the presence of a weak national legal

protection framework becomes a stronger indicator if it is coupled with lack of independent and impartial judiciary or with high levels of corruption. If the judiciary is impartial and corruption is not rampant, the impact of a weak legal protection system – for purpose of risk of atrocity crimes —is less pronounced.

Third, the risk factors and the indicators are not ranked, as their relative importance will differ according to the particular context. Even though armed conflict has been identified as the strongest or most important contributing risk factor, armed conflict is not a precondition of all atrocity crimes – genocide and crimes against humanity can also occur in times of peace. Certainly, some risk factors will have a greater weight than others, or will be manifest more often than others. However, all contribute to increasing the risk of atrocity crimes.

Fourth, monitors and analysts will need to be flexible when considering and weighing all the elements in this Framework and situate them within a broader political, contextual, historical and cultural analysis. In addition, given the development of new trends and patterns of violence and of conduct related to conflict, assessments should be open to new elements that might surface.

Finally, the Framework of Analysis provides a set of elements to help monitors make qualitative and systematic assessments of the *risk* of atrocity crimes in specific situations. However, the presence of risk factors for atrocity crimes in a particular situation does not automatically lead to the occurrence of those crimes; risk is not equated with inevitability. Sometimes, even when several risk factors are present, a situation may not escalate to the point where atrocities will be committed. That said, and although it is impossible to draw a direct causal relation between the presence of particular risk factors and the occurrence of atrocity crimes, these crimes are rarely committed in the absence of all or most of the risk factors that the Framework identifies.

The Framework as a Tool for Early Action

While the Framework constitutes primarily a tool for analysis, it has also been designed to facilitate early action. The assumption is that a systematic application of the Framework will contribute to the identification of situations of concern and to sound the alarm earlier and more consistently. In this regard, both States and the international community must assume their legally established responsibilities to respond to these alarms and to protect populations against atrocity crimes before they occur. The Framework, in short, aims at compelling actors to move from early warning to early action

The Framework recognizes that atrocity crimes do not usually constitute single or random events. Instead, they tend to develop in a dynamic process that offers entry points for action to prevent their occurrence. To engage in the level of violence associated with atrocity crimes, perpetrators need time to develop the capacity to do so, mobilize the resources, and take concrete steps that will help them to achieve their objectives. If the risk factors and precursors of these crimes are understood, it follows that it is also possible to identify measures that can be taken by States and the international community to forestall the dynamics that lead to these crimes.

In sum, the earlier the risk factors are identified, the greater the opportunities for early and preventive action. As times goes on, such action becomes more difficult and more costly. As experience shows, if atrocity crimes are already occurring, the options available to respond will be very limited. In some cases, they may require the use of coercive measures including, if all peaceful means fail, the use of force.

Atrocity crimes have wide-ranging costs and long-lasting effects. Painful experience over the past decades illustrates how the perpetration of violence based on the victims' identity destroys the fabric of societies, with consequences that pass from one generation to the next. As the United Nations Secretary-General underlined in his 2015 report on the responsibility to protect, it is imperative that Member States and other international actors devote more energy and resources to effective prevention and accelerate efforts to put an end to the ongoing perpetration of such crimes.

We consider that the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes constitutes a tool to facilitate accurate assessment and identify options for adequate and effective response. We encourage it to be used by all those who are devoted to the principle of prevention and whose contribution and response can be essential for the prevention of atrocity crimes.

Note

The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

Predicting Genocide and Mass Atrocities

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***Abstract**: This article examines several current risk assessment and early warning models to predict genocide and mass atrocities. Risk assessment (RA) concerns a country's long-term structural conditions (regime type, state-led discrimination, etc.) that determine overall risk for atrocities. Early warning (EW) focuses on short/midterm dynamics that can serve as triggers. The article evaluates contemporary RA and EW forecast modeling, and asks: How well can we predict mass atrocities and genocide? What are the strengths and limitations to current predictive modeling? Part I examines several quantitative (statistical) RA models and identifies several strengths and limitations in current research. Part II investigates a number of EW approaches, and also discusses their strengths and areas for further development. The article notes the impressive advances that have been made in the past fifteen years in RA and EW, but also counsels realistic expectations the possibilities of forecasting.*

***Keywords**: genocide, early warning, risk assessment, prediction, forecasting*

Since the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides of the 1990s, policymakers have placed a premium on predicting and halting mass killings and genocide. Governments, human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations (UN), among others, have developed a host of preventive policy architectures, many influenced by the 'responsibility to protect' principle articulated in 2001 and later adopted by the UN.[1] These international concerns over mass killing have also spurred increased attention to developing sophisticated models of prediction—how accurately can genocide and mass killings be predicted? What are the strengths and limitations of predictive modeling, and what still remains to be done?

This article examines the state of genocide and mass atrocity prediction, also known as forecasting.[2] A predictive model is part of a broader alert system that, as formulated by Lawrence Woocher, includes a) periodic global risk assessments that produce useful country watch lists; b) sustained, detailed monitoring and analysis of high risk situations; and, c) a mechanism for communicating warnings to end users, such as policymakers.[3] This article focuses on the first two elements of Woocher's list, with the understanding that forecasting is only one, albeit important, element in stopping mass violence more generally; clearly, the findings of researchers need to be useful and intelligible to policymakers and communicated in a regular and timely manner, and political will needs to be mobilized and sustained. Indeed, the challenge of generating political will may very well be the most important dimension of the preventive architecture, and it has certainly received the most attention from scholars, activists and political leaders.[4] This article, however, has a more circumscribed focus. It assesses the kinds of models currently in place and identifies a number of strengths and limitations to predicting complex phenomena like genocide and large-scale killing. It also raises some broader epistemological questions about prediction and counsels caution on expecting too great accuracy or specificity.

Barbara Harff and Birger Heldt argue that prediction models tend to fall into one of two categories—risk assessment (RA) or early warning (EW). Although the terms are often used

[1] Bellamy, Alex. 2009. *The Responsibility to Protect*. Cambridge: Polity.

[2] There is also a large prediction literature devoted to other kinds of risk, including environmental hazards and famine, that has informed mass atrocity forecasting; Secretary General of the United Nations. 2006. *Early Warning Systems.* New York: United Nations.

[3] Woocher, Lawrence. 2011. "Is a Public Warning System Necessary?" *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Available from: www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20111021-woocher-early-warning.pdf (accessed December 23 2015).

[4] Meyer, Christoph O., Florian Otto, John Brante, Chiara de Franco. 2010. "Recasting the Warning-Response Problem: Persuasion and Preventive Policy." *International Studies Review* Vol. 12, 556-578; Lupel, Adam and Ernesto Verdeja. 2013. "Developing the Political Will to Respond." In *Responding to Genocide: The Politics of International Action.* Edited by Adam Lupel and Ernesto Verdeja. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 241-257; Weiss, Thomas G. 2012. *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It.* London: Polity.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.3.1314

synonymously, they in fact have different objects of analysis and purposes.[5] Risk assessment focuses on the *general structural* elements of a society that affect its likelihood of experiencing significant human rights violations. These elements may include, *inter alia*, political regime type (e.g. autocratic, democratic), prior history of political instability, degree of integration into the global economy, and levels of state-led discrimination. Risk assessments measure each of these and other factors in a particular country and generate a score of high, medium or low risk for violence in the future. These models are largely static: the values of the relevant factors do not tend to fluctuate rapidly in short periods of time—for instance, regime type is hard to change—and they draw on data from past periods to predict the future. Risk assessments are useful for providing an overall picture of the state of affairs, but do not predict if—much less when—genocidal violence or instability will take place.

Early warning focuses on the mid- and short-term factors that make violence likely. This includes attempts to identify the escalation of instability and whether it may tip into large-scale, sustained violence. Naturally, this requires greater attention to dynamic elements such as widening cleavages among political elites, changes in the military capacity of oppositional forces, highly contested upcoming elections, and the expansion of security forces. Early warning models also often track other factors that may arrest or deescalate volatile dynamics, such as the presence and strengthening of peacekeeping forces to reinforce stability, temporary cease-fires, and other short or mid-term policies that aim to create a space for political negotiation and eventual conflict termination or transformation. In essence, early warning focuses on *processes* of violence onset, escalation, sustainment, and abeyance, rather than the long-term structural conditions that indicate general risk levels of instability and violence.

While early warnings should be "timely, accurate, valid, reliable and verifiable," it would be misguided to expect that there can be highly precise predictions of when and where violence will occur.[6] That would be too high a standard to espouse, and assumes a level of scientific accuracy that is unattainable. Early warning will be more useful if the focus is not on perfect forecasting, but instead on providing policymakers with timely and sufficiently accurate information about dynamics of escalation that can assist prevention or intervention. Early warning does not need to be perfect—it never will be—but it should be suitably concrete that it can inform policy.

The following pages first discuss risk assessments and then move on to early warning, highlighting their respective strengths and limitations. The RA models discussed below are mostly produced by academic researchers using a variety of statistical techniques, but are meant for policy purposes. I focus on these models because they are among the best in the field and are transparent about the methods they employ, which allows readers to evaluate how they arrive at their forecasts. For models that integrate risk assessment and early warning (typical of governments, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations), I leave the discussion for the early warning section.

Risk Assessment

Before moving on to the various risk assessment models, a few words on prediction and causation are in order. Risk assessments are predictive models, and not necessarily causal models. This has certain implications for how they frame their analyses. A causal model focuses on explaining the processes and mechanisms by which some factors cause some outcome, such as genocide. This requires specifying a chain of causality and ruling out competing causal factors, processes and theories. Causal theories include only those factors that can be shown to have a causal impact on the outcome. Predictive theories, however, are less concerned with explaining causal relations and

[5] Harff, Barbara. 2013. "Detection: The History and Politics of Early Warning." In *Responding to Genocide: The Politics of International Action.* Edited by Adam Lupel and Ernesto Verdeja. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 85-110; Heldt, Birger. 2009. "Risks, Early Warning and Management of Atrocities and Genocide: Lessons from Statistical Research." *Politorbis* Vol. 2, No. 47, 65-70.

[6] Schmeidal, Susanne. 2002. "Conflict Early Warning and Prevention: Toward a Coherent Terminology." In *Early Warning and Conflict Management in the Horn of Africa*. Edited by Ciru Mwaura and Susanne Schmeidal. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 81; Clarke, John. 2005. "Early Warning Analysis for Humanitarian Preparedness and Conflict Prevention." *Civil Wars* Vol. 7, No. 1, 71-91.

more with forecasting the probability of some event. There may be some factors that are highly correlated with the event and are thus useful for estimating outcome probabilities, but the factors do not have an obvious causal relationship to the outcome.

The two types of enterprises—prediction and causal analysis—do overlap. Naturally, if a researcher knows the specific causes of some event such as genocide onset and has sufficient and high quality information for all of the causal factors in her model, she can in principle predict the event's likelihood with some degree of accuracy. But of course, in "real time" such information is often imprecise, contradictory, or otherwise not fully available. And in any case, there are so many complex relations between structural and contingent causal factors that rough probabilities are the most that can be expected. Our theories on the causes of genocide are developed post-hoc, and rely on a significant amount of historical reconstruction—through interviews, archival research, forensic anthropological investigations, and the like. They seek to explain how (and why) genocide occurs. Prediction, however, is less concerned with explanation, and thus prediction models such as risk assessments pragmatically use those variables that are highly correlated with event outcome, regardless of whether those variables have causal impact or explanatory value. As will be evident below, these predictive models draw heavily on the causal theory literature, but may also use variables that have little causal connection to genocide and mass atrocities but are nevertheless correlated.

The attempt to predict systematically large-scale violent phenomena has its modern origins in post-Cold War efforts to model the likelihood of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Think tanks such as RAND, funded by the US government, developed risk assessments that took into account the general political and economic stability and military capacity of each superpower, as well as their ability to control their respective allies and satellite states. Similar models were developed to assess the likelihood of war in the European theatre between NATO and Warsaw forces as well as the relative vulnerability and resilience of governments across the so-called Third World. Many of these models promised a degree of accuracy and predictability that could not be met, leading to significant skepticism about risk assessments among high-level US policymakers.[7]

The Rwandan and Bosnian genocides generated a renewed interest in risk assessments to assist in policy planning. In 1994, the US government established a research group to investigate and predict the likelihood of severe instability around the globe. Known as the Political Instability Task Force (PITF; originally the State Failure Task Force), the group has examined a variety of state failure scenarios, including rapid regime change, civil wars, and genocide and mass killing. The PITF is the first large-scale statistical modeling project employing large datasets to forecast instability. It has provided a risk assessment of all countries around the globe by examining the conditions that precede the onset of major instability.[8]

Jack Goldstone and his colleagues use PITF data for a parsimonious model that predicts the onset of political instability, which they define as revolutionary and ethnic wars (at least 1,000 total deaths and 100 deaths per year), adverse regime changes (sudden loss of authority by the state, or replacement by a non-democratic government), and mass atrocities (including genocide).[9] The authors experimented with a host of variables from the genocide and instability literature, and settled on four: regime type, infant mortality rate (logged); extent of conflict in neighboring countries; and extent of state-led discrimination. The authors tested the model on countries worldwide from 1955 to 2003 and found the model could predict (with a two-year lead time) the

[7] For the hubris of early thinking on these issues, see Edwards, Paul N. 1997. *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

[8] The PITF data are archived at George Mason University, available at www.globalpolicy.gmu.edu/political-instability-task-force/political-instability-task-force-home/ (accessed 10 June 2015). The Center for Systemic Peace continues to produce annual watch lists based on the PITF's work, and is available at www.systemicpeace.org (accessed 10 June 2015). Also see the work of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland, www.cidcm.umd.edu/ (accessed 10 June 2015).

[9] Goldstone, Jack, Robert H. Bates, David L. Epstein, Tedd Robert Gurr, Michael B. Lustick, Monty G. Marshall, Jay Ulfelder and Mark Woodward. 2010. "A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 54, No. 1, 190-208.

onset of political instability with over 80 percent accuracy. One of the major conclusions is that political institutions, rather than economic or demographic conditions or geography, serve as the most important predictors of political instability.

The Goldstone et. al. model focuses on a very capacious dependent variable: political instability, which includes but is not limited to genocide and mass atrocities. Barbara Harff, also working with PITF, has developed the best-known predictive model for genocide. In 2003, Harff published a model that sought to predict genocide and politicide, which she defines together as "the promotion, execution, and/or implied consent of sustained policies by governing elites or their agents—or, in the case of civil war, either of the contending authorities—that are intended to destroy, in whole or part, a communal, political, or politicized ethnic group".[10] The model is predictive for countries already experiencing state failure, essentially civil wars or "reversals" in democracy. She employs six causal factors, which when combined predicted geno/politicide onset with 74 percent accuracy, and non-onset with 73 percent accuracy. The study covers the years 1955 to 2001. This is essentially a conditional model: it selects cases for analysis based on the prior condition of state failure (which may include civil war or democracy reversal). Harff respecificed the model in the following years, and the most recent version uses seven causal factors.[11] These include 1) a history of prior geno/politicide since 1955; 2) ethnic character of the ruling elite (whether the governing elite represents a minority group); 3) exclusionary elite ideology (a ruling ideology that sanctions persecution or elimination of other groups); 4) regime type (autocracy or democracy, with autocracies more highly correlated with geno/politicide); 5) trade openness (sum of exports and imports as percentage of GDP, with trade openness inversely correlated with geno/politicide); 6) state-led discrimination (systematic limitation of economic or political rights); and, 7) instability risks (major instabilities such as civil war, revolution or rapid change in regime). Each of these factors is weighted, with a higher score indicating higher risk. Countries with high cumulative scores are classified as having high risks of geno/politicide.[12] The Harff model has served as the touchstone for most contemporary statistical forecasting models and was cited by the 2008 US Genocide Prevention Taskforce as a central component for developing genocide prevention policy, and is reportedly used by the US government's Atrocities Prevention Board.[13]

Nicholas Rost has also developed and tested a variety of prediction models. He attempts to predict the onset of three violent phenomena: "mass killing" (the intentional killing by a government of at least 1,000 civilians), Harff's geno/politicide, and democide, or "death by government."[14] Though there is significant overlap in these forms of violence, they are somewhat different and seem to have different predictive factors. For instance, according to Rost, a country's trade dependence is correlated with democide, but not with genocide or mass killing. Furthermore, economic discrimination against an ethnic or communal group prior to armed conflict does not predict genocide, though political threats such as riots and "high-level" assassinations are in fact correlated. The variables with the strongest predictive power for the onset of genocide include regime type, interstate war, assassinations, prior limitations of rights, militarization, population displacement, and perhaps most surprisingly, presence of a peacekeeping force. Peacekeeping may be highly correlated for the simple reason that peacekeeping forces are only sent to countries already at risk of mass violence.[15] He finds that overall, the onset of democide is significantly

[10] Harff, Barbara. 2003. "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 97, No.1, 58.

[11] Harff, "Detection: The History and Politics of Early Warning," 85-110.

[12] Also see Chad Hazlett's interesting alternative model based on Harff, which drops her predictive factors of "prior genocides" and the "ethnic character of elites" in favor of the "strategic motivations of regimes". Hazlett, "New Lessons Learned", 2011.

[13] Albright, Madeleine K. and William S. Cohen. 2008. *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers.* Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 25; Norris, John and Annie Malknecht. 2013. *Atrocities Prevention Board: Background, Performance, and Option.* Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

[14] Rost, Nicolas. 2013. "Will It Happen Again? On the Possibility of Forecasting the Risk of Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 15, No. 1, 42, 52-53.

[15] The relation between peacekeeping and genocide and armed conflict is complex, but see Melander, Erik. 2009. "Selected To Go Where Murderers Lurk? The Preventive Effect of Peacekeeping on Mass Killings of Civilians." *Conflict Management*

harder to predict that genocide or mass killing, and notes a high rate of false alarms in the various models he examines.

Benjamin Goldsmith, director of the Australian Atrocity Forecasting Project, and his colleagues have produced a statistical forecasting model that builds on the work of Harff and others.[16] Their model is essentially two-stage: first, it predicts a country's probability of violent instability, which may include civil wars or coups. The second stage employs that probability as well as other factors to predict the specific likelihood of genocide onset three to five years in the future (they use Harff's definition of genocide). The authors tested a wide range of variables, but the most powerful predictors for genocide onset included (in addition to instability) prior genocide, "human defense burden" (proportion of a population in the regular military over a given year), "executive constraints" (extent of checks and balances on autonomy of the executive), state-led discrimination, infant mortality rate, and number of neighboring state conflicts.[17] This is not strictly a conditional model; all countries are evaluated, and there is no prior condition of violent instability that has to be met for inclusion in the second stage of analysis. Although violent instability is an important predictor of genocide, the authors avoided using this as the "gate" for inclusion in second stage. The benefit of a non-conditional model is that it avoids the risk of excluding some countries that do not meet a particular threshold but otherwise may experience genocide in the future. The authors find that their model predicts 82 percent of genocide onsets correctly and 79 percent of non-onset years correctly, which is an impressive outcome. One interesting finding is that certain economic factors that are highly correlated with civil war[18] and general violent instability such as poverty, unemployment rate, unemployment change, proportion of men in the labor force, and so forth, are not good predictors of genocide. Economic factors are important when mediated by other political factors, such as type of political regime, but not on their own. Given that most post-World War II genocides occur in the context of civil war, revolution or coups, this means that economic factors predict a wider range of violent phenomena than genocide as such.

Jay Ulfelder and the Early Warning Project (EWP) have sought to produce risk assessments of the potential for "state-led mass killings" (rather than only geno/politicide) annually for all countries.[19] The EWP's approach is also nonconditional, and thus countries are not required to meet a certain instability threshold for inclusion. This approach combines an opinion pool and statistical modeling to produce assessments. The opinion pool collects country forecasts from a relatively large group of experts.[20] The statistical component uses an "ensemble Bayesian" forecast that involves combining three statistical RA models and aggregating their predictions to generate one final probability score of mass killing per country per year. The models include 1) a combination of Harff's original 2003 model on geno/politicide and Goldstone et. al. on political instability;

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and Peace Science Vol. 29, No. 4: pages 389-406; Fortna, Virginia Page. 2008. "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 48: pages 269-292.

[16] Butcher, Charles R., Benjamin E. Goldsmith, Dimitri Semenovich and Arcot Sowmya. 2013a. "Understanding and Forecasting Political Instability and Genocide for Early Warning." Sydney: Australian Government, Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, The University of Sydney, The University of New South Wales. Available from: www.sydney.edu.au/arts/research/atrocity_forecasting/downloads/docs/GenocidePolicyReportGlobalLowRes_final120905.pdf (accessed 7 January 2015); the authors use the term "early warning" in their title in the way risk assessment is used here. Also see Butcher, Goldsmith, Semenovich and Sowmya 2013b.

[17] Butcher et al. "Understanding and Forecasting Political Instability", 15.

[18] Hegre, Håvard and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. "Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onsets." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 50, No. 4, 508-535.

[19] Early Warning Project. 2015a. Available from: http://www.earlywarningproject.com (accessed 9 June 2015); also see Ulfelder, Jay. 2013. "A Multimodel Ensemble to Forecast Onsets of State-sponsored Mass Killing." American Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Available from: www.ssrn.com/abstract=2303048 (accessed 10 January 2015) and Early Warning Project. 2015d. "A New Statistical Approach to Assessing Risks of State-Led Mass Killing." Available from: http://www.earlywarningproject.com/2014/01/22/a-new-statistical-approach-to-assessing-risks-of-state-led-mass-killing (accessed 9 June 2015), where many of the technical details are laid out. The EWP also runs an annual Wiki survey to assess the risk of mass killing, see Early Warning Project. 2015c. "Wiki Survey." Available from: http://www.earlywarningproject.com/2015/01/12/relative-risks-of-state-led-mass-killing-onset-in-2015-results-from-a-wiki-survey (accessed 9 June 2015). For frequently updated discussions of this work, see www.dartthrowingchimp.wordpress.com.

[20] Early Warning Project. 2015b. "Expert Opinion Pool." Available from: http://www.earlywarningproject.com/opinion_pools (accessed 9 June 2015).

2) an "elite threat" model for predicting civil wars and coups; and, 3) a "random forest" approach that employs the variables in the previous models as well as a few others. Ensemble forecasting avoids the pitfall of having to pick one "best" model when the researcher has little confidence for privileging one above the other since various models will each have particular strengths and limitations. The EWP's ensemble model does not use specific variables to predict mass killing but rather averages across models, so there is no set of main predictors as is the case with models discussed earlier. However, Ulfelder finds that overall an ensemble approach produces better forecasts than using one statistical model.[21] Results are updated at www.earlywarningproject.com.

The Fund for Peace is a think tank that has produced an annual Fragile States Index for the past decade and currently covers 178 countries. The Fund also publishes a shorter watch list of highly fragile states based on the Index. Unlike most nongovernmental organizations involved in risk assessment, the Fund's sources, coding criteria and analytical model are publicly available, and the model has been refined over time following periodic peer review. It is among the more methodologically transparent and rigorous assessments developed by a policy think tank. The Index defines fragile states as those that have lost control of territory or monopoly of legitimate use of force (the classic Weberian definition of the state), the erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions, a failure to provide public services, or the inability to interact with other states as a "full member of the international community" (i.e., legal sovereignty is questioned).[22] The analysis employs a framework called Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST), which uses twelve general indicators to assess the degree of state fragility. The indicators fall broadly in three categories: social (demographic pressures, displaced persons, group grievances, human flight); economic (uneven economic development, poverty and economic decline); and political and military (state legitimacy, public services, human rights and rule of law, security apparatus, elite factionalization, external interventions).[23] Unlike the examples discussed earlier, the Index does not produce systematic predictions for violence or instability onset in the future; rather, it provides assessments of current levels of state fragility. Like Goldstone et. al.'s model, the Index focuses on a much broader range of instability outcomes than mass violence and genocide, though in practice its country watch list overlaps extensively with other watch lists.

The RA models discussed above differ in various ways. Aside from employing a variety of different indicators and statistical methods, they also attempt to forecast somewhat different phenomena: political instability, state fragility, state-sponsored mass killings, democide, or politicide and genocide. Nevertheless, there is significant overlap in the countries that qualify as high risk in each model. Table 1 shows this by model, with the fifteen highest risk countries listed by descending risk score in each column. Note that although these countries are "ranked" by model, the rankings are not meant to reflect exact risk level differences between countries; rather they simply show comparative levels of risk. I exclude the Goldstone et. al. country list because it is older than the other lists presented here, so it is not as comparable. Rost is testing the efficacy of models and he does not generate a list of countries, so his findings are not included either.

What can we make of this? The table shows some consistency across models, even if specific country rankings differ (recall that EWP's is an ensemble model, so it includes the 2003 version of the Harff model). For instance, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia appear on all four lists, and Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Myanmar (Burma), Pakistan, Sudan and Syria are on three. A number of countries are on two lists: Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Iraq, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, South Sudan and Zimbabwe. Of course, many other countries are ranked a bit lower and thus do not appear here, but show up consistently across models.

The differences across lists are a product of the specific outcome that is being measured (genocide onset, state fragility, etc.) and the various model specifications. Nevertheless, the bundling of high-risk countries across sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and south Asia suggests

[21] Ulfelder, "A Multimodel Ensemble to Forecast Onsets of State-sponsored Mass Killing," 15.

[22] Early Warning Project. 2015a.

[23] Haken, Nate, J. J. Messner, Krista Hendry, Patricia Taft, Kendall Lawrence, Laura Brisard, and Felipe Umaña. 2014. *Failed State Index 2014: The Book*. Washington, D.C.: Fund for Peace.

Table 1. Highest-Risk Countries by Model[1]

Harff (genocide and politicide)	**Butcher et. al.** (genocide and politicide)	**EWP** (state-led mass killing)	**Fragile States Index**
Syria	Central African Republic	Myanmar	South Sudan
Myanmar	D. R. Congo	Sudan	Somalia
Sudan	Chad	Central African Republic	Central African Republic
Pakistan	Somalia	Pakistan	D. R. Congo
Ethiopia	Angola	South Sudan	Sudan
Rwanda	Myanmar	Somalia	Chad
Zimbabwe	Sri Lanka	D. R. Congo	Afghanistan
China	Ecuador	Iraq	Yemen
Iran	Burundi	Mali	Haiti
D. R. Congo	Afghanistan	Guinea	Pakistan
Somalia	Syria	Afghanistan	Zimbabwe
Saudi Arabia	Guinea	Bangladesh	Guinea
Sri Lanka	Cameroon	Nigeria	Iraq
Nigeria	Uganda	Ethiopia	Cote d'Ivoire
Cameroon	Libya	Rwanda	Syria

Source: Harff, "Detection: The History and Politics of Early Warning," 97: Table 4.1; Butcher et.al, "Understanding and Forecasting Political Instability," Table 1; Early Warning Project 2015e; Fund For Peace 2015b; On the Index, the first five countries are ranked "very high alert" and the following ten are ranked "high alert."

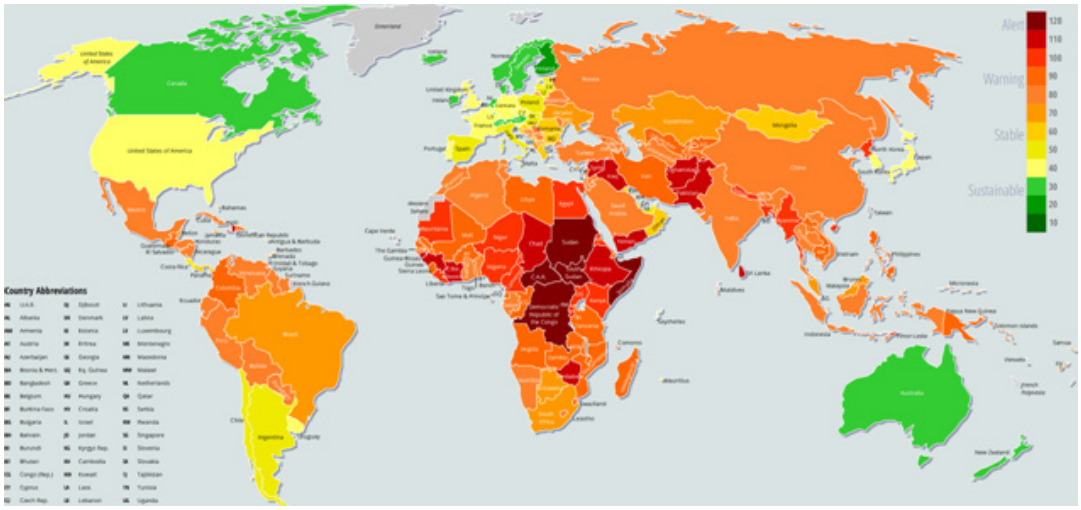
[1] Harff, "Detection: The History and Politics of Early Warning," 97: Table 4.1; Butcher et.al, "Understanding and Forecasting Political Instability," Table 1; Early Warning Project 2015e; Fund For Peace 2015b; On the Index, the first five countries are ranked "very high alert" and the following ten are ranked "high alert."

that many of the factors that predict one violent or disruptive outcome have some effects on others, though as we saw earlier there is variation in particular indicators and variables.

Another equally important pattern emerges, which concerns regional concentrations of risk. The models focus on country-year as the unit of analysis, but as Martin Shaw has argued, the causes of genocide and similar forms of violence cannot be explained solely by country-level analysis. In fact, there may be broader international and regional factors that exacerbate (or mitigate) risk and help determine regional concentrations of violence at given historical periods.[24] The lists themselves suggest this when mapped. Below are two global "heat" maps, which reflect the Fragile States Index and EWP lists in Table 1. The maps below are taken from these sources.

In Map 1, high-risk countries are in dark red and low risk countries are in green. The map reveals a concentration of fragile states across Africa, the Middle East and south Asia, with generally moderate levels in Latin America and other parts of Asia.

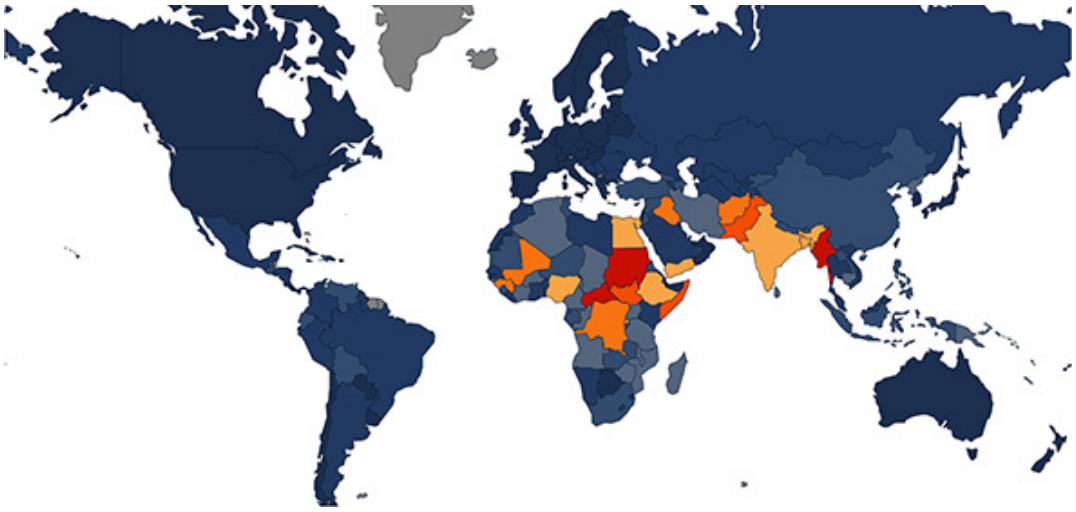
[24] Shaw, Martin. 2013. *Genocide and International Relations: Changing Patterns in the Transitions of the Late Modern World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



Map 1. Fragile States Index[1]. Source: Fund for Peace 2015b.

[1] Fund For Peace. 2015b. State Fragility Index. Available from: www.ffp.statesindex.org/rankings-2014 (accessed 13 January 2015).

In the EWP's map, countries in red have the highest risk of mass killing, which decreases through various shades of orange. High-risk countries cluster in Africa, the Middle East, and south Asia.



Map 2. EWP Model of State-Led Mass Killing[1]. Source: Early Warning Project 2015e.

[1] Early Warning Project. 2015e. "World Map." Available from: http://www.earlywarningproject.com/map# (accessed 9 June 2015).

Again, EWP's findings show a high concentration of ongoing and likely mass killing in the same regions as the Index's high-risk countries; nevertheless, because the various models do not systematically investigate regional or global factors, those clustering patterns are somewhat underexplored.[25]

[25] There is, for instance, a robust literature on civil war contagion effects across borders, and some on genocide and other forms of political violence. See Buhaug and Gleditsch 2008. Also see Harvey 2003; Escobar 2004 on global structural violence shaping national dynamics violence.

Common Risk Indicators

What, then, are some of the main risk predictors for genocide and mass atrocity? They include several political, social and economic factors. Most of these will be unsurprising to scholars of genocide. Many qualitative comparative studies on the causes of genocide have had the same findings. Below I summarize these indicators in the risk assessment literature, though their specific articulation will differ across models.

1. A *history of prior genocide or mass atrocities* since the end of World War II consistently appears as important. Where there are prior histories, especially when the perpetrator group was not punished or removed from power, mass atrocities are somewhat more likely to occur.
2. *Regime* type is important. Genocide and mass atrocities are more likely in highly autocratic regimes than in democracies and somewhat more likely than in partially autocratic regimes (where non-competitive or partly competitive elections are possible, for instance). Governments that systematically limit or deny basic rights are unaccountable to their populations and respond to political contestation through force are much more likely to engage in genocide and related atrocities. The significance of regime type is also partly captured in some assessments by measuring the lack of executive constraints.
3. Ongoing *state-led discrimination.* As much of the genocide studies literature has long argued, patterns of increasing repression against already historically targeted groups, including the restriction of civil and political rights as well as violent coercion, precede genocide and mass atrocities. This is often tied to *extremist elite ideology* and/or *prior devaluation of the targeted group*, though various risk assessments specify this in different ways.
4. *Political instability* is also correlated with genocide and mass atrocity onset, with various models using different specifications of this (coup, civil war, assassinations, etc.).
5. *Ongoing domestic armed conflict,* such as civil war, is correlated with genocide and other atrocities. This is perhaps not surprising, given that war facilitates the logistics of mass killing and tends to radicalize ingroup and outgroup differentiations.[26]
6. *Armed conflict in neighboring states* can also radicalize domestic politics, serve as conduits for arms for insurgents, and raise elites' threat perceptions.[27]
7. *Economic factors* are somewhat more complex for forecasting. Harff has found that a low level of trade openness is an important predictor, but Butcher et. al. and Hazlett find that most economic factors are weak genocide predictors (including poverty and inequality levels), though some are better predictors of political instability and civil war, which in turn may lead to genocide and other atrocities.[28] This seems to indicate that the importance of economic factors depends on how they are mediated by political institutions, a point well known in the standard genocide studies literature. Rather than looking at country-level information (such as national rates of inequality like the Gini coefficient), it may be more useful to look at economic factors subnationally, by ethnic groups and other minorities, as has been done in civil war research.[29]

Limitations and Caveats

Statistical risk assessments have improved tremendously over the past decade and a half, as is illustrated by the examples above. They help provide a global snapshot of the regions of the world that are most likely to suffer from terrible violence, and to this extent can inform preventive policy by the United Nations and governments (provided, of course, the appropriate will to respond can

[26] Valentino, Benjamin, Paul Huth and Dylan Balch-Lindsay. 2004. "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare." *International Organization* Vol. 58, No. 2, 375-407.

[27] Butcher et al., "Understanding and Forecasting Political Instability."

[28] Stewart, Frances. 2013. "The Causes of Civil War and Genocide: A Comparison." In *Responding to Genocide: The Politics of International Action.* Edited by Adam Lupel and Ernesto Verdeja. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 47-84.

[29] Cederman, Lars-Erik, Nils Weidmann, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2011. "Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 105, No. 3, 478-495.

be mobilized, which is often doubtful). However, there are several limitations and caveats that should be raised. I discuss some of these below.

Some risk assessments use a relatively narrow definition of genocide. Defining genocide in narrow terms produces comparatively few cases, a challenge for statistical analyses that require large numbers of observations for better forecasting. For these reasons, some scholars have preferred to focus on "mass killings," which as defined earlier yield comparatively many more cases for the purposes of analysis.

Related to this, a host of other forms of group destructive violence are often left out of assessment models.[30] Sheri Rosenberg and Everita Silina have documented the ways in which genocide may occur by "attrition," such as the systematic denial of food and shelter or through forced relocations and enslavement that do not result in immediate death.[31] The United Nations Genocide Convention also identifies a range of acts beyond direct killing that can qualify as genocidal, including causing seriously bodily or mental harm to the group, imposing measures intended to prevent births, and forcibly transferring children of one group to another.[32] Naturally, these complex, long-term patterns of violence are much harder to model and measure than direct killing, but the result of excluding them may be to ignore countries that should otherwise appear high on watch lists. It is necessary to complement current risk assessments with regular, systematic assessments that take into account these other forms of violations. The Fragile States Index goes some distance in doing this by looking at a wide range of forms of violence and repression, but even here the emphasis is on measuring the relative resilience of the state.

Contemporary risk assessment models also tend to focus on very large-scale phenomena, and use baselines (say number of mass killings per year) for inclusion that can be rather high. A lower threshold and greater awareness of subnational patterns of violence, rather than just the country level, can provide not only a larger number of observations for analysis, but also greater sensitivity to cases where violence has yet to explode across the country.

Further improvements can be made to the data used in risk assessments, as Rost has argued.[33] In some cases data may be missing or are unreliable for particular countries or regions (such as data on infant mortality rates), but often it is data for precisely those countries that are most prone to mass atrocities. Fatality estimates at the beginning of a violent episode can be especially unreliable due to undercounts, double-counts and manipulation. Similarly, there are limitations to using some off-the-shelf datasets, which have conceptualization and measurement problems. For example, the Polity dataset, used for measuring levels of democracy and thus regime type, has been criticized for having a host of conceptualization problems.[34] And yet it is widely used in quantitative research on political violence.

Forecasting the onset of mass violence, whether genocide, mass atrocities, or related phenomena, always has to confront the challenge of balancing false positive and false negative predictions, which in turn have important implications for policy. A model should try to generate few false positives, or false alarms (that is, countries incorrectly forecasted to experience mass violence). Too many false alarms will not help analysts and policymakers in prioritizing their limited attention and resources. Reducing false alarms requires a high level of certainty about the likelihood of violence in particular countries during the given forecasting period, and this normally results in generating watch lists that include relatively obvious high-risk countries. However, reducing false positives may also mean a commensurate rise in the number of false negatives (i.e., those countries

[30] Birger Heldt's definition of atrocities "excludes indirect deaths caused by disease, starvation and crossfire" and "other indirect methods." See Heldt, "Mass Atrocities Early Warning Systems," 13.

[31] Rosenberg, Sheri P. and Everita Silina. 2013. "Genocide by Attrition: Silent and Efficient." In *Genocide Matters: Ongoing Issues and Emerging Perspectives.* Edited by Joyce Apsel and Ernesto Verdeja. New York: Routledge, 106-126; Farmer, Paul. 2004. "An Anthropology of Structural Violence." *Current Anthropology* Vol. 45, 305-325.

[32] United Nations General Assembly. 1948. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Available from: www.treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2078/volume-78-I-1021-English.pdf (accessed 3 January 2015).

[33] Rost, "Will It Happen Again?" 42, 59.

[34] Goertz, Gary. 2005. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

that were not predicted to experience mass violence during a given period but did experience it). So, to the extent that a model is trying to lower the number of false negatives, it risks raising the number of false positives, and vice versa. This is a constitutive tradeoff in forecasting, though it should be noted that actual future cases of mass violence (future true positives) are often today's false positives.

Finally, and more generally, there is a danger that decision makers ascribe too much certainty to these probabilistic predictions, which can in turn shape policy choices. Part of this is an epistemological issue—how certain can we be of the predictions? The works discussed above are admirably clear about their scope of applicability and limitations. In speaking about genocide, Rost notes that, "for any model, picking out events that are so rare that they only occur in less than one percent of the cases included is difficult".[35] However, the growing tendency in policy circles to treat "big data" quantitative research as categorically superior to other forms of research risks producing a misplaced sense of forecasting accuracy for mass violence and instability. The kind of scientism and big data hubris that have pervaded policy planning may generate a fictitious sense of foreknowledge and sidelines case experts who may make crucial analytical contributions.

Early Warning

There is no hard line between risk assessment and early warning, but as discussed earlier, early warning models tend to focus on short- and midterm predictions. Rather than analyzing broad structural conditions that point toward risk of some future instability or violence, early warnings include dynamic factors and are meant to be sensitive to changes in political context that may trigger violence. In general, countries that are deemed high-risk become the focus of early warning monitoring, so that risk level serves as a condition for early warning selection. As is the case with risk assessments, early warning models are often predicting somewhat different events—genocide, civil war, mass killing, mass atrocities, and the like—and thus may employ a variety of factors.

Policymakers often emphasize that what they need is better early warning.[36] Although risk assessments are naturally valuable, accurate and timely knowledge is especially important for short term preventing responses. And yet, producing reliable early warnings is extremely difficult. Even for high-risk countries, predicting with any degree of accuracy when violence may erupt—especially atrocities such as mass killing and genocide – can be especially vexing.

An important point of contention for early warning modeling concerns the relative strengths of various methodological approaches. Should one rely on quantitative (statistical) approaches, qualitative evaluations that use systematic case study comparisons, or expert-based assessments of single cases? Some scholars, such as Barbara Harff, have argued that quantitative models hold significantly more promise than the alternatives because they are open to testing and falsification.

> "Early warning efforts should be done in a systematic fashion using theoretically tested models—quantitative analysis—not just untested theory or experts' insights… The social sciences cannot afford to depend on insiders' knowledge or hunches and then cry "wolf" when there is no solid evidence that we are facing a genocide rather than some other violent event".[37]

The Fund for Peace advocates a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, but also remains skeptical of privileging specialized expert knowledge:

> "To have meaningful early warning, and effective policy responses, assessments must go beyond specialized area knowledge, narrative case studies and anecdotal evidence to identify and grasp broad social trends. An interdisciplinary combination of qualitative research and quantitative methodologies is needed to establish patterns and acquire predictive value".[38]

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[35] Rost, "Will It Happen Again?," 42.

[36] Albright and Cohen. *Preventing Genocide.*

[37] Many researchers who make this point cite the work of Philip Tetlock, who argues that expert judgment is not especially reliable in trying to predict trends in international politics. See Tetlock, Philip E. 2006. *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Harff, "Detection: The History and Politics of Early Warning," 101.

[38] Haken et al., *Failed State Index 2014,* 9.

Other scholars have argued, however, that early warning prediction requires extensive expert knowledge. This is so, the argument goes, because experts have a more sophisticated understanding of the motives and goals of various political actors and they know the political and historical context of the conflict. Quantitative studies reduce the complexity of conflict and risk missing important dynamics and events that can trigger violence, or at best provide only information that is too generalized to be policy-relevant in the short- and midterm.[39]

The question of whether of whether quantitative, qualitative or expert-based approaches are superior remains unresolved, though most EW tends to be highly qualitative and dependent on expert interpretation (indeed, there are few early warning models in current use that are wholly or primarily quantitative). Nevertheless, this debate appears rather artificial. Given the difficulty of predicting complex violent events in the short- or midterm, it seems reasonable that a combination of statistical and qualitative approaches, as well as expert judgments, should be employed. Statistical models provide important insights into general patterns of violence onset and escalation through analyses of large numbers of similar cases, and they help identify what factors are the most important to monitor. However, qualitative assessments are necessary to develop causal models (rather than only correlative, typical of statistical approaches) that can assist in identifying patterns and triggers of violence escalation and restraint. Case experts are needed to interpret whether certain events may constitute violence accelerators and how events may impact the actions of other actors, given the specific case context. They can also assist in interpreting particular kinds of information that are not amenable to easy quantification, such as how ethnic or religious identities function in certain locations and how they may become politicized. The strongest EW approaches will likely be those that combine quantitative, qualitative and expert analyses. However, as Harff points out, quantitative early warning models are still not well developed.

A host of early warning models exist, many of them developed by nongovernmental organizations, governments, and international institutions such as the United Nations, often in conjunction with scholars in academia.[40] Many of these groups publish outlines of the EW models they employ, but unfortunately few of them publish specific material on methodology, such as how their information is gathered, how sources are evaluated, and how the factors and variables in their various early warning models are operationalized (that is, how evidence is interpreted in light of the models). Unfortunately, without further elaboration of how information is interpreted it is difficult to evaluate the efficacy of various early warning models, which means that the discussion below is somewhat briefer than that of risk assessments. Nevertheless, even though methodological issues are rarely addressed at length in EW analysis, the violence triggers across models appear to be relatively similar. Below I first canvass organizations that produce early warning reports and then present the most common early warning triggers.

The United Nations has been involved in early warning for a number of decades, though until relatively recently it had not systematically coordinated the collection of information across its many agencies. Information gathering for early warning already occurs in country-based and global offices across the UN, including in the UN Development Programme, the Department of Peace Keeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, and most recently the big data collection project called Global Pulse (previously the Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System). Each of these offices collects information to assist its own particular

[39] Hamburg, David A. 2010. *Preventing Genocide: Practical Steps Toward Early Detection and Effective Action*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers; Stewart, Rory and Gerald Knaus. 2012. *Can Intervention Work?* New York: W.W. Norton.

[40] Space limitations preclude discussing many other important early warning initiatives. See the work of the Genocide Prevention Advisory Network available from: www.gpanet.org (accessed 5 June 2015); the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Center for the Prevention of Genocide available from: www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide (accessed 5 June 2015); International Alert available from: www.international-alert.org (accessed 5 June 2015); Satellite Sentinel Project available from: www.satsentinel.org (accessed 5 June 2015); and the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response available from: www.fewer-international.org (accessed 5 June 2015). The FAST early warning unit at Swisspeace Foundation is no longer operating, but it did produce important work, discussed in Krummenacher and Schmeidl 2001. US military efforts like the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) are discussed in O'Brien, Sean. 2010. "Crisis Early Warning and Decision Support" *International Studies Review* Vol. 12, 87-104.

mandate, but until the advent of a special UN office dedicated to genocide prevention there was no systematic analysis of information relevant to mass atrocity prevention and detection.[41]

The UN Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide was established by the Security Council in 2004. In 2010, the office was expanded to include the promotion of the 'responsibility to protect' principle among UN member states, and it is now called the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (OGPRP). The mandate of the special adviser includes collecting existing information from the numerous branches of the UN system, acting as a "mechanism of early warning to the UN Secretary-General," making recommendations to the UN Security Council on preventing and stopping genocide, and liaising within the UN system to strengthen prevention, detection and analysis efforts.[42] The OGPRP recently extended its focus to "mass atrocity crimes," which include genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.[43] It currently uses a "framework of analysis" for mass atrocity crimes employing fourteen risk factors that together produce an overall early warning evaluation. The framework relies on the qualitative analysis of information from various UN bodies as well as NGO, news and scholarly sources.

In its early days, the office was severely understaffed and under-resourced and did not seem to have much of an impact on policy or advocacy work.[44] In recent years its staff has grown and become more professional, and its work is analytically more sophisticated. It produces regular public reports and advises the Secretary-General and Security Council, though given the sensitivity of its sources most of its reporting is confidential with limited circulation at the UN. Nevertheless, the OGPRP has emerged as an important player in the early warning field.

A number of regional organizations engage in early warning monitoring as well. These include the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union's Policy and Planning Unit in the European Council, the Continental Early Warning System in the African Union, The Economic Community of West African States' ECOWARN Office, and the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions in the Organization of American States.[45] These organizations secure information from a variety of sources, some confidential, and produce regular internal analyses for policy advice and occasional public reports for broader distribution. Most of them do not release detailed information on their early warning models.[46]

In 2011, US President Barack Obama ordered the creation of the Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) to coordinate an inclusive government approach to risk assessment and early warning.[47] The APB was established the following year and includes regular monthly meetings of high-level

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[41] Zenko, Micah and Rebecca R. Friedman. 2011. "UN Early Earning For Preventing Conflict," *International Peacekeeping* Vol. 18, No. 1, 21-37.

[42] United Nations Security Council. 2001. Resolution *S/Res/1366*. Available from: www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/files/SC_Resolution1366_31Aug2001.pdf (accessed January 6, 2015).

[43] United Nations Security Council. 2001. Resolution S/Res/1366. Available from: www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/files/SC_Resolution1366_31Aug2001.pdf (accessed January 6, 2015).

[44] Hehir, Aidan. 2010. "An Analysis of Perspectives on the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide" *Genocide Studies and Prevention* Vol. 5, No. 3, 258-276.

[45] See the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Early Warning and Early Action* available from: www.osce.org/secretariat/107485 (accessed 15 January 2015); European Union Policy and Planning Unit, *The Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Capability of the Council of the European Union* available from: www.ifp-ew.eu/pdf/0611prelisbon.pdf (accessed 15 January 2015); African Union, *Continental Early Warning System* available from www.peaceau.org/uploads/early-warning-system-1.pdf (accessed 15 January 2015); Economic Community of West African States, ECOWARN available from: www.ecowarn.org (accessed 26 March 2015); Organization of American States, Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions, available from: www.oas.org/en/spa/dsdsm/ (accessed 15 January 2015). A useful overview is found in Wulf, Herbert and Tobias Debiel 2009. "Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms: Tools for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Regional Organizations? A Comparative Study of the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, ASEAN/ARF and PIF." London: Crisis States Research Centre.

[46] Military and intelligence organizations also produce early warning analyses, but little detailed information is available on these efforts. See Albright and Cohen, 24-25; Kriendler, John. 2006. "NATO Intelligence and Early Warning." *Conflict Studies Research Centre at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom*, Vol. 06, No. 13: pages 1-10; Hamburg, *Preventing Genocide*, 256-264.

[47] White House. 2011. Presidential Study Directive on Mass Atrocities PSD-10. Available from: https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/04/presidential-study-directive-mass-atrocities (accessed December 20, 2015).

officials from various governmental agencies to share information, identify atrocity risks and develop coherent policy responses.[48] The APB focuses on potential or ongoing high-risk cases that may otherwise be missed, rather than major cases such as Syria already receiving significant attention.[49] Little is known of the APB's effectiveness, however; its meetings and findings are confidential and it has not reached out in any sustained fashion to human rights NGOs or the broader human rights scholarly community. Its risk assessment and early warning models are not available (though they are reportedly based on Harff 2003 with some adjustments and extensive qualitative analysis).[50] Sarah Sewall, Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights at the State Department sits on the APB and has stated that the Board "sounded the alarm" on Burundi in 2015, Islamic State attacks on the Yazidi in 2014, and the Central African Republic in 2013.[51] However, the lack of information on the ABP's work, including the kind of RA/EW models it employs, makes it very difficult to evaluate the Board's overall impact.

The nongovernmental organization Genocide Watch, founded and run by noted genocide scholar Gregory Stanton, employs a ten-stage model of analysis (updated from eight stages). The ten stages range from "classification" of groups into exclusive categories through "extermination" and finally "denial." The stages are "predictable but not inexorable," nor are they linear.[52] The model is based on the scholarly literature and is especially helpful for case study work. Genocide Watch releases a regular list of countries at high risk and also sends out early warning alerts when "politicide or genocide is imminent" and declares "genocide emergencies" when genocide is underway. Although Genocide Watch uses the United Nations definition of genocide (which is notoriously narrow and problematic for policy purposes),[53] in practice the organization covers a wide range of violent phenomena, closer to the more inclusive "mass atrocity crimes."[54]

The International Crisis Group (ICG) monitors conflicts around the globe through a network of regional offices. The ICG produces the monthly report *Crisis Watch* on high-risk countries as well as occasional early warning "crisis alerts" on specific countries, the latter including but not limited to genocide and mass atrocities. It is among the best-known NGOs devoted to early warning and its large staff of area experts and field specialists mostly employ qualitative methods.[55] The ICG consults regularly with policymakers and news media. Most of the cases it identifies appear on other risk watch lists and early warning lists, though the ICG does not publish its analytical framework or details of its methodology.

The Canadian Sentinel Project has regular early warning evaluations of a number of high-risk countries and regions around the world. Like many NGOs, the Sentinel Project uses traditional news media and expert interviews as sources, but it is particularly noteworthy for using new technologies in conjunction with partners on the ground to generate information for early warning analysis. The organization has used a risk profile based on Stanton's earlier "eight stages of genocide" to identify "situations of concern" (essentially high-risk cases), and then applies an early warning model to monitor those cases. Monitoring is done through the Conflict Tracking System (CTS), a data visualization program that tags events by relevant early warning indicators. It employs the popular Ushahidi crowdsourcing platform to process data from a variety of sources.[56]

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[48] The APB is composed of 11 government agencies and is chaired by the National Security Council. There are also more frequent inter-agency meetings by lower-level staff.

[49] Norris and Malknecht, *Atrocities Prevention Board*.

[50] Private communication, State Department official. September 15, 2015.

[51] Sewall, Sarah. 2015. "Charting the US Atrocities Prevention Board's Progress." Available from: http://www.cfr.org/human-rights/charting-us-atrocities-prevention-boards-progress/p36332 (accessed 22 December 2015).

[52] Genocide Watch. 2015a. "The 10 Stages of Genocide." Available from: www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/tenstagesofgenocide.html (accessed 15 January 2015).

[53] Verdeja, Ernesto. 2013. "Genocide: Debating Definitions." In *Responding to Genocide: The Politics of International Action*. Edited by Adam Lupel and Ernesto Verdeja, pages 21-46. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

[54] Genocide Watch. 2015b. "Countries at Risk" Available from: http://genocidewatch.net/alerts-2/new-alerts/ (accessed 15 January 2015).

[55] Communication from Isabelle Arradon, Deputy Chief Policy Officer and Director of Research, ICG. February 17, 2015.

[56] Sentinel Project. 2015a. Conflict Tracking System. Available from: https://thesentinelproject.org/2015/02/11/the-sentinel-project-launches-conflict-tracking-system/ (accessed 9 June 2015).

The Sentinel Project focuses on a relatively small number of cases, and much of its current work is centered on local-level interventions rather than broad-based EW, but the CTS is very promising and should influence future early warning efforts.[57]

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCRP) is an NGO based in New York that promotes the strengthening of the responsibility to protect principle in the United Nations system. Among a variety of initiatives, it publishes a bimonthly report on "populations at risk" of mass atrocity crimes, with special emphasis on a select number of countries in Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Its early warning work is mostly focused on those countries and is largely directed at government and UN policymakers, news media and other human rights advocacy organizations. It is a particularly good source of material for specific countries.

Common Early Warning Indicators

These various organizations employ a wide range of early warning frameworks, but a close reading of their many reports reveals that the indicators they use tend to overlap. These indicators may apply to state forces, insurgent forces, or both, depending on the specific indicator.[58] The most common ones include:

1. *increased hate media,* which may sanction the use of violence against already vulnerable civilian groups;
2. *public rallies and popular mobilization* against vulnerable groups;
3. *upcoming elections*, which may be perceived as threatening to ruling elites;
4. *public commemorations* of past crimes or contentious historical events that exacerbate tensions between groups;
5. rapid *change in government leadership*, such as through assassination or coup, which can create a power vacuum and result in violent contestation for political power;
6. *natural disasters*, which may overstretch already weak state capacity and embolden opposition groups;
7. sharp increase in *repressive state practices,* including removal of political, religious, civil and economic rights, stripping of citizenship; shift from selective to widespread patterns of repression;
8. *arrest, torture, disappearance or killing* of political, religious, or economic leaders;
9. *physical segregation or separation* of the targeted group from the broader population; forced removal or settlement of populations;
10. increase in *weapons transfers* to security forces or rebels;
11. rapid increase in *opposition capacity*, raising their perceived threat, or conversely a rapid decline in opposition capacity, which may serve as an opportunity to destroy them and their "civilian base";
12. *deployment of security forces* against previously targeted civilian groups;
13. commencement/resumption of *armed conflict* between government forces and rebels;
14. *spillover* of armed conflict from neighboring countries;
15. *nowhere for targeted civilian groups to flee* as violence escalates.

Limitations and Caveats

Much like risk assessments, early warning models have made impressive advances in the past decade and a half. The organizations discussed above today produce important analytical and advocacy work on potential crises around the world, and thanks to them decision makers are much better informed than in the past. However, early warning models do face some limitations. Below I identify a few of these.

The first concerns limitations in information. New information technologies including social media allow us to monitor crises essentially in "real time," so that older problems of limited data

[57] Sentinel Project. 2015b. Hakika. Available from: https://thesentinelproject.org/2014/02/17/how-it-works-una-hakika (accessed 9 June 2015).

[58] Fein, Helen. 2007. *Human Wrongs and Wrongs* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), 134-135.

are less pressing, though they are still a problem in some places (such as in northeastern Central African Republic during the spring 2013 phase of the civil war). Nevertheless, as Birger Heldt has argued, the surfeit of information raises challenges for verifying its accuracy and relevance; for instance, information may be unrepresentative (e.g., primarily from urban versus rural areas or elite versus non-elite sources), unverifiable, or willfully misrepresented.[59] Triangulating sources can address some of these concerns, but in rapidly changing political contexts this is often hard to do.

It can be especially difficult to interpret information during so-called complex emergencies, conditions that combine ongoing internal conflict with population displacements, existing food insecurity and "fragile or failing economic, political, and social institutions."[60] It is exceptionally hard to know when violent tipping points are going to occur under such already precipitous conditions that have their own complex causes and vectors, which often may reinforce one another.[61]

In addition to these data and complexity problems, there is generally little information available on how early warning models are designed and used. As discussed earlier, many organizations that conduct early warning monitoring share relatively little about how they reach their conclusions, which makes it difficult to assess their strengths and limitations. Given the grave risks of false negative predictions, and to a lesser extent false positives, we need greater clarity on how violence triggers and accelerators are framed and evidence interpreted. This would allow comparisons across models, and thus advance our knowledge about which indicators and models work best. Greater transparency would also help illuminate how analyst biases shape interpretations of conflicts.

Early warnings must be "actionable"; that is, they must be analyses that decision makers can translate into concrete preventive policies. On this count, early warning models have been mixed. Some are particularly useful, such as the alerts by the International Crisis Group or the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, but others can be vague and unhelpful for making sense of complex crisis events. There are of course limits to how actionable they can be, but we do not appear to be there yet.

A final point concerns unpredictability itself. As the UN notes in its own atrocity prediction work, "It can also happen that unpredictable events or circumstances aggravate conditions or spark a sudden deterioration in a situation, prompting the perpetration of atrocity crimes".[62] Some events prove to be unpredictable triggers; there is simply a limit point to knowing how and when things will unfold, and this uncertainty counsels some caution about our abilities to predict events.

These are important limitations, but overall there have been marked improvements in early warning monitoring since the 1990s, and our knowledge today is well ahead of where it was twenty years ago. Further research should continue to pursue these successes and ensure that early warning analysis continues to be policy-relevant.

Conclusion

This article has canvassed contemporary risk assessment and early warning approaches in contemporary conflict prevention. Scholars, human rights groups, governments and international organizations have made impressive advances in identifying the main indicators of mass violence in its many forms for policy purposes. The article has also highlighted some areas for further development and advised realistic expectations about what degree of predictive accuracy we should expect. Of course, the ultimate challenge concerns whether political leaders will take these warnings seriously.

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[59] Heldt, Birger. 2012. "Mass Atrocities Early Warning Systems: Data Gathering, Data Verification, and Other Challenges." *Guiding Principles of the Emerging Architecture Aiming At the Prevention of Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity*. Available from: www.ssrn.com/abstract=2028534 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2028534 (accessed 23 January 2015). 22.

[60] World Health Organization. 2015. "Environmental Health in Emergencies." Available from: www.who.int/environmental_health_emergencies/complex_emergencies/en/ (accessed 14 January 2015).

[61] Heldt, Birger. 2013. "Genocide Intent and Randomness of Killings of Civilians." Available from: www.ssrn.com/2138171 (accessed 22 December 2014).

[62] United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, *Framework for Analysis of Atrocity Crimes*, 17.

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Why the U.S. Government Failed to Anticipate the Rwandan Genocide of 1994: Lessons for Early Warning and Prevention

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***Abstract**: During the months leading up to the Rwandan genocide of 1994, cognitive biases obstructed the capacity of U.S. government analysts and policymakers to anticipate mass violence against the country's Tutsi minority. Drawing on declassified U.S. government documents and on interviews with key current and former officials, this essay shows that most U.S. government reporting on Rwanda before April 1994 utilized a faulty cognitive frame that failed to differentiate between threats of civil war and genocide. Because U.S. officials framed the crisis in Rwanda as a potential civil war, they underestimated the virulence of the threat to Tutsi civilians and discounted the risk of catastrophic violence. The "civil war frame" also justified rigid U.S. policy guidance that may have exacerbated ethnic and political conflicts in Rwanda on the eve of the genocide. The phenomenon of faulty cognitive framing remains a challenge for contemporary atrocity prevention and response efforts toward countries including Libya and South Sudan.*

***Keywords**: Rwanda, genocide prevention, intelligence analysis, peace negotiations, framing, cognitive biases, Arusha Accords, Libya, South Sudan, Syria*

The hundred-day bloodletting in Rwanda from April through July 1994, which took more than 500,000 lives, represented one of the moral low points of the twentieth century. In a speech of March 1998, delivered on the tarmac at Kigali airport, U.S. President Bill Clinton acknowledged that the "international community, together with nations in Africa, must bear its share of responsibility for this tragedy." Clinton declared that "all over the world there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable terror."[1]

Most scholarship on the Rwandan genocide has rejected such claims that international observers did not know, or "did not fully appreciate," what was going on in Rwanda before and during the genocide. As Samantha Power observes in her book *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*:

> Ahead of the April 6 plane crash [in Kigali that killed Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and triggered the genocide], the United States ignored extensive early warnings about imminent mass violence. It denied Belgian requests to reinforce the peacekeeping mission. When the massacres started, not only did the Clinton administration not send troops to contest the slaughter, but it refused countless other options. President Clinton did not convene a single meeting of his senior foreign policy advisers to discuss U.S. options for Rwanda.[2]

Many commentators have asserted that, during the months leading up to April 1994, international observers grasped clearly the gravity and imminence of the threat of genocide in Rwanda. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) official inquiry, *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*, is typical in this regard:

> There can be not an iota of doubt that the international community knew the following: that something terrible was underway in Rwanda, that serious plans were afoot for even more appalling deeds, that these went far beyond routine thuggery, and that the world nevertheless stood by and did nothing…. There were a thousand early warnings that something appalling was about to occur in Rwanda. If not a genocide, it was at least a catastrophe of so great a magnitude that it should command international intervention.[3]

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[1] Clinton, President Bill. "Address to Genocide Survivors at the Airport in Kigali, Rwanda," 25 March 1998. Available from: http://www.cbsnews.com/news/text-of-clintons-rwanda-speech/ (accessed 14 January 2016).

[2] Power, Samantha. 2002.*"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*. New York: Basic Books, 334-35.

[3] Organization of African Unity (OAU) International Panel of Eminent Personalities, *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*,

Matthew Levinger, "The Impossibility to Protect? Media Narratives and the Responsibility to Protect" *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 9, 3 (2016): 33–58. ©2016 *Genocide Studies and Prevention*.
http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.3.1362

According to this line of analysis, the key obstacle to effective preventive action was not the failure to comprehend the danger, but rather the inability of working-level diplomats and intelligence analysts to draw the attention of senior policymakers to the crisis, and—after April 6—the lack of "political will" for a robust response to the genocide.[4] In Power's words:

> Simply put, American leaders did not act because they did not want to. They believed that genocide was wrong, but they were not prepared to invest the military, financial, diplomatic, or domestic political capital needed to stop it.[5]

A few scholars, however, have argued that the absence of knowledge—or perhaps the presence of the wrong kind of knowledge—about the unfolding events in Rwanda did indeed play a critical role in shaping responses to the genocide by the U.S. government and other international actors. One of the earliest retrospective inquiries into this topic, published in 1996 by the OECD Steering Committee for Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, concluded that on the eve of the genocide:

> There were significant signs that forces in Rwanda were preparing the climate and structures for genocide and political assassinations. However, people both in the region and the broader international community ignored, discounted or misinterpreted the significance of these signs, thereby not only indicating an unwillingness to intervene, but communicating that unwillingness to those who were planning genocide.[6]

According to the Steering Committee, international policymakers' perceptions of the situation in Rwanda on the eve of the genocide were colored by two events of the previous year. The first of these events was the signing of the Arusha Accords of August 1993, which had set the terms of a peace settlement between Rwanda's Hutu ruling coalition and the Tutsi insurgency of the Rwandan

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7 July 2000, Ch. 9, par. 1 and 16, Available from: http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/rwanda-the-preventable-genocide (accessed 14 January 2016).

[4] See for example Prunier, Gérard. 1995. *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*. New York: Columbia University Press; Keane, Fergal. 1995. *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey*. London: Viking; Castonguay, Jacques. 1998. *Les casques bleus au Rwanda*. Paris: Harmattan; Des Forges, Alison. 1999. *"Leave None to Tell the Story": Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch; Adelman, Howard and Astri Suhrke.1999. *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers; Melvern, Linda. 2000. *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*. London: Zed Books; Melvern, Linda. 2004. *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide*. London: Verso; Gourevitch, Philip. 1998. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux; Grünfeld, Fred and Anke Huijboom. 2007. *The Failure to Prevent Genocide in Rwanda: The Role of Bystanders*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV; Power, *A Problem from Hell*; Leader, Joyce E. 2001. *Rwanda's Struggle for Democracy and Peace, 1991-1994.* Washington, D.C: The Fund for Peace; Dallaire, Roméo. 2003. *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda.* Toronto: Random House Canada; Marchal, Luc. 2001. *Rwanda: La descente aux enfers: témoignage d'un peacekeeper, décembre 1993-avril 1994*. Brussels: Editions Labor; Feil, Scott. 1998. *Preventing Genocide: How the Early Use of Force Might Have Succeeded in Rwanda*, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York; Straus, Scott. 2006. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Official inquiries into international responses to the genocide include: the UN *Report of The Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations During the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and Statement of the Secretary-General on Receiving the Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations During the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda*, 15 December 1999, available from: http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/1999/1257 (accessed 14 January 2015), France's *Rapport d'Information sur les opérations militaires menées par la France, d'autres pays et l'ONU au Rwanda entre 1990 et 1994*, available from: http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dossiers/rwanda/r1271.asp (accessed 14 January 2016); the report of the Belgian *Parliamentary commission of inquiry regarding the events in Rwanda*, 6 December 1997, available from: http://www.senate.be/english/rwanda.html (accessed 14 January 2016); and the Organization of African Unity's report of the International Panel of Eminent Personalities, *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*.

[5] Power, Samantha. *A Problem from Hell,* 508. At a 2014 conference co-sponsored by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Hague Institute for Global Justice, many of the speakers reiterated the view that Western diplomats and other international observers familiar with Rwanda fully recognized the risks of genocide in the country. See Colum Lynch, "Exclusive: Rwanda Revisited," *Foreign Policy*, 5 April 2015. Available from: http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/05/rwanda-revisited-genocide-united-states-state-department/ (accessed 12 January 2016).

[6] Eriksson, John et al. 1996. *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, Synthesis Report*. Copenhagen: OECD Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, March, 9.

Patriotic Front (RPF); the second was the disastrous "Blackhawk Down" incident of October 1993, which had resulted in the deaths of eighteen U.S. Special Forces soldiers in Somalia, provoking fears among American political leaders concerning the dangers of UN peacekeeping missions in Africa:

> There existed an internal predisposition on the part of a number of the key actors to deny the possibility of genocide because facing the consequences might have required them to alter their course of action. The mesmerization with the success of Arusha and the failure of Somalia together cast long shadows and distorted an objective analysis of Rwanda.[7]

This emphasis on the cognitive biases of international actors is also found in Michael Barnett's book *Eyewitness to a Genocide*, which recounts the story of the internal struggles within the United Nations about how to respond to the Rwandan genocide. Barnett emphasizes that the bureaucratic culture of the UN limited the capacity of its officials to perceive events in Rwanda clearly:

> Government officials and UN staff came to know Rwanda as members of bureaucracies; the bureaucratic culture situated and defined their knowledge, informed their goals and desires, shaped what constituted appropriate and inappropriate behavior, distinguished acceptable from unacceptable consequences, and helped determine right from wrong.[8]

During the initial weeks after the outbreak of the genocide, Barnett writes, UN Security Council officials "were operating under the influence of uncertainty and organizationally scripted descriptions of the violence as a civil war with unfortunate civilian killings, not a prelude to genocide."[9]

This essay revisits the debate over whether the international response to the Rwandan genocide was hampered principally by failures of political will, or by failures of comprehension as well. I address the question of how U.S. government officials analyzed the crisis in Rwanda during the months leading up to the genocide—and whether there may have been missed opportunities for effective preventive action that could have averted mass violence.

Although the U.S. government was not the only, nor even the most heavily invested, external power involved in the Rwanda crisis, it played a key role in shaping international responses to the events that preceded the genocide. U.S. diplomats actively sought to end the war that had begun in October 1990 with the invasion of a Tutsi exile army from Uganda, and the U.S. helped broker the Arusha Accords of August 1993. Even more important, as the only superpower left standing after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. dominated discussions over how to redefine not only its own foreign policy objectives, but also those of its NATO allies and the United Nations, vis-à-vis political developments in Africa.

This paper limits its focus to U.S. government policy toward Rwanda *before* April 6, 1994, excluding from consideration the question of how U.S. officials responded to the genocide after it had begun. It draws on declassified U.S. government documents, obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests by the National Security Archive at the George Washington University, and on retrospective interviews with key working-level U.S. officials who were involved in formulating and implementing U.S. policy toward Central Africa from 1990 through the eve of the genocide in April 1994.

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[7] Ibid, 19. See also Suhrke, Astri and Bruce Jones. 2000. "Preventive Diplomacy in Rwanda: Failure to Act or Failure of Actions?" in *Opportunities Missed, Opportunities Seized: Preventive Diplomacy in the Post–Cold War World*. Edited by Bruce Jentleson. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 241. "The failure to recognize the transformation of the conflict from civil war to genocide and to anticipate the escalation in victims and, equally, the failure to possibly nip the genocide in the bud at two points in time, constitute the most critical missed opportunities of the Rwanda case."

[8] Barnett, Michael N. 2002. *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 7.

[9] Ibid, 14. Gregory Brazeal echoes Barnett's arguments, citing the work of Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow on bureaucratic decision-making processes: 1999. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd edition, New York: Addison-Wesley, 4-6. According to Brazeal, responses to genocide by the U.S. government "follow standardized routines, bureaucrats operate according to a 'logic of appropriateness' rather than a 'logic of consequence,' and seemingly irrational results often follow when a bureaucracy is confronted with a problem for which it has no preset response."

Several key findings emerge from this research. Perhaps most strikingly, I conclude that before April 1994, *virtually no U.S. diplomats or intelligence analysts working on Central Africa anticipated the scope of the violence that erupted that month*. Their worst-case scenarios generally envisioned the resumption of a war between the Hutu-dominated government and the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front resulting in tens of thousands of deaths—more than an order of magnitude less than the actual toll of the genocide. This near-universal misperception of the nature and scope of the threat had fatal consequences for Rwanda's Tutsi.

Two key factors inhibited the capacity of U.S. government analysts and policymakers to comprehend and respond to the imminent catastrophe brewing in Rwanda:

- The use of a *faulty cognitive frame* that failed to differentiate between threats of civil war and genocide, leading U.S. officials to underestimate the virulence of the threat to Tutsi civilians.
- The adoption of *rigid policy guidance* stressing the need to achieve a formal power-sharing agreement for Rwanda—and the continuing insistence on staying this diplomatic course despite indications that the implementation of the power-sharing arrangement mandated by the Arusha Accords would exacerbate rather than alleviate the conflicts between rival factions in Rwanda.

After assessing the impact of these factors on U.S. intelligence analysis and diplomacy toward Rwanda, the paper examines the policy implications of this case study. It concludes by discussing the continuing relevance of the lessons of Rwanda for U.S. and international responses to contemporary threats of genocide and mass atrocities.

Rwanda on the Brink of Genocide, 1990-1993

In October 1993, less than a week after the deaths of 18 U.S. soldiers in the Blackhawk Down incident in Somalia, President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda visited Washington, D.C. to meet with Secretary of State Warren Christopher and other top U.S. government officials. A report published in March 1993 by an international commission of inquiry had accused Habyarimana and his entourage of sponsoring a "deliberate policy" aimed at "inciting Rwandans to hate and attack each other," and of permitting extremist militias to "terrorize people in many parts of the country with no effective reaction from the officials responsible to public security."[10] In August 1993, the UN Special Rapporteur on Summary, Arbitrary, and Extrajudicial Executions had issued a report that largely confirmed this commission's findings, concluding that the UN Genocide Convention "might … be considered to apply to" the massacres committed over the past three years, which had claimed the lives of more than 2,000 Tutsi.[11]

But, in meeting with Habyarimana that October, Secretary Christopher expressed no concerns about human rights abuses by the Rwandan regime. Instead he applauded the Rwandan president for his "great courage" in having signed the Arusha Accords of August 1993, which had settled a three-year war between the Hutu-dominated Rwandan government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), an insurgency of expatriate Tutsi who had lived as refugees in Uganda. Christopher "expressed…satisfaction" with the recent UN Security Council vote to create a Rwanda peacekeeping mission, and he articulated his hope that the peacekeepers would "be very effective" in implementing the Accords.[12]

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[10] *Report of the International Commission on Human Rights Abuses in Rwanda since October 1, 1990*, March 1993. Available from: https://www.hrw.org/report/1993/03/01/report-international-commission-investigation-human-rights-violations-rwanda (accessed 14 January 2016).

[11] OAU Report of the International Panel of Eminent Personalities, Ch. 9, p. 64; United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*, "Report by Mr. B. W. Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur, on his mission to Rwanda from 8 to 17 April 1993," 11 August 1993, E/CN.4/1994/7/Add. 1, 22-23.

[12] U.S. Department of State, cable State 313040, "President Habyarimana and Secretary Christopher Discuss Peace Process and Challenges Ahead," 14 October 1993, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC, available from: http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB117/Rw27.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016).

Christopher's optimism reflected the views expressed in other State Department policy papers and cable traffic from this period. In June 1993, nine months before the outbreak of genocide, a policy memorandum by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose had described "the reconciliation process" in Rwanda as one of six "realizable goals" for U.S. policy toward Africa in the coming year. "Real progress has been registered," the memo declared. "Prospects are good that Rwanda, a volatile, heavily populated country with a history of extreme ethnic violence, can move into nation-building during the next year."[13]

In late January 1994, the State Department released its annual Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Rwanda in 1993. The report concluded:

> Human rights abuses that plagued the first quarter of 1993 diminished considerably as the peace process progressed… Those abuses stemmed from dissatisfaction on the part of the former sole party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), over the power-sharing arrangement agreed to on January 9 between the multiparty Government and the RPF.[14]

As late as 1 April 1994—six days before the genocide erupted in Kigali—the new U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson, sent a reporting cable to Washington expressing cautious optimism about the political situation in Rwanda, tinged by concern about a possible return to war:

> A round of Good Friday calls to observers, the UN and key players suggests that the sides are inching towards each other, but afraid to make the final offer. Many observers believe the installation of institutions will have to await the Arusha summit on Burundi…Our major fear is that the relative calm which has characterized Kigali the last couple of weeks will not hold until then. I have urged all my interlocutors to use every influence at their disposal to encourage calm as we approach this last turn on the course.[15]

The war of 1990-1993 was the outgrowth of a long and bitter polarization of relations between Rwanda's majority Hutu and minority Tutsi ethnic groups. In the pre-colonial era, the rulers had been drawn from the pastoralist Tutsi, rather than the agriculturalist Hutu, but these ethnic distinctions had been fluid and permeable. Under German colonial rule beginning in the 1880s, and especially after Belgium seized control of Rwanda after World War I, the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi became hardened as the Europeans redefined these essentially social categories in racial terms. German and Belgian colonial administrators relied on Tutsi surrogates to rule Rwanda, viewing the Tutsi as an aristocratic race with Caucasoid features, and in the 1920s the Belgian administrators issued racial identity cards that permanently fixed Rwandans' ethnic identities.

The Hutu emancipation movement of the late 1950s, led by Grégoire Kayibanda, represented a rebellion against Tutsi social domination as well as Belgian colonial rule. From the onset of the independence struggle in 1959 through the immediate aftermath of Rwandan independence in 1962, more than 20,000 people died in political violence and 150,000—perhaps half of Rwanda's Tutsi population—fled to neighboring countries including Uganda and Burundi.

Neighboring Burundi, whose population had an ethnic composition similar to Rwanda's—but where the minority Tutsi ruled the country after independence—also experienced massive intercommunal violence during this era. In 1972, between 100,000 and 300,000 Burundian Hutu were massacred, and thousands of Hutu refugees fled to Rwanda. Taking advantage of the ensuing

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[13] U.S. Department of State, Information Memorandum from George E. Moose through Mr. Tarnoff to the Secretary, "The African Agenda During the Next Twelve Months: Realizable Goals and Perceived Pitfalls", 18 June 1993, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

[14] U.S. Department of State, "Rwanda Human Rights Practices, 1993," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1993,* 31 January1994, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

[15] U.S. Department of State, cable Kigali 01458, "Negotiations Slide Into Long Weekend," 1 April 1994, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC. Available from: http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB117/Rw02.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016).

chaos, Rwandan army Maj. Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana, a Belgian-trained paratrooper from Northern Rwanda, overthrew President Kayibanda (who had favored the interests of Southern Hutus) in 1973. For the next eighteen years, Habyarimana presided over a stable, autocratic, and increasingly ossified regime in which a Northern Hutu elite maintained its monopoly on power.[16]

In 1990, this regime began to unravel. Under pressure from France and other Western aid donors, Habyarimana announced a program of political reforms in July 1990. These reforms included the transition to a multi-party system by 1992, a referendum on a national political charter by June 1991, the end of compulsory membership in his National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) party, the end of ethnic identification on national identity cards, and the peaceful return of refugees. The issue of refugee return was particularly problematic. By 1990, more than 400,000 Rwandan Tutsi refugees were living in Uganda, Burundi, and Tanzania, and the host governments were placing increasing pressure on these refugee communities. But as the most densely populated country in Africa, Rwanda was ill-equipped to absorb a large influx of repatriated refugees, especially in light of the economic hardship caused by the economic austerity program imposed on Rwanda by the International Monetary Fund and by the collapse of global commodity prices during the early 1990s. Habyarimana's democratization program extended no political rights to Rwandan Tutsi living as refugees outside the country's borders.

On 1 October 1990, approximately 2,000 Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels, mainly Rwandan Tutsi refugees serving in Uganda's National Resistance Army, invaded northeast Rwanda from Uganda. With French and Belgian military assistance, Rwandan government forces halted the initial RPF assault. But the U.S. and other donor governments recognized the intractable nature of the conflict and pressed Habyarimana toward negotiations to reach a power-sharing agreement. In the summer of 1991, Habyarimana set forth a new constitution in order to effect political reforms, the national assembly passed a law allowing the formation of political parties, and shortly thereafter five parties registered with the government and began meetings and demonstrations. In early 1992, hard-line members of the president's party founded a Hutu-supremacist party, the Coalition for the Defense of the Republic (CDR), which began lobbying for inclusion in the government. Under pressure from Western donors, in April 1992 Habyarimana named a prime minister from the MDR, the primary opposition party, who then formed a five-party coalition government that limited Habyarimana's power over routine governmental affairs.

In peace talks hosted by Tanzania and attended by American, French, and other international representatives, the transitional government concluded several protocols with RPF representatives collectively known as the Arusha Accords, which were signed by Habyarimana and RPF Chairman Alexis Kanyarengwe in August 1993. The Accords stipulated the establishment of a 22-month broad-based transitional government (BBTG) within 37 days; elections by the end of 1995; the return of exiles, refugees and displaced persons; the integration of FAR and RPF forces; the integration and reduction of the Presidential Guard and other elite forces; and a Neutral International Force (NIF) to maintain peace. But African leaders witnessing the signing were skeptical about the viability of the agreement, and there was no celebration in Kigali. Almost immediately, the Accords' transition process deadlocked, as the various players presented slates of ministerial candidates and maneuvered for position and influence.[17]

Even as the rival factions in Rwanda jockeyed for advantage, the member states of the UN Security Council in New York locked horns over the establishment of the NIF. The Arusha Accords had stipulated that the NIF would carry out a wide range of security tasks, including guaranteeing the overall security of the country, maintaining law and order, tracking arms caches and neutralizing armed gangs throughout the country, and determining security parameters for Kigali with the objective of making it a neutral zone. Under pressure from the U.S. and other member states, the Security Council scaled back both the size and the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), authorizing a force of 2,548 peacekeepers charged with the responsibilities to "contribute to the security of the city of Kigali *inter alia* within

[16] OAU International Panel of Eminent Personalities, *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*, Ch. 8, "The Arusha Peace Process," 15-33.

[17] Ibid, 34-53; Suhrke and Jones, "Preventive Diplomacy in Rwanda."

a weapons-secure area established by the parties in and around the city," to "monitor observance of the cease-fire agreement," and to "monitor the security situation during the final period of the transitional government's mandate, leading up to the elections."[18]

In October 1993, before the broad-based transitional government could be established in Rwanda, neighboring Burundi's first elected Hutu president was assassinated by Tutsi military officers. The subsequent two months witnessed a massive bloodletting in which 30,000 to 50,000 Burundian Hutu and Tutsi died in intercommunal violence and 250,000 refugees fled the country. The massacres in Burundi eviscerated what little trust and good will remained between rival Hutu and Tutsi political factions in Rwanda, dealing a fatal blow to the already shaky prospects for the implementation of the Arusha Accords.

The Limits of Foreknowledge: U.S. Conflict Analysis on the Eve of Genocide

Proponents of the view that U.S. officials surely must have known about the impending genocide have ample ammunition to support their claims. Various diplomats and other international observers had urgently warned of the threat of violence in Rwanda. Canadian law professor Professor William Schabas, a member of the International Commission of Inquiry that visited Rwanda in January 1993, describes the political climate that he and the other members of the Commission encountered:

> [F]aced with convincing evidence of mass killings (i.e., tens to hundreds at a time) of Tutsis, accompanied by public incitement whose source could be traced to the highest levels of the ruling oligarchy, the word "genocide" sprang inexorably to our lips. . . . In a press release issued the day after our departure from Rwanda, we spoke of genocide and warned of the abyss into which the country was heading.[19]

On 11 January 1994, three months before the genocide erupted, the Force Commander of the UN Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), Maj. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, faxed UN headquarters in New York to relay information from an informant who worked as a trainer for the President's party militia. After providing details of the militia's direct connections to the President's party and the Rwandan Army, Dallaire's informant reported: "Since UNAMIR mandate he has been ordered to register all Tutsi in Kigali. He suspects it is for their extermination. Example he gave was that in 20 minutes his personnel could kill up to 1000 Tutsis."[20]

The following month, Dallaire reported that time was "running out for political discussions" and "any spark on the security side could possibly have catastrophic consequences."[21] Following the assassination of two leading government officials in late February, Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Rwanda, declared that the "general situation is observed to be explosive."[22] In a letter to the UN Security Council, the Belgian Foreign Ministry urged that the peacekeeping force in Rwanda be reinforced. It warned, "The political assassinations, the ensuing unrest, and the worsening of the climate of safety, could well lead to

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[18] Hilaire, Max. 2015. *Waging Peace: The United Nations Security Council and Transnational Armed Conflicts*. Berlin: Logos Verlag, 70-72; UN Security Council Resolution 872, October 5, 1993. Available from: http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB452/docs/doc01.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016).

[19] Schabas, William A. 2000. *Genocide in International Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, x.

[20] Facsimile from Maj. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, Force Commander, United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, to Maj. Gen. Maurice Baril, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Request for Protection for Informant," 11 January 1994. See also U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, "The Genocide Fax," 2014. Available from: http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases/rwanda/turning-points/genocide-fax-part-i (accessed 14 January 2016).

[21] Bloomfield, Sara J. and Michael Abramowitz, "Don't Assume that the Rwandan Genocide Couldn't Happen Today," *New Republic*, 7 April 2014. Available from: http://www.newrepublic.com/article/117285/rwanda-genocide-20-year-anniversary-what-have-we-learned: (accessed 14 January 2016).

[22] Booh-Booh, Jacques-Roger. Situation Report of 23 February 1994. In Jake Freyer and Emily Willard, editors, "Sitreps Detail Rwanda's Descent into Genocide 1994: Complete Collection of Peacekeepers' Situation Reports from Rwanda to UN Headquarters in New York," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 466, 7 April 2014. Available from: http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB466/ (accessed 14 January 2016).

a new bloodbath," and expressed concern that the Belgian peacekeepers could become "passive witnesses to genocide in Rwanda."[23]

But most U.S. government diplomatic reporting and intelligence analysis on Rwanda lacked this sense of urgency. Although a few analysts issued warnings about the potential for mass atrocities, virtually none of the Central Africa experts in the U.S. government anticipated the scope of the impending violence. For example, David Rawson, who became U.S. ambassador to Rwanda in January 1994, had grown up in Burundi as the son of a missionary and was one of the only speakers of Kinyarwanda in the U.S. government. Though Rawson "expected internecine killing, he did not anticipate the scale at which it occurred. 'Nothing in Rwandan culture or history could have led a person to that forecast,' he says. 'Most of us thought that if a war broke out, it would be quick, that these poor people didn't have the resources, the means, to fight a sophisticated war. I couldn't have known that they would do each other in with the most economic means.'"[24] George Moose, then serving as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, echoes this view: "We were psychologically and imaginatively too limited."[25]

For officials at the highest echelons of the U.S. government, the degree of awareness of the situation in Rwanda was far lower. Madeleine Albright, who was the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, recalls:

> There had been killings in Somalia, Bosnia; just constant attention to a lot of other issues, unfortunately. We did know obviously that there were struggles both in Rwanda and Burundi. There was hope that the Arusha accords would actually have resolved some of the long-term fighting between the Hutus and Tutsis, so I think it was not high on the agenda…. It didn't show up very often in intelligence summaries. There were not very frequent reports about it.[26]

According to Anthony Lake, President Clinton's National Security Adviser from 1993 to 1997, "[T]here was very little attention to what the problem was and how to fix it politically . . . at least at my level." Several days after the genocide erupted on 6 April 1994, Lake attended a meeting at the Pentagon to plan the evacuation of American civilians from Rwanda. At the end of the meeting, he says, "I asked some of the people from the Defense Intelligence Agency, 'So what's going on? Who's killing who? I haven't seen much about this.' Maybe I'd seen something, but hadn't certainly focused on it. And they couldn't tell me."[27] Likewise, Lieutenant General Wesley Clark, who was then serving as Director of Strategic Plans and Policy for the Department of Defense, "frantically telephoned around the Pentagon for insight into the ethnic dimensions of events in Rwanda" in early April. Clark remembers staff officers asking: "Is it Hutu and Tutsi or Tutu and Hutsi?"[28]

To evaluate the quality of U.S. intelligence analysis and diplomatic reporting on Rwanda during the months leading up to the genocide, one must first make clear one's premises about the nature and purpose of conflict analysis and early warning. Many laypeople conceive of intelligence analysis as a kind of crystal ball whose value depends on how accurately it predicts future events. For example, several publications on the Rwanda genocide have asserted that, in early 1994, a CIA analyst predicted that as many as 500,000 people might die there in genocidal violence.[29] They present this claim as proof that the U.S. government knew that genocide was imminent in Rwanda, and that it should have taken more robust preventive action.

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[23] Belgian Foreign Ministry, Telex #64, From MINAFET to DELBELONU, 25 February 1994. Available from: https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1015806-19940225-gob-bsrr-translation.html#document/p1/a144308 (accessed 14 January 2016).

[24] Quoted in Power *A Problem From Hell*, 347-48.

[25] Ibid, 348.

[26] Albright, Madeleine. Interview for PBS Frontline documentary, "Ghosts of Rwanda," 25 February 2004. Available from: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/albright.html (accessed 14 January 2016).

[27] Lake, Anthony.Interview for PBS Frontline documentary, "Ghosts of Rwanda," 13 December 2003. Available from: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/lake.html (accessed 14 January 2016).

[28] Power, *A Problem From Hell*, 330.

[29] Ibid, 338; OAU, *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*, chap. 9, p. 5; Des Forges, xxx.

But this line of argumentation presents two difficulties. First, the intelligence report that allegedly predicted half a million deaths may well be apocryphal. Three senior U.S. government analysts—two from the CIA and one from the State Department—who have searched the CIA's classified records have been unable to locate any such document. Nor does such a document appear in the collection of nearly 4,500 declassified U.S. and Canadian diplomatic cables and intelligence reports from between 1990 and 1994 concerning Rwanda that have been obtained by the National Security Archive, an independent institute at the George Washington University,[30] or in a more recent tranche of declassified documents published by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2014.[31]

The second, more fundamental difficulty with the claim that the CIA predicted the Rwandan genocide lies in the very assumption that intelligence analysis should have the capacity to accurately predict future events. Nassim Taleb, a statistician who studies business risks, points out that there are inherent limitations to humans' capacity to anticipate future catastrophic events. Taleb uses the term "Black Swan" to describe a "random event satisfying the following three properties: large impact, incomputable probabilities, and surprise effect." Because a Black Swan represents a sudden and massive deviation from a normative state "with nothing in the past history of the process . . . indicating such possibility," it cannot be reliably predicted. Moreover:

> By some vicious dialectic, it is the surprise element that either causes the Black Swan or at least exacerbates its consequences. If there were anything [in past experience] convincing about the need for protection, then agents would have taken preventive or protective actions. These would have either stopped it in its tracks or limited its impact.[32]

One of the most sophisticated Central Africa analysts in the U.S. government in 1994 worked in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. An expert on the political dynamics of Rwanda and Burundi, he had a Ph.D. in Conflict Resolution had done extensive research on peace processes in Africa. In his view, the Rwandan genocide meets Taleb's criteria for the Black Swan: "I don't think normal analysis can account for a 'perfect storm.' I still think that if you put good analysts in a room and gave them the pre-94 data they would *not* come up with genocide on that scale."[33]

Indeed, recent historical research by historians including André Guichaoua, as well as findings by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), suggests that the genocide may not have been fully planned in advance. Rather, the violence escalated rapidly in April 1994 as a result of evolving circumstances on the ground and decisions made by key actors in the conflict.[34]

Although it may have been impossible before April 1994 to predict the *magnitude* of the impending violence in Rwanda, ample evidence existed regarding the ominous *nature* of the conflict. One curious aspect of international reporting on Rwandan politics during this period is that, in several cases, observers with relatively little personal knowledge of Central Africa recognized the threat of genocide more clearly than seasoned Africa hands in the U.S. government, the United Nations, and other organizations. In 1993, both the International Commission of Inquiry on Violations of Human Rights in Rwanda and B. W. Ndiaye, the UN Special Rapporteur, described the conflict as a potential genocide—though neither predicted the magnitude of the killing. In

[30] Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

[31] U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Rwanda: Turning Points," 2014. Available from: http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases/rwanda/turning-points (accessed 14 January 2016).

[32] Taleb, Nassim N. "Rare Events: Why Don't We Understand Them?" (unpublished ms.), Highland Forum 23, Las Vegas, November 2003, 5-6. Available from: http://highlands.vmhost.psu.edu/_reading/docs/blackswan.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016).

[33] U.S. State Department Rwanda-Burundi analyst, interview with the author, March 8, 2007. In The U.S. State Department's Bureau of African Affairs declined the author's request to quote this analyst by name, so he is referred to in subsequent references simply as a U.S. State Department Rwanda analyst.

[34] See for example Guichaoua, André. 2005. *Rwanda 1994: Les politiques du genocide à Butare*. Paris: Editions Karthala; Guichaoua, André, editor. 1995, *Les crises politiques au Burundi et au Rwanda (1993-1994)*. Lille: Université de Lille 1, Diffusion Karthala.

January 1994, the newly arrived UN force commander in Rwanda, Gen. Dallaire, also warned of the potential for catastrophic violence against Rwandan Tutsis.

U.S. diplomats and analysts witnessed the same danger signs as these other observers but frequently discounted their significance. Ambassador Joyce Leader, who was Deputy Chief of Mission in Embassy Kigali from 1991 to 1994, recalls a series of worrisome events of late 1992 and early 1993:

- The infamous speech of 22 November 1992 by Leon Mugesera, an MRND official in the Northwestern Gisenyi Prefecture (Pres. Habyarimana's home district), denouncing the opposition parties as traitors, condoning summary justice against them, and declaring that the "Tutsi should return to Ethiopia from whence they came … via the Nyaborongo River" (implying that they should be murdered and their bodies thrown into the river). According to Amb. Leader, Mugesera's message "spread by word of mouth like wildfire throughout the country," and that subsequently, Tutsi employees of the American embassy "were falling asleep at their desks, unable to do their work," because the men were standing guard at night to protect their families from attack.
- A speech by a local official in Gisenyi Prefecture in late December 1992 warning of imminent RPF attacks and advising listeners to "clear the brush" in the forest—i.e. kill Tutsi villagers—"so the RPF would have nowhere to hide."
- The massacres of at least 300 Tutsi in Gisenyi Prefecture in December 1992 and January 1993, which, "though portrayed as spontaneous, … stopped abruptly during a two to three week period in January when an International Commission on Human Rights was in Rwanda."
- "Daily reports … about deaths and destruction across northern Rwanda."[35]

Yet the Embassy staff made little systematic effort to investigate these incidents. Joyce Leader recalls: "[W]e knew about the formation and the training of the militia, but we didn't do anything about it, except to talk to people and say that this is unconscionable—you can't do this."[36] Indeed, diplomatic cables from Embassy Kigali sometimes minimized the significance of the violence in Rwanda. For example, on 16 December 1992, the State Department's Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs transmitted a draft of the 1992 Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Rwanda to Embassy Kigali. The report charged: "In 1992 there were significant human rights abuses, many related to the conflict with the RPF," and that: "Credible reports allege that local officials were involved in widespread ethnic violence in March in which 300 died and 15,000 were displaced."[37] A week later, Embassy Kigali cabled back to protest these allegations:

> We contest the claim of "significant human rights abuses." War, ethnic violence, political violence, terrorism and unchecked assaults are abominations and cause immense human suffering. Can they, however, be classified as human rights abuses when their links to government actions or agents are tenuous, unproven and, indeed, seem to be perpetrated by all sides and not necessarily orchestrated or organized? In Rwanda, all sides are suspect but conclusive evidence is either lacking or ambiguous. We propose:
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> In 1992 there were human rights abuses in Rwanda, many related to the conflict with the RPF.[38]

[35] Leader, Joyce E. *Rwanda's Struggle for Democracy and Peace,* 22-23.

[36] Leader, Amb. Joyce E. Interview with the author, November 2004.

[37] U.S. State Department, Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, "Rwanda: Initial Edit of 1992 Country Report on Human Rights Practices," 16 December 1992, 3, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

[38] Embassy Kigali to Secretary of State Washington, "Comments on Initial Edit of 1992 Human Rights Report: Rwanda," 23 December 1993, 3, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

As for the reports published by the International Commission of Inquiry in March 1993 and by the UN Special Rapporteur that August, Embassy Kigali noted duly their assertions, but did not share their sense of alarm. Indeed, the first draft of the Embassy's 1993 Human Rights Country Report for Rwanda, composed that October, asserted: "The peace process that culminated in the August 4 peace accord led to the virtual elimination of the human rights abuses that plagued the country during the first quarter of 1993."[39] Commenting on a subsequent draft of the Human Rights Report two months later, Embassy Kigali declared of the International Commission of Inquiry:

> The group's findings were welcomed by the human rights groups in Rwanda that believe the president and his party are behind all abuses; they documented long-held suspicions. However, the human rights groups that defend Hutus criticized the Commission's work. The Commission's methodology had several weaknesses.[40]

The Embassy did not elaborate on the nature of the weaknesses it perceived in the Commission's report.

During the eighteen months before the genocide, analysts at both the State Department and the Defense Intelligence Agency issued occasional warnings of the potential for mass atrocities in Rwanda. Already in September 1992, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) issued a classified report with the chillingly prescient subtitle "The Hutu Right and the Genocide Card." This report pointed out that, historically, when exiled Tutsi had launched cross-border attacks aimed at toppling the Hutu-dominated government, "The Kigali regime—or certainly key elements within it—reacted by killing Tutsis living inside Rwanda."[41] In February 1993, following the Gisenyi massacres and the subsequent resumption of the RPF offensive in Northern Rwanda, the DIA Weekly Warning Forecast Summary declared: "Renewed warfare could lead to the RPF and government forces participating in 'ethnic cleansing' of their opponents further exacerbating the situation."[42]

Despite having invoked the term genocide, the author of the State Department report says that he did not imagine the possibility of the full-scale destruction of Rwanda's Tutsi population:

> I was certainly aware of the possibility of something like that happening, of genocidal type killing going on. The thing that I didn't get was the scale of this thing. I think I explicitly said, "Oh you could have like twenty thousand people killed, as occurred in the early sixties, twenty thousand people." It's sort of like, magnify that by ten times or twenty times, or forty times! That took a leap of imagination I just didn't have.[43]

But the majority of U.S. intelligence reporting and diplomatic cables on Rwanda before April 1994 failed to differentiate between the threat of war and genocide. Typical of such reports was the CIA's classified *Africa Review* of 14 January 1994, which included an item on Rwanda under the heading: "Sub-Saharan Africa: Democratization Chronology." Circulated three days after Gen. Dallaire's alarming fax to UN headquarters about the arms caches in Kigali, this report included no mention of the Dallaire fax (which none of our interviewees reports ever having seen before the genocide), but two brief paragraphs about the renewed mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission to Rwanda and one paragraph on delays in the implementation of the Arusha Accords:

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[39] Embassy Kigali, "1993 Human Rights Report: Rwanda," Kigali 03613, 4 October 1993, 3, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

[40] Embassy Kigali, "Rwanda: Comments on Initial Edit of 1993 Report on Human Rights Practices," Kigali 04523, 22 December 1993, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

[41] U.S. State Department Rwanda analyst, interview with the author, November 2004.

[42] DIA Weekly Warning Forecast Summary, 10 Feb. 1993, 2, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

[43] U.S. State Department Rwanda analyst, interview with the author, November 2004.

> Political bickering … indefinitely postpones the swearing in of a broad-based transitional cabinet and national assembly as called for by the August 1993 settlement agreement that ended 34 months of fighting between the ethnic Hutu-majority based regime and opposing Tutsi rebels. Any prolonged impasse risks a breakdown of the country's cease-fire.[44]

Apart from the reference to political bickering, which indicates incuriosity about the pre-genocidal conditions in Rwanda, this report was striking for the implicit plot line that it put forth. The report suggested that the democratization process in Rwanda had the potential to move either forwards or backwards—but it did not entertain the possibility that political events might veer off in an entirely different and more sinister direction.

The most explicit warning of the possibility of imminent violence came in a CIA report included in the highly classified National Intelligence Daily of 19 March 1994, less than three weeks before the genocide began. But this paragraph-long warning also focused on the risk of renewed civil war rather than genocide. Under the heading "Rwanda: Threat of Violence Increasing," the paragraph read:

> Security is deteriorating in Kigali and in the demilitarized zone between Hutu-dominated government troops and Tutsi rebel forces. Rumors of imminent warfare are sweeping the capital, international relief workers report both sides are fortifying defensive positions in the demilitarized zone, and a nearby American-owned tea factory may close temporarily, according to the US Embassy. Unless President Habyarimana quickly begins a good-faith effort to form the multiethnic government he agreed to, the rebels probably will resume fighting.[45]

Nor did the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research warn of mass atrocities against civilians—though, during the months leading up to the genocide, it issued increasingly urgent warnings of the risk of a renewed war between the Rwandan government and the Tutsi expatriate army. In December 1993, two months after the assassination of Burundi's first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, INR distributed another classified assessment entitled "Burundi: The Sum of All Fears." This assessment reported that, since October, "Tens of thousands—no one knows exactly how many; estimates range from 30,000 to 150,000—have been killed [and] … 700,000 persons … have fled Burundi." Yet the concluding section of this report, entitled "Rwandan spillover," made no reference to the possibility that Rwanda might soon experience violence far exceeding the scope of the bloodshed in Burundi. It declared of Rwanda:

> Leaders of the key parties—perhaps reassured by the presence of 800 Belgian and Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the capital, and exhausted from a three-year war that neither the RPF nor government could win—still seem committed to power-sharing. But fear, instability, and disorganization exacerbated by events in Burundi may further delay or derail the establishment of a transition government originally slated to take power in September.[46]

According to the author of this INR report, U.S. diplomats "were paying so much attention to the peace process, and trying to keep it on the rails, trying to get that transitional government going that [the Embassy] didn't really appreciate the possibility of things going completely south."[47]

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[44] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Africa Review," 14 January 1994, 21, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

[45] National Intelligence Daily, 19 March 1994, 13, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC. (Italics in original.)

[46] Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. Department of State, "Burundi: The Sum of All Fears," SC#12802-93, December 16, 1993, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC, 14-15. Available from: http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB466/ (accessed 14 January 2016).

[47] U.S. State Department Rwanda analyst, interview with the author, November 2004.

The Perils of Powersharing: U.S. Diplomatic Strategy, 1990-1994

> Peace processes are great. Peace processes sometimes bring peace, and that's wonderful. But peace processes, especially at the U.N. and especially within the State Department, can also be a way of saying we're doing something even when you had, at a minimum, a nagging voice telling you that maybe this ain't working and you have harder decisions to make.
> —Anthony Lake, U.S. National Security Advisor, 1993-1997[48]

"We were naïve policy optimists, I suppose," says Ambassador David Rawson of the attitude of the U.S. diplomatic corps toward Rwanda during the months leading up to the genocide:

> The fact that negotiations can't work is almost not one of the options open to people who care about peace. We were looking for the hopeful signs, not the dark signs…. One of the things I learned and should have already known is that once you launch a process, it takes on its own momentum. I had said, "Let's try this, and then if it doesn't work, we can back away." But bureaucracies don't allow that. Once the Washington side buys into a process, it gets pursued, almost blindly.[49]

The Rwanda analyst in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research echoes Rawson's view:

> I would say the Arusha Agreement, to which we were so committed, was deeply flawed in ways we were probably not willing to admit, because… it was all we had, so we had to make it work…. We had gone down this path to such an extent that… to go back to the international community that had helped forge the peace accord and say, "Well, we better start over again," was just not in the cards.[50]

This commitment to the Arusha process at any price reflected the broader priorities of U.S. foreign policy on Africa in the aftermath of the Cold War. Following the Soviet Union's collapse in the early 1990s, U.S. policymakers had adopted "conflict resolution and democratization" as the watchwords of their diplomacy toward Sub-Saharan Africa. Operating under the premise that democratic societies were intrinsically stable and peaceful, policymakers devised a one-size-fits-all approach to ending violent conflict: convening peace negotiations to produce democratic power-sharing agreements, whose implementation should *ipso facto* result in peace.

This new foreign policy paradigm was summarized by National Security Directive (NSD) 75 on "American Policy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s," which President George H. W. Bush approved in December 1992, and which remained in force during the first years of the Clinton administration. The policy prescriptions set forth in NSD 75 reflected widely shared assumptions of the U.S. foreign policy establishment during the early 1990s: "Post-colonial, authoritarian regimes in Africa have been dismal failures. As they disappear, we have a historical opportunity to show Africans how stability and development can be achieved through participatory political life and responsible government." By propagating "democratic values," the "rule of law," and "free and fair elections," U.S.-sponsored programs could "help make democratic experiments in Africa permanent realities" and thus promote the primary U.S. objectives of "conflict resolution and political stability" in Sub-Saharan Africa.[51]

Despite the lofty rhetoric, the Arusha Accords were a profoundly flawed foundation for stable peace in Rwanda. Astri Suhrke and Bruce Jones describe the Arusha Accords as a "victor's agreement"—or, in the words of Belgian scholar Filip Reyntjens at the time of the signing—"a

[48] Lake, Anthony. Frontline interview, 13 December 2003.

[49] Rawson, Amb. David. quoted in Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 347.

[50] U.S. State Department Rwanda analyst, interview with the author, November 2004.

[51] Bush, President George H. W. National Security Directive 75, "American Policy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s", 2. Available from: https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/nsd/nsd75.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016).

veritable coup d'état for the RPF and the internal opposition."[52] The RPF had routed the Rwandan government's military forces in its February 1993 offensive, and France's military support for the Habyarimana regime had played a critical role in halting the RPF's initial advance toward Kigali. Moreover, the RPF fielded a highly focused and disciplined team of negotiators to the Arusha negotiations of 1992-1993, whereas the government's negotiating team was fractured between Habyarimana's MRND party and three opposition parties. Foreign Minister Boniface Ngulinzira, a member of the opposition MDR, headed the government's negotiating team. On the RPF's insistence, the Hutu extremist Coalition for Defense of the Republic (CDR) was excluded from the negotiating table—but CDR observers attended the Arusha talks and worked to undermine any potential agreement.[53]

Another factor weakening the position of the Rwandan government vis-à-vis the RPF reflected a structural feature of the Arusha negotiations. As INR had emphasized in a classified "African Trends" report issued on 18 September 1992 (nearly a year before the signing of the Arusha Accords):

> Habyarimana's side has been pushed harder and more successfully to compromise. The government is vulnerable to military pressure from the RPF and to political and economic pressure from major western donors. The RPF leadership by contrast enjoys sanctuary in Uganda and is not so heavily pressed by Kigali, outsiders, or the costs of a war which is fought on Rwandan soil. It is likely, therefore, that the RPF will maintain a more intransigent negotiating position. This would perpetuate the current instability and stir passions that could lead to the sort of anti-Tutsi genocide that gripped Rwanda and neighboring Burundi in the past.[54]

This report warned of "the possibility of a genocidal civil war" if the ongoing talks in Arusha were to fail:

> Whether the parties reach agreement depends partly on how much power President Habyarimana is willing to cede to the RPF and domestic opposition parties. But to be accepted by Kigali (and viewed as legitimate by the Rwandan people), a true settlement also depends on the RPF's willingness to accept a powersharing formula more in accordance with the Tutsis' 10-15 percent of the population than with the 50-50 share the RPF has been demanding.

As a result of these imbalances at the Arusha talks, the final peace agreement was highly unfavorable to Habyarimana's MRND party, which was granted only five of twenty-one cabinet positions in the prospective 22-month Broad-Based Transitional Government (BBTG). The agreement was even less appealing to the extremist CDR, which was excluded from the government altogether. Adding insult to injury, the RPF was given the right to provide 40 percent of the soldiers in the new Rwandan army, and 50 percent of the officer corps, far above the Tutsis' proportion of the country's population.[55]

Suhrke and Jones observe: "While resembling a victor's agreement, the accords left the losing side with access to the state apparatus in an interim period, and hence the means for obstructing the

[52] Suhrke and Jones, "Preventive Diplomacy in Rwanda," 244, 246.

[53] Stettenheim, Joel. 2000. "The Arusha Accords and the Failure of International Intervention in Rwanda," in *Words over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict*, Greenberg, Melanie C. John H. Barton, and Margaret E. McGuinness, editors. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 224-26.

[54] U.S. Department of State, cable State 310659, "INR/AA's African Trends – 9/18/92 (No. 19)," September 23, 1992, in *International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1993, Briefing Book, Vol. 1*, compiled and produced by the National Security Archive, at George Washington University, June 2014, 1-69. Available from: http://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20150325-rwanda-briefing-one.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016).

[55] On the proportion of Tutsi in the Rwandan population, see Straus, *The Order of Genocide*¸ 19.

implementation of a political order that was decidedly unfavorable to its interests."[56] Both during the negotiations and in the implementation phase, Habyarimana made no secret of his distaste for the accords. He refused to sign any of the preliminary agreements before the final ceremony in Arusha in August 1993, and he repeatedly disavowed proposals that had been accepted by the government's own negotiating team.[57] In November 1992, Habyarimana announced in a public speech that the agreement on political power-sharing was "nothing but a scrap of paper…that the government is not obliged to respect."[58] Several months later, at the 1993 annual conference of the MRND, he pledged to resist any sharing of power with the RPF.[59]

Beyond these general concerns about the political marginalization of the MRND and the CDR's exclusion from power, the Arusha Accords also sparked fears among Rwandan Hutus about their economic well-being and even their physical survival. UN Special Rapporteur B. W. Ndiaye pointed to one of these concerns in his report of August 1993:

> Many of the people to whom the Special Rapporteur spoke pointed out that the return of the 400,000 to 500,000 refugees from abroad would cause a number of problems. Firstly, as has been mentioned, Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa and there has long since been no land to spare. In addition to this, certain Hutu businessmen are afraid that the Tutsi who have made their fortune in the countries receiving them are coming back to resume control of the Rwandese economy, thereby reasserting their domination.[60]

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen, who oversaw U.S. policy at the outset of the Arusha talks in 1992, had identified the refugee problem as a key obstacle to a peace settlement, and advocated addressing it as a primary issue for negotiation.[61] But while the final agreement of 1993 guaranteed the right of return for Tutsi refugees, it provided no formal safeguards for the rights of those already residing in Rwanda, apart from the stipulation that "refugees who left the country more than 10 years ago should not reclaim their properties, which might have been occupied by other people."[62]

Another possible cause for concern for the Hutu elites was the loss of the safety net provided by the French military forces in Rwanda, which had intervened three times to protect the regime from the RPF. In January 1993, French Ambassador Georges Martre, who had long been a staunch advocate for the Habyarimana regime, ended his tour of duty in Kigali.[63] The Arusha Accords mandated that all French military forces leave Rwanda as a precondition for the power-sharing agreement. Their departure in December 1993 deprived Rwandan Hutus of this implicit security guarantee, leaving in place only a weak UN contingent that had neither the mandate nor the capacity for a robust peace enforcement mission.

By far the most damaging blow to the confidence of Rwanda's Hutu leaders was the mass killing that erupted in neighboring Burundi in October 1993, following the assassination of the newly elected Hutu president of Burundi, Melchior Ndadaye. In the words of the State Department's Rwanda analyst:

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[56] Suhrke and Jones, "Preventive Diplomacy in Rwanda," 244.

[57] See for example U.S. Department of State, cable State 310659, "INR/AA's African Trends – 9/18/92 (No. 19)," 23 September 1992, 1-74.

[58] Stettenheim, "The Arusha Accords," 215; Leader, *Rwanda's Struggle for Democracy and Peace,* 19.

[59] Keane, *Season of Blood*, 92.

[60] United Nations Economic and Social Council, "Report by Mr. B. W. Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur," 8.

[61] Stettenheim, "The Arusha Accords," 223.

[62] See Arusha Accords, "Protocol of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front on the Repatriation of Rwandese Refugees and the Resettlement of Displaced Persons," Article 4, 9 June 1993. Available from: http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/services/cds/agreements/pdf/rwan1.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016).

[63] U.S. Department of State, cable Kigali 00068, "Kigali Awaits Protocol," 8 January 1993, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

> I think one of the reasons the Rwandan Hutus signed onto Arusha in August was because they felt like they could relax a little bit, because the Tutsis had peacefully surrendered power in [Burundi in] June/July. So the Burundi transition may have contributed to a slight mellowing on the Hutu side. It seemed to be, "okay, this isn't so bad, maybe things are changing, so maybe we can handle this power sharing government." But then the army comes in and assassinates the president and plunges the country into this violent spiral. Rwandans look at that and just think, "Holy Christ, look what's going on down there?"… [M]oderates were turned into hard-liners, and hardliners were turned into *génocidaires*, and it was… the only good Tutsi is a dead Tutsi. I don't know if Arusha would have worked under any circumstances, but it became much, much, much more difficult after Burundi went down.[64]

Despite all of these ominous signs, U.S. diplomats continued to view the full and timely implementation of the Arusha Accords as the only viable path to sustainable peace in Rwanda. Joyce Leader, who was the Deputy Chief of Mission at Embassy Kigali, writes that she and other diplomats "assumed, mistakenly as it turned out, that the parties had agreed to … implement and abide by the agreements reached" and "treat the other side as a legitimate partner." Western diplomatic interventions reinforced the conflict cycle: "The more the violence escalated, the harder we diplomats pushed for implementation of the Arusha Accord."[65]

During the months leading up to the genocide, only one "Plan B" for Rwanda was seriously discussed by senior U.S. and UN policymakers: namely, "pulling the plug" on UNAMIR and withdrawing the peacekeeping force if the Rwandans failed to establish the transitional government in a timely manner.[66] Ambassador Donald Steinberg, who was then serving as White House deputy press secretary, points out the fallacy behind this threat. Steinberg observes that telling the parties to the conflict "that if they were being intransigent, we could remove the international peacekeepers" was "the equivalent of saying if there is a babysitter and the kids are misbehaving, the alternative is to have the babysitter leave, and then they burn down the house."[67]

Policy Implications for Genocide Prevention

In a 2006 interview, former President Bill Clinton recalled his own response toward the Rwanda genocide as it was unfolding: "We never even had a staff meeting on it. But I don't blame anybody that works for me. That was my fault. I should have been alert and alive to it."[68] In seeking to account for the passivity of senior U.S. officials toward the Rwanda genocide, most commentators have pointed to the lack of "political will" for a more robust response. Samantha Power has argued:

> It is in the realm of domestic politics that the battle to stop genocide is lost. American political leaders interpret society-wide silence as an indicator of public indifference. They reason that they will incur no costs if the United States remains uninvolved but will face steep risks if they engage. Potential sources of influence—lawmakers on Capitol Hill, editorial boards,

[64] State Department Rwanda analyst, interview with the author, November 2004.

[65] Leader, Joyce E. "The Case of Rwanda," unpublished ms., September 2005, 3, 5.

[66] See for example U.S. Department of State, cable USUN 01187, "Discussions on Rwanda Mandate and New SRSG to Zaire", 23 March 1994, Rwanda Genocide Collection (compiled 1998-2003), National Security Archive, Washington, DC. Available from: http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB472/pdf/us01187.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016). Prudence Bushnell recalls: "I met with both sides in mid-March [1994], about two weeks before the plane was shot down. And I met with Kagame and company, as well as Habyarimana, and Generals. I told them…, 'You have been futzing around on this for a long time, so if you don't put the interim government that you promised to put in place soon, the Security Council may vote to remove the peacekeepers, and if they do, I am really concerned about what may happen.' I think they would have liked nothing better than to have them removed, but I don't know that Habyarimana was in that position. I would understand completely that the extremists would want the peacekeepers out." Interview with the author, September 2006.

[67] Steinberg, Amb. Donald. Interview with the author, 30 October 2006. Steinberg is referring here to his own subsequent negotiating experiences as Ambassador to Angola from 1995 to 1998.

[68] Remnick, David. "The Wanderer," *The New Yorker*, 18 September 2006.

> non-governmental groups, and ordinary constituents—do not generate political pressure sufficient to change the calculus of America's leaders.[69]

Although Power makes a persuasive case, it is important to recognize that genocide cannot be prevented merely by building the political will to do so. In any genocidal situation, popular demands by the American public for humanitarian intervention are likely to arise—if at all—only after mass atrocities have begun, by which time tens or hundreds of thousands of people may already have been killed. And by this stage of the crisis, many low-cost, non-military options for intervention may have evaporated, forcing policymakers to resort to risky and costly peace enforcement missions in order to suppress genocidal violence. From this perspective, it appears that the most important question is not how to generate the political will to respond to genocide when it occurs, but rather how to create the *diplomatic capacity* to prevent genocide before it begins.

Information Collection and Analysis

Three principal deficiencies in information collection and analysis hampered U.S. officials' efforts to understand the emerging crisis in Rwanda: (1) the lack of early warning mechanisms for conveying relevant information to high-level U.S. policymakers; (2) inadequate information gathering concerning the conflict; and (3) the distorted framing of the conflict as a civil war rather than as a potential genocide.

Lack of early warning mechanisms. Events in Central Africa rarely attracted the attention of U.S. policymakers above the level of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Even within the State Department's Africa Bureau, the attention of senior officials was split in numerous directions. Amb. Prudence Bushnell, who was serving as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, recalls: "I was responsible …for promoting democracy in 48 countries, resolving conflict in all these countries. It included environment, HIV/AIDS—I mean what a perfectly ridiculous portfolio to have."[70] The State Department and intelligence agencies did not have any systematic mechanism for calling the attention of senior officials at the White House and National Security Council to emerging threats of genocide.

Inadequate information gathering. Embassy Kigali was a small overseas post with a staff of only four U.S. nationals including the ambassador. It had no political officer, CIA station, or military attaché, which meant that the ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission were the primary "eyes and ears" for the mission. Embassy staff cultivated only limited local contacts apart from Rwandan government officials, diplomats from other embassies in Kigali, and foreign nationals working for the U.S. mission. They did not consistently investigate incidents of violence or rumors of treaty violations. Nor did they systematically track or report on "hate radio" broadcasts or speeches by prominent political figures inciting intercommunal violence. Joyce Leader recalls: "I think the formation of the militia was something we knew about, but we just never got out and tried to track it down. We went on what we gathered from other people without any firsthand information. When we would confront people in positions of authority, which we did, they would of course deny that any such militarization was going on."[71]

Both in Kigali and in Washington, diplomats and intelligence analysts either lacked access to or gave insufficient credence to explicit warnings of potential mass violence. For example, none of our interviewees reported having seen Gen. Dallaire's fax to UN headquarters of 11 January 1994, which warned of the existence of arms caches in Kigali and of Hutu extremists' plans to exterminate the Tutsi. As for the warnings of impending violence issued by Rwandan and international human rights organizations, U.S. diplomats tended to discount these reports, at least partially, as lacking in objectivity and methodological rigor.

Distorted framing of the conflict. The premise that the establishment of democratic institutions was the sole viable path to sustainable peace in Sub-Saharan Africa exerted a powerful influence

[69] Power, *A Problem from Hell,* xviii.

[70] Bushnell, Amb. Prudence. Interview with the author, September 2006.

[71] Leader, Amb. Joyce E. Interview for PBS Frontline documentary, "Ghosts of Rwanda," 30 September 2003. Available from: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/leader.html (accessed 14 January 2016).

over U.S. diplomats' and intelligence analysts' reporting on Rwanda. In Joyce Leader's words, "The embassy was of the view that a lot of the violence that was going on in the country [was] random violence. We were of the view that this could be brought under control, if the peace process could be carried [out], concluded, and then implemented."[72] Perhaps these episodes of violence appeared "random" because they did not fit observers' expectations for an emerging democracy. Viewed as warning signs of a potential genocide, these same acts of violence might not have appeared random at all.

In an incisive analysis of the UN response to the Rwandan genocide, Michael Barnett observes: "Before policymakers can act, they must come to create a definition and understanding of the situation, and that understanding is mediated by how the institution is organized to think."[73] This paper has shown that U.S. foreign policy institutions were not organized to think systematically about the threat of genocide in Rwanda during the early 1990s, and that this deficiency inhibited diplomats' capacity to take effective preventive action. Despite urgent warnings of impending communal violence, U.S. diplomats and intelligence analysts focused principally on the risk of a return to conflict in Rwanda, not on the threat of genocide. Before April 1994, most U.S. intelligence analysts' worst-case scenarios for Rwanda envisioned a potential death toll of tens of thousands, rather than a million. This faulty conflict analysis shaped U.S. policy deliberations, which, in syllogistic fashion, posited "democratization and conflict resolution" as the sole viable path to peace in Rwanda. U.S. policymakers discounted the possibility that the Arusha Accords might aggravate rather than resolve communal tensions in Rwanda, and U.S. officials did not develop any contingency plans for alternative policy options in the event that the power-sharing arrangements mandated by the Accords were to collapse.

To be fair, one must acknowledge that U.S. government and other international observers confronted an exceptionally difficult analytical task during the months leading up to the Rwandan genocide, as well as during the first few weeks after its eruption. In early 1994, there existed a genuine risk of renewed conflict in Rwanda. The downing of the presidential jet on April 6 unleashed three simultaneous catastrophes in the country: a military coup, a civil war, *and* a genocide. U.S. analysts and policymakers struggled to make sense of these chaotic events.[74] It is perhaps understandable that, both before and immediately after the outbreak of the genocide, outside observers focused their attention principally on the threat of war. And yet, the failure of American and other international leaders to recognize and respond to the prospect of mass violence against civilians in Rwanda gave an implicit green light to the *génocidaires*, and may have contributed to expanding the scope of the violence and accelerating its pace.

Policy Formation and Implementation

At the operational level, the U.S. government was served by a conscientious and capable—though frequently overwhelmed—group of diplomats who implemented its policy toward Rwanda during the three years leading up to the 1994 genocide. The central failure of U.S. diplomacy toward Rwanda during this period stemmed not from the deficiencies of individual diplomats, but rather from the overarching U.S. strategy for conflict resolution in Sub-Saharan Africa. This strategy, as outlined in National Security Directive 75 of 1992, emphasized the adoption and implementation of formal peace agreements and power-sharing arrangements, rather than an incremental approach toward achieving security and mutual trust among competing factions in order to prepare the ground for a stable democratic government.

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide,* 60.

[74] For example, Pentagon talking points produced on April 11 warned: "Unless both sides can be convinced to return to the peace process, a massive (hundreds of thousands of deaths) bloodbath will ensue that would likely spill over into neighboring Burundi." Despite this stark warning, the talking points stressed that the U.S. was not "willing to get involved… inside Rwanda or Burundi until peace is restored," but that "we would want to restart our security assistance program once the peace process is back on track." Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Middle East Africa, "Memorandum for Under Secretary of Defense for Policy," I-94/16533, April 11, 1994, in *International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1993, Briefing Book, Vol. 1,* compiled and produced by the National Security Archive, at George Washington University, June 2014, 2-138 and 2-139. Available from: http://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20150325-rwanda-briefing-one.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016)

The U.S. government's policy guidance toward Rwanda offered essentially only two alternatives: "Arusha or bust." Given these constraints, the failure to successfully implement the Arusha Accords would have left U.S. diplomats entirely without options for productive engagement in this crisis. Thus, it is not surprising that the U.S. diplomatic corps invested all its energy into implementing the peace agreement, and discounted the potentially catastrophic effects of the failure to do so.

Yet, perversely, the pressure to implement the Arusha Accords was one of the key factors exacerbating conflict and mutual distrust in Rwanda during the months leading up to the genocide. U.S. diplomats disregarded many ominous signs of the Accords' destabilizing impact on Rwandan politics. For example:

- President Habyarimana's obvious antipathy toward the power-sharing agreement mandated by the Arusha Accords and his reluctance to move toward the Accords' implementation.
- The rage of the Hutu-extremist CDR over its exclusion from the transitional government, and CDR leaders' public incitement of anti-Tutsi violence.
- Population pressures and the ongoing economic crisis, exacerbated by falling global commodity prices and the imposition of an economic austerity program by the International Monetary Fund. These factors heightened fears that the prospective return of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi refugees would threaten the livelihoods of Hutus—both farmers and merchants.
- Above all, the Burundi coup and massacres of civilians in October and November 1993, which terrified Rwandan Hutu leaders about the prospect of sharing political and military power with former Tutsi rebels.

In light of the escalating fears of Rwandan Hutus after the signing of the Arusha Accords, especially after the outbreak of mass violence in neighboring Burundi, the international diplomatic community might have been well-advised to suspend at least temporarily the implementation of the Arusha Accords, and to focus instead on interim steps toward reestablishing physical security and building trust among the rival factions in Rwanda. The report of August 1993 by B. W. Ndiaye, the UN Special Rapporteur, offered a useful starting point for such a policy. Among Ndiaye's recommendations:

- "**Mechanism for the protection of civilian populations against massacres.** A mechanism for the protection of civilian populations against massacres should immediately be set up, in terms of both prevention … and monitoring and intervention in cases of violence…. To this end, international teams of human rights observers and a civilian police force might be established, particularly in high-risk areas; with the agreement of the Rwandese authorities, they would be placed under international supervision."
- "**National reconciliation campaign.** A national reconciliation campaign should be organized in order to attempt to eliminate the negative effects in people's minds of the odious disinformation advocating ethnic and political intolerance, hatred, and violence which has been disseminated in the past. This campaign should begin with a solemn, public commitment, in French and Kinyarwanda, by the Head of State, the Head of Government, the leaders of all the political parties and the religious authorities to adopt a policy of non-discrimination, national unity and respect for human rights…"
- "**Media-related action**…. The reform of the media should take place in accordance with the spirit of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War, proclaimed on 28 November 1978 at the twentieth session of the General Conference of UNESCO."
- "**Dismantling of all violent organizations.** All violent organizations should be dismantled as a matter of urgency. Criminal organizations such as the 'death squads,' 'Amasasu,'

or 'Network Zero,' must be identified and dismantled, and their members prosecuted, whatever their rank."

- "**Combating impunity and compensating victims**…. In describing the need to end the vicious circle of impunity by rendering justice to the victims and their families, some of the people with whom the Special Rapporteur spoke mentioned the need for 'drastic surgery' in order to bring about genuine national reconciliation and eliminate the spectre of a recurrence of the massacres…. History now seems to be repeating itself, and the errors of the past should be avoided."[75]

Bruce Jentleson has written: "Foreign policy is about making choices. The choice for preventive diplomacy is politically difficult, the political constraints are serious ones; but they are potentially malleable… The key, as it always has been and always will be, is executive leadership."[76] As the proposals in Ndiaye's report vividly illustrate, U.S. diplomats were not inevitably locked into the policies that they pursued during the months leading up to the Rwandan genocide. They made choices to adopt one set of policies, aimed at "democratization and conflict resolution," rather than another, that would have sought to build physical security and mutual trust as preconditions for stable democratic rule.[77] The obstacles to adopting this alternative course of action were not the lack of imagination, nor the lack of knowledge, nor even primarily the lack of resources, because only modest resources would have been required in order to begin to implement several of Ndiaye's proposals. Rather, the obstacles lay principally in the ways that U.S. foreign policy institutions were "organized to think." In order to work effectively to prevent atrocities, diplomats and senior policymakers must learn to think anew about the nature and the urgency of this challenge.

Lessons Learned? The Path Forward

In the two decades since the Rwandan catastrophe, the U.S. government has adopted measures to better anticipate and respond to emerging threats of genocide and mass atrocities, most notably through President Obama's establishment of the interagency Atrocity Prevention Board (APB) in 2012. This new administrative machinery for atrocities prevention within the U.S. government has facilitated more robust and sustained attention to civil strife in countries of otherwise peripheral interest to senior U.S. policymakers, including Burma, Kenya, Burundi, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan.[78]

The creation of the APB, which convenes on a monthly basis to assess emerging threats of genocide and mass atrocities around the world, has helped remedy some of the institutional deficits that hampered U.S. analysis of the Rwandan crisis on the eve of the genocide. In particular:

- The APB provides an institutional channel for communicating early warnings of potential mass atrocities to the highest levels of the U.S. executive branch.
- When warranted, the APB can provide a limited "surge capacity" for information gathering and analysis concerning emerging threats—though its resources for such activities remain restricted.
- The APB applies an analytical lens focused specifically on the atrocity prevention mandate, allowing it to complement the perspectives of analysts and diplomats who are focused

[75] United Nations Economic and Social Council, "Report by Mr. B. W. Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur," 11 August 1993, 18-22.

[76] Jentleson, Bruce, editor. 1999. *Opportunities Missed, Opportunities Seized: Preventive Diplomacy in the Post–Cold War World*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 348.

[77] For a discussion of this tension between the tasks of democratization and post-conflict stabilization, which some conflict resolution practitioners call the "sequencing dilemma," see for example Durch, William J., editor. 2006. *Twenty-first-Century Peace Operations*. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 11-28 and 573-602.

[78] Levinger, Matthew. 2015. "A Core National Security Interest: Framing Atrocities Prevention," *Politics and Governance* vol. 3, no. 426-27. Available from: http://www.cogitatiopress.com/ojs/index.php/politicsandgovernance/article/view/322 (accessed 14 January 2016); Finkel, James P. 2014. "Atrocity Prevention at the Crossroads: Assessing the President's Atrocity Prevention Board After Two Years," *Center for the Prevention of Genocide Occasional Papers*, No. 2 (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum). Available from: http://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20140904-finkel-atrocity-prevention-report.pdf (accessed 14 January 2016).

> on other national security priorities such as counterterrorism, security cooperation, or democracy promotion. Thus its work can help illuminate the cognitive blind spots that were evident in the U.S. government's analysis of Rwandan politics before the genocide.[79]

Despite this important progress, the broader historical record of recent years—including the commission of mass atrocities across large areas of Africa and the Middle East—suggests that much still remains to be accomplished. Both of the factors that impaired U.S. government officials' understanding of Rwanda in 1993-1994—*faulty cognitive framing* and *rigid policy guidance*—have continued to impede U.S. atrocity prevention efforts in recent years.

Faulty Cognitive Framing

Just as the civil war frame led U.S. officials to underestimate the risk of mass violence against Rwandan civilians in 1994, faulty framing has played a role in shaping U.S. policy toward North Africa and the Middle East since the Arab Spring, as well as toward the newly independent nation of South Sudan. For example, after the fall of Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi in 2011, President Obama and other senior U.S. officials applied a cognitive frame focusing on "democratization" to the Libyan political transition, discounting evidence of growing threats of instability and danger to civilians.

After rebel forces seized control of Tripoli in September 2011, President Obama congratulated the people of Libya on "writing a new chapter in the life of their nation" by building "a future that is free and democratic and prosperous."[80] By the following year, prospects for peace and security in Libya had turned bleak. In September 2012, the U.S. Ambassador to Libya was assassinated in Benghazi, and the International Crisis Group warned that Libya was devolving into "a country of regions and localities pulling in different directions, beset by intercommunal strife and where well-armed groups freely roam."[81] But President Obama remained upbeat. In his speech to the UN General Assembly that month, he declared:

> [E]ven as there will be huge challenges to come with a transition to democracy, I am convinced that ultimately government of the people, by the people, and for the people is more likely to bring about the stability, prosperity, and individual opportunity that serve as a basis for peace in our world. So let us remember that this is a season of progress.[82]

With respect to South Sudan, U.S. and other international donors framed the situation principally in terms of the challenges of state-building and "post-conflict reconstruction." Unlike Rwanda, which had attracted meager foreign assistance or high-level diplomatic attention during the early 1990s, the new republic of South Sudan received billions of dollars of aid and intense international scrutiny after achieving independence from Sudan in July 2011. Organizations including the U.S. government, the UN, and international human rights groups closely monitored developments in Sudan and South Sudan, watching for trouble signs in the disputed border territories of Abyei and South Kordofan, in the pastoralist grazing corridors of Jonglei and Unity states, and in other regions.

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[79] Finkel, "Atrocity Prevention at the Crossroads"; Finkel, James P. 2015. "Moving Beyond the Crossroads: Strengthening the Atrocity Prevention Board," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 9, 2: 138-47, available from: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1361&context=gsp (accessed 14 January 2016); Alleblas, Tessa and Eamon Aloyo, Sarah Brockmeier, Philipp Rotmann, Jon Western. 2015."Syria and Beyond: Assessing the Obama Administration's Atrocity Prevention Board," The Hague Institute for Global Justice, unpublished ms.

[80] Obama, Barack. 2011. Remarks by President Obama at United Nations High-Level Meeting on Libya, 20 September. Available from: https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/20/remarks-president-obama-high-level-meeting-libya (accessed 14 January 2016).

[81] International Crisis Group. Divided We Stand: Libya's Enduring Conflicts. *Middle East/North Africa Report* No. 130, 14 September 2012. Available from: http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/130-divided-we-stand-libyas-enduring-conflicts.aspx (accessed 14 January 2016).

[82] Remarks by the President to the UN General Assembly. 25 September 2012. Available from: https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-un-general-assembly (accessed 14 January 2016).

Nonetheless, the implosion of the South Sudanese government in December 2013, when a civil war erupted between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to Vice President Riek Machar, took most international observers by surprise. In the words of peacekeeping expert Alison Giffen:

> The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) had focused its protection efforts on early warning, prevention, and support to the government of South Sudan to fulfill the state's responsibility to protect its people. But while Security Council members backed this strategy, they didn't adequately invest in its success through coordinated pressure on the government of South Sudan to make reforms that could have prevented this crisis. This approach to protecting civilians turned out to be foolishly idealistic and wholly inadequate when government forces turned against their own citizens, opposition and irregular forces rose up to join in the abuses, and communities committed crimes against their neighbors.[83]

A study on U.S. atrocity prevention efforts since 2011 found analogous shortcomings in the U.S. government's analytical work on this crisis: "The APB and others had devoted considerable time over the months preceding the current political crisis to the potential threat of atrocities in South Sudan, but focused on Jonglei State and elsewhere where there was inter-ethnic violence rather than on Juba itself."[84]

In both of these cases, international policymakers fell prey to the same type of cognitive failures that had characterized the response to the Rwandan genocide. After the defeat and killing of Qaddafi in 2011, the Libyan civil war was lauded as a successful "transition to democracy." President Obama and other international leaders disregarded signs of the country's political unraveling and growing civilian insecurity. After South Sudan achieved its independence, the UN and other international donors oriented their policies around the objectives of state-building and "post-conflict reconstruction." They paid little heed to the possibility that the country's leaders—who had for decades fought in militias against, as well as alongside, each other—might take up arms in a new civil war.

Rigid Policy Guidance

In cases of faulty cognitive framing, the inability to *see* a situation clearly can inhibit one's ability to *act* effectively to address it. Rigid policy guidance can contribute to the converse phenomenon: the unwillingness to *act* can render one unable to *see*. In 2006, President Bill Clinton belatedly acknowledged that he had not been "alive" to events in Rwanda during the genocide. Because Clinton had ruled out supporting an international intervention to stop the violence, officials in his administration shied away from discussing the events in Rwanda too precisely—for example by avoiding public use of the word "genocide."

This same tone of studied evasion may be found in some of President Obama's pronouncements on recent crises in North Africa and the Middle East. Obama came into office determined to end his predecessor's wars in the Middle East and Asia, not to begin new ones. Perhaps unsurprisingly, when discussing situations in which he has decided not to intervene, he has steered clear of using language that would imply the need for vigorous American action. Thus, in September 2012, he saw a "season of progress" in Libya, even as other observers saw a nation on the brink of chaos.

With respect to the Syrian civil war, this pattern has been even more striking. At the rare moments when Obama has advocated a muscular response to the Assad regime's atrocities—notably in the wake of its 2013 chemical weapons attacks on Syrian civilians—he has spoken vividly and forcefully about the human suffering in the country.[85] But apart from his speeches about chemical weapons, Obama publicly discussed the Syrian crisis only five times in speeches

[83] Giffen, Alison. 2014. "How the UN Should Handle South Sudan," CNN, February 5. Available from: http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2014/02/05/how-the-u-n-should-handle-south-sudan/ (accessed 14 January 2016).

[84] Finkel, "Atrocity Prevention at the Crossroads," 22. See also Alleblas, Aloyo, Brockmeier, Rotmann, and Western, "Assessment of U.S. Atrocity Prevention Efforts," 6.

[85] Levinger, "A Core National Security Interest: Framing Atrocities Prevention," 37.

and presidential statements delivered between April 2011 and August 2014. The longest of these statements was 700 words; most were considerably shorter. For example, in his annual address to the UN General Assembly of September 2011, Obama devoted two paragraphs to discussing Syria. On the same occasion the following year, Obama devoted three paragraphs to the Syrian conflict, declaring that "the regime of Bashar al-Assad must come to an end so that the suffering of the Syrian people can stop and a new dawn can begin."[86]

Like the Rwandan genocide, the crises in Libya, South Sudan, and Syria were all intractable conflicts that posed difficult challenges for international policymakers. Even the most robust and enlightened policies would have had no guarantee of success, and might have given rise to perverse unintended consequences. But any effective decision-making process must orient the policy to address the facts on the ground, rather than reengineer the facts to meet the policy prescriptions. In order to achieve any desired change, we must begin by paying attention to the problem. We must be alive to the possibilities, both positive and negative. We must recognize that issues of grand strategy and global security cannot be divorced from the mandate to defend individual human lives.

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[86] Ibid, 33-37.

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Turning Atrocity Prevention Inside-Out: Community-Based Approaches to Preventing, Protecting, and Recovering from Mass Violence

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***Abstract**: This article reviews recent research and evolving practice of community-based approaches to preventing and mitigating mass violence. It considers growing evidence that externally driven international interventions in response to violence are failing due to a lack of recognition and support for local actors, and increasing research into locally-led efforts, such as community protection strategies, early warning and response systems, interreligious peacebuilding, and post-atrocity trauma healing. Drawing from examples from a wide range of cases, including Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Colombia, and Sri Lanka, the article identifies key lessons for improving atrocity prevention policy and practice. Based on examination of the literature and case studies, it argues for a fundamental shift in the field of atrocity prevention from external interventionism toward supporting local peace agency.*

***Keywords**: atrocity prevention, local peacebuilding, community protection, agency, early warning, community-based*

Introduction

Ten years after the adoption of the responsibility to protect doctrine by the global community in 2005, horrific images of mass violence against civilians in places like Syria and South Sudan continue to beam across our televisions and computer screens. Despite important progress over recent years in elevating genocide prevention as a policy priority and developing new tools for early warning and response, the persistence of large-scale, deliberate violence against civilians in far too many places around the world beckons for more effective approaches to protecting civilians and averting mass killing. While many within the international community argue for more robust peacekeeping, more rapid intervention, and more effective warning and risk systems, this article proposes shifting greater support toward peacebuilding actors and efforts within the local context where mass violence unfolds. My premise is that the growing recognition of the failures of international interventions to effectively halt violence and sustain peace alongside increasing evidence that local peacebuilding actors can play a positive role in helping to prevent violence and rebuild peace in more sustainable ways is relevant to the field of genocide prevention.[1]

As the peacebuilding field is increasingly demonstrating, and as anyone who has lived through a violent conflict situation understands, even amid the most wicked conflicts there are always individuals and communities resisting the systems of dehumanization and killing that allow genocide and mass atrocities to unfold. As documented on the web-based database Insight on Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org), local peacebuilding groups continue working in even the worst situations of violent conflict to foster dialogue and relationships across groups,

[1] Autesserre, Severine. 2010. *The Trouble with Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge; Autesserre, Séverine. 2014. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; Denskus, Tobias. 2007. "Peacebuilding Does Not Build Peace." *Development in Practice*, Vol. 7, No. 4-5, 656-662; Donais, Timothy. 2011. "¿Empoderamiento O Imposición? Dilemas Sobre La Apropiación Local En Los Procesos de Construcción de Paz Posconflictos Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes." *Relaciones Internacionales*, February, No. 16; Funk, Nathan C. 2012. "Building on What's Already There: Valuing the Local in International Peacebuilding." *International Journal*, Vol 67, No. 2, 391-411; MacGinty, Roger, and Oliver P Richmond. 2013. "The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace." *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 34, No. 5, 763–783; Anderson, Mary B. and Marshall Wallace. 2013. *Opting out of War: Strategies to Prevent Violent Conflict*. Boulder; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers; Carpenter, Ami C. 2012. "Havens in a Firestorm: Perspectives from Baghdad on Resilience to Sectarian Violence." *Civil Wars* Vol. 14, No. 2, 182–204; MacGinty, Roger, and Palgrave Connect (Online service). 2011. *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance Hybrid Forms of Peace*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; MacGinty, Roger Mac. 2014. "Everyday Peace: Bottom-up and Local Agency in Conflict-Affected Societies." *Security Dialogue* Vol. 45, No. 6, 548-564; Kaplan, Oliver. 2013. "Protecting Civilians in Civil War: The Institution of the ATCC in Colombia." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 50, No. 3, 351–367; Richmond, Oliver. 2005. *Transforming Peace (The Transformation of Peace and Conflict Studies)*. New York: Palgrave McMillan Publishers; Richmond, Oliver. 2011. *A Post-Liberal Peace*. New York: Routledege Publishers.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.3.1313

protect civilians, prevent recruitment, promote tolerance and refute hate, and support healing and reconciliation in the face of inhumane acts. Faced with the seemingly binary choice of killing or being killed, these leaders and communities seek other options, and they are not alone in history. Though facing different types of violence in different contexts, many of these present day local peace agents are doing the work of genocide prevention on a daily basis. Their efforts, though newly documented, are not entirely new. Indeed, they may resemble the resisters who refused Nazi orders and protected their Jewish neighbors, the Colombian villagers who created peace zones to thwart attackers from all sides in a civil war, and the Rwandan Muslims who refused to be divided as Hutu-Tutsi during the genocide.

Traditionally, the genocide field has focused on mobilizing external interventions to halt mass violence once it is already underway. Recent efforts to shift the focus toward earlier prevention—arresting the processes that can lead to annihilative violence before the killing begins—represent an important shift in theory and approach. However, they remain bedeviled by the challenge of mobilizing attention and support from external international actors to situations that have not yet made the headlines. Closing the response gap may require turning the focus from external intervention toward internal capacity building and support for local actors, who inevitably experience the warning signs and escalating dynamics of mass violence before those watching from the outside. A growing body of research within the peacebuilding and conflict prevention fields is demonstrating that local communities facing the unraveling of their societies from atrocities, war, and violence can and do find creative, nonviolent, and effective methods for protecting their members, opting out of the violence, and restoring peace.[2] These examples of what we can call local peace agency provide an important opportunity to the field of genocide prevention. They not only challenge our dominant assumptions about how mass violence can be averted, but may also help re-orient our theory and practice in ways that can help move upstream to earlier prevention, break repeating cycles of violence, and ensure more sustainable recovery and reconciliation processes over the long-term.

This article reviews some of the recent developments in theory, research, and practice around peacebuilding and the role of local peace actors, and considers what lessons they might offer the field of genocide prevention. It does not claim to examine all aspects of local violence and peacebuilding, address all realities faced in polarized societies, or consider the role of many important actors, such as diaspora and the displaced. In drawing lessons for the field of genocide prevention from local peacebuilding practice, I do not propose that all local actors are positive agents for helping to prevent genocide. Indeed local actors are also the perpetrators of atrocities and violence and societies at risk of mass atrocities deserve and should receive critical external support and intervention when needed. I do claim that the potential role of local peace agents as critical actors in genocide and atrocities prevention is too often overlooked and under-supported.

Why Link Genocide Prevention and Peacebuilding?

Although genocide and mass atrocities prevention, broader conflict prevention, and peacebuilding all draw from related theory and practice to help us better understand processes of human violence and halt, mitigate, or transform them, the three are often considered and treated within policy and practice as quite distinct fields. Each has worked to distinguish its own definitions and approaches to human violence, and each has advanced its own approaches through particular policy developments and practical initiatives. This specialization has important conceptual, theoretical, and practical benefits and is important as a still relatively new field of study works to define itself and deepen our understanding of the various forms of violent conflict that exist and the variety of approaches possible to seek a more peaceful world. It can, however, become a false distinction that reduces opportunities to learn and improve across different approaches. In fact, scholars and practitioners of genocide prevention, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding have a great deal to

[2] Anderson and Wallace, *Opting out of War*; Carpenter, "Havens in a Firestorm", 182–204; Mac Ginty, "International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance"; MacGinty, "Everyday Peace: Bottom-up and Local Agency in Conflict-Affected Societies"; Kaplan, "Protecting Civilians in Civil War", 351–367; Richmond, Oliver. *Transforming Peace (The Transformation of Peace and Conflict Studies)*; Richmond, Oliver. *A Post-Liberal Peace*.

offer and learn from one another. By bringing together lessons from each across the current divide, we may all benefit in ways that help improve theory and, most importantly, strengthen our abilities to reduce various forms of tragic and preventable human suffering.

A Paradigm Shift in the Making: From External Intervention to Local Leadership

As the fields of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and genocide prevention continue to grow, debate has risen around how the international community engages with local actors. Important flaws in current approaches are being revealed through case studies and evaluations of international peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions, while scholars are beginning to challenge the assumption that the so-called international community, which is dominated by a relatively small group of countries and organizations, has either the right or the capacity to continually intervene in other countries in ways that are often not effective and may do further harm. [3] Critics point to a liberal interventionist bias that dominates the field and assumes solutions to conflict need to be driven from the outside, represented largely by Western ideology and undertaken by actors and resources from the global North directed into the global South.[4] As these critics explain, interventions designed and directed by external actors are too often superimposed upon local contexts for which they may not be appropriate, leading to failures to improve the peace, or worse, increased violence and injustice.[5] As Nathan Funk points out, "Activities undertaken in the name of peacebuilding have often marginalized local actors, proceeded in ways that did not adequately respond to local expectations, and at times replaced one set of problems with another."[6]

In her in-depth case study of the UN's peace operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo from 2002-2006—an operation mobilized in response to one of the worst cases of mass violence against civilians in decades—Severine Autesserre points to a dominant peacebuilding culture embedded in the international system that ignores the importance of local violence and in turn marginalizes local peacebuilders. Her work reveals how the international community's focus on liberal peace (achieved largely through elections) and national and international issues (addressed at macro policy levels) ultimately failed to address the key drivers of violence (which were often local) and undermined much-needed local peacebuilding efforts (i.e., peace agency).[7] Growing evidence demonstrates how failures to deliver peace through external interventions often derive from problems such as a lack of recognition or understanding of local knowledge and capacities; cookie-cutter technical solutions that do not fit specific contexts; and, the creation of parallel economies and systems of actors that undermine local capacities for peace. Contributing to these failures is an inadequate understanding of how people are already acting for peace in conflict contexts, why they are doing so, and what outside actors could do to support and expand their efforts.

Despite the reality that many of the most immediate choices between violence and peace are faced and made by those living within the immediate realities of violent conflict, those living outside these contexts continue to dominate the scholarship and resources directed toward peacebuilding. As the practice and study of peacebuilding begins to focus more attention on the local dynamics at play in national and regional conflicts, the importance of understanding local perspectives and potentials for peace is gaining ground. In his study of local peace committees and national peacebuilding, Andries Ondendaal argues for greater attention to strengthening local systems of resilience against violence as a critical and under-attended aspect of helping peace agreements

[3] Autesserre, *The Trouble with Congo*; Autesserre, Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention; Denskus, "Peacebuilding Does Not Build", 656-662.

[4] Jabri, Viviene. 2013. "Peacebuilding, the Local and the International: A Colonial or a Postcolonial Rationality?" *Peacebuilding* Vol. 1, No. 1, 3–16; Lidén, Kristoffer. 2013. "In Love with a Lie? On the Social and Political Preconditions for Global Peacebuilding Governance." *Peacebuilding* Vol. 1, No. 1, 73–90.

[5] Funk, "Building on What's Already", 391–411; Donais, "¿Empoderamiento O Imposición?"; MacGinty, Roger Mac, and Oliver P. Richmond. 2013. "The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace." *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 34, No. 5, 763–83.

[6] Funk, "Building on What's Already", 392.

[7] Autesserre, *Peaceland Conflict Resolution*; Autesserre, *The Trouble with Congo.*

stick at a national level. Doing so, however, requires understanding local conflict dynamics and capacities for peace, which are not merely "smaller clones of the master cleavage" in a society.[8] "Local dynamics and local agency, therefore, have an impact on the manner in which both violence and peace unfold."[9] Put more simply, as a colleague recently asked when I described the complicated, time-consuming, and expensive processes undertaken by large donors to determine what kinds of peacebuilding activities they should fund in a country: "Why don't they just ask the locals?"

This critique is not to suggest that the international community's efforts to halt violence and advance peace are not making notable contributions and improving the lives of many. The mere growth in number, scale, and variety of peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions undertaken by the international community signals concerted effort aimed at strengthening the world's commitment, approaches, and tools to reducing human violence and preventing genocide and war. Research over recent years indicates that the international community is improving its ability to end wars through mediation and negotiated settlement, even if its ability to prevent new wars still lags behind.[10] The emergence of focused attention by the international community to strengthening tools for preventing mass atrocities and genocide is leading to new policies, analysis, and training. The UN Peacebuilding Commission has improved the way it operates and demonstrated important contributions in Liberia and Burundi. The non-governmental peacebuilding community has grown exponentially and now operates in conflict situations around the world providing analysis, training, mediation, facilitation, capacity-building and other direct and indirect support to high level peace processes as well as community-level peace programs. No doubt many lives have been saved and improved by the growing panoply of actors engaged and efforts underway.

Still, a growing body of research is demonstrating that despite the investment of billions of dollars in post-conflict, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding efforts by the international community, violent conflicts often re-emerge and root problems facing societies remain unresolved. Internationally designed and delivered interventions, while often critical to halt abuse or accompany a settlement, often become more a costly band-aid than a lasting solution, undermine or neglect local capacities, and may in fact replicate systems of injustice and violence that underlie the conflicts they purport to address. In turn, policymakers grow skeptical, cut budgets, and self-fulfilling prophecies of entrenched violence persist.

For 2014, the UN peacekeeping budget stood at $7.83 billion, a cost that has been growing over the past two decades as the international community expands the number and size of its interventions to try to restore and rebuild peace in war-torn societies. This money represents significant savings compared to late reaction military interventions by unilateral countries like the United States, and the shift from blind neglect to active intervention is certainly a welcome advance in the international community's response to potential or outright genocide. However, current approaches require critical improvements if they are to become more effective at truly transforming societies impacted by mass violence and sustaining effective prevention for the long-term.

Turning genocide prevention inside-out to focus first on supporting and strengthening local capacities for peace within a society, linking them more effectively with regional and global back-up response systems, would not only save lives, it would also be significantly less expensive and less damaging, and holds greater promise for finally closing the prevention gap so often debated.

Community-Based Approaches to Atrocity Prevention

In every situation of violence and human suffering, no matter how deep and seemingly entrenched, there are people working for peace. Some genocide scholars have documented such efforts by individual resisters or communities that refrained from violence, but we study these sparks of

[8] Odendaal, Andries. 2013. *A Crucial Link: Local Peace Committees and National Peacebuilding.* Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 32.

[9] Odendaal, *A Crucial Link, 17.*

[10] Woocher, Lawrence. 2009. Preventing Violent Conflict: Assessing Progress, Meeting Challenges. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

hope far too little. Peace practitioner scholars like Mary Anderson and John Paul Lederach have demonstrated how communities within situations of violent conflict can and often do find creative ways of avoiding harm or pro-actively advancing peace. Growing literature on zones of peace, infrastructures for peace, and other locally-led initiatives to create mechanisms for preventing and mitigating violence demonstrate the reality that this kind of agency for peace is alive and well in societies across the world today.[11] Case studies from Colombia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, the Philippines, and elsewhere that illuminate some of the strategies communities employ—from engaging armed actors to mobilizing faith communities to employing nonviolent actions—provide further evidence that resisting violence and acting for peace is a common phenomena across cultures and geography, though its specific form and function may differ. In their recent work, *Opting Out of War*, Anderson and Wallace examine 14 such communities that chose not to engage in violence, and in some instances worked to actively restore or spread peace, within civil war contexts. They identify key characteristics across these cases—community cohesion, leadership, consultation, communication, and a willingness and ability to engage with armed groups—as common factors that may help communities opt out of violence. *Notably, the study finds international involvement to have played little to no role in the choices these communities made to opt out of violence.*

Anderson's book provides a critical jumping off point and inspiration for understanding how local initiatives by communities to avert violence might be relevant to atrocity prevention. The authors note:

> The experiences of these nonwar communities remind us that oppositions exist. They remind us that capacities exist. They teach us that communities of people have the agency to shape things, even in the face of seemingly awful odds, to preserve the values they share and their ways of life. These lessons are not trivial.[12]

Other scholars like Oliver Kaplan of Denver University and Helen Berents of the University of Queensland are also building the evidence base for community-based violence prevention through particular case studies. Examining communities in Colombia and the Philippines that remained peaceful amid war, they again affirm that local actors can and do demonstrate agency, even within situations of severe violence and entrenched conflict, often without external support or intervention.[13] In his research on how civilians survive violence, Casey Barrs finds local communities can and do employ a range of strategies to protect themselves without reliance on outside interveners.[14] In her research on youth in Colombia, Berents finds that children demonstrate peace agency through the creative use of spaces available to them to make sense of the violence around them and foster a different, more constructive environment. These spaces in turn provide important arenas and resources for sustaining positive engagement and interaction across potential conflict lines a lesson directly relevant to atrocity prevention and a growing focus on providing youth constructive alternatives to help avoid recruitment and mobilization for violence.[15]

The voices and experiences of local peacebuilders in places that have experienced mass violence also hold insights for the international community's atrocity prevention agenda. In her book, *This Light That Pushes Me: Stories of African Peacebuilders,* Laura Shipler Chico profiles the personal experiences and photographs of nearly 40 individuals from across the continent who are actively working for peace amid or in the aftermath of war and genocide.[16] This include individuals

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[11] Mitchell, Christopher, and Hancock, Landon, editors. 2012. *Local Peacebuilding and National Peace: Interaction between Grassroots and Elite Processes*. New York: Continuum; Van Tongeren, Paul. 2013. "Potential Cornerstone of Infrastructures for Peace? How Local Peace Committees Can Make a Difference." *Peacebuilding* Vol. 1, No. 1, 39–60.

[12] Anderson and Wallace, *Opting out of War*, 176.

[13] Kaplan, *Protecting Civilians in Civil War*, 351–367.

[14] Barrs, Casey. 2010. *How Civilians Survive Violence: A Preliminary Inventory*. New York: The Cuny Center.

[15] Berents, Helen. 2014. "Its About Finding a Way: Children, Sites of Opportunity, and Building Everyday Peace in Colombia." *International Journal of Children's Rights* Vol. 22, 362–384.

[16] Shipler Chico, Laura. 2014. *This Light That Pushes Me: Stories of African Peacebuilders.* Richmond: Quaker Books.

who survived, and sometimes participated in, mass violence in Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sierra Leone, and Uganda, as well as peacebuilders from places like Tanzania and South Africa. Their reflections on their own experiences and their stories of resilience point to a diverse set of motivating factors behind their decisions to work for peace in the midst of violence. They include religious values (many are Quaker), transformational personal experiences (some were child soldiers or were saved by others), hope for a different future, and the influence and relationship with particular people in their families and communities. Understanding why and how individuals avoided being swept into violence, or rejected it later and chose instead to work for peace, can inform international policy and programming to better support such agents for change and strengthen local leaders who may be able to help interrupt or transform situations of potential mass violence.

As scholars of genocide and mass atrocities, we often assume that such local peace agents may be able to help a few people, but that their efforts will ultimately be overwhelmed by broader systematic organizing for violence, especially when high-level authorities are actively mobilizing toward mass killing. We point to the Nazis' ability to murder millions and occupy large swaths of territory as proof that individual resistance or community protection efforts will ultimately fail. But in fact, these efforts did save countless lives and created small points of light and resistance within a system of horrific violence. If they had been recognized, supported, strengthened, and backed up by the international community much earlier and in more effective ways, might they have succeeded in averting the genocide? Hattingh de Coning suggests conflicts are in fact so complex that they cannot be resolved without an approach that actively engages local leadership at the forefront.[17] Systems theory is also teaching us to look at conflict as an interactive process where small change initiatives can grow and transform entire societies, if they gain enough power, reach enough other parts of the system, and become resilient against other forces at play. This is, in fact, how violence can take hold and spread. So, couldn't small initiatives for peace also do the same?

As scholars of genocide prevention, the question is at least worth posing, particularly given the growing recognition of the failures of current top-down approaches that rely on the international community coming in to save local communities. Moreover, as contributions from Critical Genocide Studies have pointed out, even interventions that focus on local empowerment, but do so simply as a linear process embedded within a larger view of societal progress as contingent upon concepts of Western democracy and liberal norms, ignore the dynamic cultural and political contexts through which genocide prevention efforts will ultimately have to navigate.[18] This is not to suggest that local communities should be left to fend for themselves once violence is underway or if mass killing seems imminent. Local peacebuilding can be most effective upstream, before violence erupts, and in the aftermath and recovery to break cycles of violence. If mass atrocities are underway, external actors may need to intervene, but they should do so, to the greatest extent possible, in ways that re-enforce local leadership for peace and strengthen local resilience against violence. Too often, rather than being at the center of analysis and action, they end up on the margins.

Community-based approaches to preventing mass violence are at work today in places around the world, from Syria to DRC to the Central African Republic. Understanding, documenting, and seeking to support them should be an imperative of our research and practice as a field. The non-governmental organization Peace Direct, working with local correspondents in over 35 countries, has identified and published through their Insight on Conflict website (www.insightonconflict.org) over 1000 local peacebuilding groups operating within conflict situations around the world. A collaboration of Burundian NGOs is establishing a local early warning/early response system in advance of potentially volatile elections. The Center for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka is working across interreligious lines to promote tolerance and reduce extremism. A former rebel soldier is now leading programs in North Kivu, DRC to convince combatants to give up their arms, working with communities to reintegrate them

[17] Hattingh de Coning, Cedric. 2012. "Complexity, Peacebuilding and Coherence: Implications of Complexity for the Peacebuilding Coherence Dilemma." Dissertation Paper, presented for defense to Stellenbosch University.

[18] Hinton, Alexander L. 2013. "Transitional Justice Time: Uncle Sam, Aunty Yan, and Outreach at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal" in Mass Atrocities in Asia: Legacies and Prevention. Edited by D. Mayersen and A. Pohlman. NY: Routledge, 82-94.

and resist further violence. Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities, an initiative led by the Quaker Peace Network in Central and East Africa, is helping Muslims and Christians in the Central African Republic (CAR) overcome their trauma and recover their collective humanity. These are all locally-led initiatives, supported and accompanied by a variety of international actors in a variety of ways. They include different types of leadership, different theories of change, and different strategies. They rely on context-specific capacities first, and then seek additional resources and support where needed. They face different challenges and will yield different outcomes. But they offer some common lessons across their efforts. They represent both examples and opportunities of putting community-based approaches to atrocity prevention at the forefront of our collective efforts as a global community.

Lessons for Atrocity Prevention Policy and Practice

This growing debate suggests a fundamental flip—or paradigm shift—in our approach to addressing violent conflict, including the worst forms of mass atrocities and genocide, is needed. Increasing evidence that international interventions are enormously costly and questionably effective is pushing the international community to look first for solutions to conflicts within those communities most directly affected by the violence, an approach the international NGO Peace Direct calls local first. Taking such a community-based approach to preventing mass violence and genocide will require significant shifts in the dominant assumptions and paradigms that currently drive our theory and practice as a field, but they are well worth the effort. As growing research is showing, communities who are able to design, lead, and exercise their own approaches to prevent, respond, and recover from violence demonstrate remarkable creativity and innovation, heightened cultural and contextual sensitivity, greater cost-benefit ratios, and more sustainable and resilient impacts. While there may always be a need for external back-up response mechanisms, the current orientation of our resources, policies, and practices as an international community too often prioritizes external intervention over locally-led leadership. In doing so, we not only undermine the potential of preventive efforts that can respond to the earliest warning signs as they begin to emerge within societies, we also become mired in the practical and political challenges of trying to mobilize an external response after the crisis is already unfolding. We then bemoan the failure of the international community to respond quickly enough or with enough peacekeepers to effectively intervene in a situation that has escalated beyond control. This feeds the assumption that the failures are due to a lack of adequate intervening forces to confront and dispel perpetrators—a process which can itself escalate the violence and put more civilians and international actors at risk—rather than a recognition that the greatest potential for effective prevention and long-term transformative change resides within the societies themselves.

The genocide prevention field would do well to learn lessons from this growing debate in and the increasing number of community-based atrocity prevention approaches that are being documented, and apply them in transforming our own interventions toward a more local first approach. In doing so, we would begin to turn the paradigm and practice of genocide prevention inside-out, working first and foremost to help strengthen societies to resist, refute, and rebound from mass violence (an approach implied by the second pillar of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine), and bolstering international mechanisms to better accompany and strengthen local leadership to prevent the killing before it begins.

Study What Works

In his presidential address to the Peace Research Society in 2013, Pat Regan of Notre Dame urged greater research into the causes of peace, explaining that "unless we study the pathways to peace as vigorously as we study those to war, we might miss the forest because the trees are in our way", and reminding us that "the methods of achieving peace are probably not simply the negative of the pathways to war".[19] Thanks to decades of research and practice in the fields of conflict resolution, peace studies, and genocide prevention studies, we have developed a much deeper understanding

[19] Regan, Patrick M. 2014. "Bringing Peace Back in: Presidential Address to the Peace Science Society, 2013." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* Vol. 31, No. 4, 345.

of the cycles and dynamics that drive systems of human violence and the horrific extents to which they can reach. We still know much less about the realities of human compassion, agency, and collective resistance that can and do interrupt and avert those systems, creating their own virtuous cycles within or alongside cycles of violence. If, as Elise and Kenneth Boulding often proposed, "what exists is possible," then understanding why and how people choose to actively pursue peace, particularly amid ongoing systems of potential or occurring mass violence, represents a critically understudied area of human possibility.[20] Important efforts to document cases individuals and communities avoiding violence in the midst of mass violence are growing, but as a field we should dedicate much more research to this endeavor. We need to study what works among locally-led peacebuilding and atrocity prevention as much, if not more, as we study our failures as a human family. This will require dedicated researchers and resources, as well as the support and space within academic, policy, and practitioner organizations to engage in such inquiry, but it will be well worth the investments. Critically, this research needs to also include – from the design phase onward - those communities for whom it will be most relevant, local peacebuilders themselves. Collaborative, participatory, action research approaches offer important ways of ensuring our learning is not only grounded in the realities and perspectives of the communities we claim to support, but also serves as a contribution to their own learning.

We need to ask early and often: Who are the local peace agents at work in situations of conflict and potential mass violence? How do we recognize them? Why do they do what they do? What sustains them in taking risks to opt out of violence and actively protect and prevent? What kinds of support do they need to continue and strengthen their efforts? These questions should be at the forefront of our theory and practice, and should be accompanied by careful study, attentive listening, and collaborative action.

Do No Harm

Increasingly, we are learning that mass atrocities and genocidal violence are often cyclical, not linear, in nature, and are not bound by national borders. For example, current atrocities and violent conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo are directly connected to the legacies of genocide in Rwanda and cycles of violence across the region. In turn, the genocide in Rwanda was part of a history of violence and abuse dating back to colonialism. Trying to treat atrocities in only one moment of time ignores the need for a deeper understanding and seeking to address historical legacies of intergroup violence that often crosses borders and spans generations. Outsiders have difficulty fully grasping these legacies and their complex impacts on local societies. Without such understanding, interventions can end up harming rather than helping.

Just as the development community has embraced a *Do No Harm* approach, violence prevention and response efforts need to ensure first that they do not end up unintentionally fueling cycles of conflict and sparking unintended negative consequences. This means resisting the pressure to just "do something" in the face of a crisis and instead thoroughly analyzing the potential impacts of interventions and avoiding taking actions that contribute to legitimizing violence and fueling cycles of conflict. Military interventions in particular carry significant risks of negative spin offs, though diplomatic and development approaches can also end up undermining peace if not undertaken carefully.

Without grounding atrocities and violence prevention efforts in a broader understanding of the conflict and addressing root causes, even the best intentioned interventions aimed at halting one act of killing today may only end up contributing to new atrocities and violence tomorrow. The NATO intervention in Libya, for instance, opened the door to further civil violence in the country and the flow of more weapons in the region, fueling a new crisis in Mali. It also emboldened anti-US sentiment in the region and may have contributed to the attack on the US embassy and growing extremism in the region. Atrocities prevention programs and policies need to be prioritized as much in post-conflict and long-term preventive phases as in moments of intensifying violence, and atrocities prevention efforts need to be designed with local communities from start to finish.

[20] Portilla, Julian. 2006. "What Exists Is Possible: Stories from Conflict Resolution Professionals." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 2, 241-248.

The first guiding principle for decision-making and designing preventive actions should be Do No Harm, accompanied by a critical self-assessment to ensure policies and programs underway are not inadvertently contributing to the problem.

Look Local First

Effective atrocities prevention should, first and foremost, focus on supporting local communities to design and develop their own capacities and resiliencies to manage conflicts peacefully and justly, hold government and abusive actors accountable, resist manipulation and violence triggers, identify and respond to early warning signs of pending violence, and heal and reconcile from past atrocities.

As the "responsibility to protect" doctrine recognizes, building local community and government capacities to protect people from the threat of atrocities is preferable to relying on outside intervention after violence erupts. Efforts to create early warning systems remain constrained by a response gap—a lag in the time warning signs are identified and the time it takes for decision-making to happen. This gap grows the farther from the source of the threat decision-making is expected. Protection through intervention models also inevitably fall victim to geopolitics, a problem which may change shape over time but will persist for the foreseeable future. Local responses, if they can be effectively mobilized and supported, can help close the early warning gap and break out of the geopolitical struggle over intervention. Support and active response is needed from the international community when local mechanisms to prevent atrocities fail or are overwhelmed, but the ultimate goal should be building preventive systems at the local level that remove the need for outside intervention.

Currently, however, the atrocities movement remains dominated by the global North, with a major locus of activity at the UN and in the US, and focused on how countries outside a potential atrocity situation can intervene to halt violence once it erupts. Much less support is given to strengthening local capacities for peace that can be more effective at long-term prevention of violence. This imbalanced approach which overemphasizes external intervention without adequate support to building local peace capacities can actually disempower communities and reduce the potential for effective long-term prevention of deadly violence. Focusing the majority of attention on the question of external intervention, particularly military intervention, also inevitably raises political debates and reduces the space and resources available to improve local preventive capacities. Efforts to implement the responsibility to protect doctrine and genocide prevention at the international level need to be at least matched, if not surpassed, with a stronger focus of resources and support for strengthening local peace and violence prevention capacities—including community-based groups, civil society networks, and local and national governments.

We need to seek out and support the everyday peacebuilders who may be doing the most upstream work, long before warning signs have reached international policymakers and long-after the international community has moved on to the next crisis. In her work, Berents concludes that it is a type of "everyday peacebuilding" that is available and active among youth in Colombia.[21] Such local peacebuilding is local not by geography but because, as Richmond and Mitchell argue, it belongs to the realm of everyday activity: "the local is the site of various forms of power, resources, and agency" that can be applied toward peace.[22] This attention within the local peacebuilding literature to the role of ordinary actors choosing peace amid systems of violence is an important response to the post-liberal critiques of the field and its growing professionalization. As Roger MacGinty has argued, the concept and practice of everyday peace is a critical factor in how people navigate and survive within divided societies, especially in the face of failed international peace interventions.[23]

[21] Berents, "Its About Finding a Way", 362–384.

[22] Richmond, Oliver P, and Audra Mitchell. 2012. Hybrid Forms of Peace: From Everyday Agency to Post-Liberalism. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 11.

[23] MacGinty, Roger Mac. 2014 "Everyday Peace: Bottom-up and Local Agency in Conflict-Affected Societies." *Security Dialogue.*Vol. 45, No. 6, 548-564. Available from https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/uk-ac-man-scw:247104. (accessed December 2014).

The more formalized the genocide prevention and peacebuilding fields becomes through organizational development, academic and scholarly programs, specialized training and consultant services, the more distant they risk becoming from the daily realities lived by most people experiencing the types of situations of entrenched violence and war that it aims to address, and the more reliant on external interventions as the right, or only, solution. A search for understanding and strengthening local peace agency offers one way of helping to ensure the ability to make peace is not lost to those experiencing the violence by an increasing technicalization of the field. If everyone has the choice to act for peace and exercise positive agency, then more people may feel empowered to access and act on that choice. Keeping peace within the ordinary and everyday realm of local communities can help strengthen motivations and means for peace agency. It also holds significant promise in building greater long-term resilience within societies against the risks of mass violence. The more peace becomes the responsibility of us all in our local communities, the less space potential perpetrators have to mobilize the scale of violence that we collectively abhor as a human family.

Conclusion

As the challenges (and failures) of linear, externally driven approaches to addressing conflict are increasingly evident, and more attention is given to locally-led approaches that support those actors in situations of conflict who are already working for peace, our field is ripe for a fundamental shift in paradigm and practice. Turning atrocity prevention "inside-out" to prioritize locally-led and community-based approaches may be a critical next step in our collective efforts to help avert the worst forms of human violence and reassert our common humanity.

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Dangerous Speech and Dangerous Ideology: An Integrated Model for Monitoring and Prevention

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Abstract*: There is considerable agreement amongst scholars and international actors that ideologies and speech play a critical role in the path of escalation towards mass atrocity crimes. Speech features prominently in the jurisprudence of the U.N. war crimes tribunal for Rwanda, for example, and in historical accounts of the months and years preceding many other genocides. Nonetheless, this is one of the most underdeveloped components of genocide and atrocity prevention, in both theory and practice. This paper draws together the authors' independent past work on dangerous speech and the ideological dynamics of mass atrocities by offering a new integrated model to help identify the sorts of speech and ideology that raise the risk of atrocities and genocides. We suggest that this model should inform monitoring activities concerned with the risk of genocides and mass atrocities, and prevention efforts at the strategic and targeted levels.*

Keywords*: dangerous speech, ideology, atrocities, genocide, prevention, justification, discourse*

Introduction

On 12 March 1941, the German Reichskommissar of the occupied Netherlands, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, addressed collected German officials in Amsterdam, using archetypal pre-genocidal language. Reaffirming a chronic claim of Nazi ideology—that Jews sought to annihilate the Germans—he stated:

> The Jews are the enemy of national socialism and the national socialistic Reich. From the moment of their emancipation, their methods were directed to the annihilation of the common and moral worth of the German people... They are the enemies with whom we can neither come to an armistice nor to peace..."[1]

Seyss-Inquart's language has since been echoed by a great many propagandists in a striking diversity of countries and cultures, to cultivate fear and hatred, and incite mass violence against civilians. This is a particular sort of speech that scholars and policymakers have begun to focus on for its apparent role in promoting mass atrocities. As paragraph 21 of the United Nations Secretary-General's 2013 report on State Responsibility and Prevention affirms:

> [T]he underlying motivation for targeting a community...is an additional risk factor for atrocity crimes. This motivation is often demonstrated through the use of exclusionary ideology and the construction of identities in terms of "us" and "them" to accentuate differences. These differences can be even further accentuated through hate speech or propaganda campaigns that depict the targeted community as disloyal, as a security or economic threat or as inferior in order to justify action against the community.[2]

Such discourse is indeed typical. But advocates of mass violence also use a variety of other, quite different rhetorics in calling for the killing of civilians. Their justifications do not always rely on hatred or blatant exclusionary discourse. Twenty three years before Seyss-Inquart's words, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin published one of the most detailed justifications of the fledgling Soviet

[1] Office of the United Sates Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, U.S. G.P.O., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. VI (Washington D.C, 1946), Document 3430-PS, 136.

[2] United Nations General Assembly. 2013. *Responsibility to protect: State responsibility and prevention*. New York, 5.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.3.1317

regime's ongoing 'Red Terror' in the Russian Civil War. In a letter in the 22 Aug 1918 issue of *Pravda,* the official newspaper of the Bolshevik party, Lenin denounced critics of Soviet violence, arguing:

> To blame us for the "destruction" of industry, or for the "terror", is either hypocrisy or dull-witted pedantry; it reveals an inability to understand the basic conditions of the fierce class struggle…. for in revolutionary epochs the class struggle has always, inevitably, and in every country, assumed the form of *civil war*, and civil war is inconceivable without the severest destruction, terror and the restriction of formal democracy in the interests of this war. Only unctuous parsons… cannot see, understand and feel this necessity. Only a lifeless "man in the muffler" can shun the revolution for this reason instead of plunging into battle with the utmost ardour and determination at a time when history demands that the greatest problems of humanity be solved by struggle and war.[3]

Lenin does not justify terror here via hatred of those it targeted, but in light of a theoretically dense claim that revolutionary violence is necessary. This constituted a powerful and highly violent worldview which endorsed and rationalized atrocities by the new Soviet government against its own civilians. And Lenin's arguments here are not idiosyncratic outliers. Assertions that violence is inevitable and unavoidable, and the displacing of responsibility for it onto others (or simply onto abstract historical forces), are recurring features of the ideologies behind many different atrocities.

Most such claims are quite different from the hate speech or dehumanization that tend to dominate current discussions of the role of speech, ideology and propaganda in catalyzing mass violence. So while it is often important, hate can be something of a distraction.[4] Research on perpetrators by Christopher Browning, Lee Ann Fujii, John Mueller, Scott Straus and others suggests that hatred of another group often isn't what drives a person to kill.[5] Some scholars erroneously conclude from this that ideology or speech in general are not catalysts for violence —assuming that ideology and speech can encourage violence only by inculcating hatred. This is a mistake. Instead, a broad repertoire of justifications for atrocity can help explain why many perpetrators commit violence even though they do not match classic stereotypes of the wild-eyed fanatic, enthusiastically slaughtering civilians. *Both speech and the ideology that underpins it can be dangerous (in the sense of promoting violence) without being hateful, and can also be hateful without being dangerous.* Less ardent beliefs matter: cool but anxious perceptions that other groups have radical or threatening ambitions, for instance, or a sense that terror is the only option for resolving a particular social problem, or a belief that violence is honourable and necessary.

Critically, such justifications are patterned across cases. *The forms of speech and ideology that catalyze mass violence, and the ways in which they do so, are strikingly similar across different cases.* The same sorts of justification recur with uncanny similarity across cases from widely differing time periods, across vast geographical distances, and in spite of contrasting social, political and cultural contexts.[6] This should not obscure differences—sensitivity to the context-specific ideological and

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[3] Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. 1969. "Letter to American Workers." In *Lenin: Selected Works*. Edited by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 461-462.

[4] Ross, Andrew A.G. 2014. *Mixed Emotions: Beyond Fear and Hatred in International Conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Fujii, Lee Ann. 2008. "The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide." *Security Studies* Vol. 17, No. 3, 570-571.

[5] Fujii, Lee Ann. 2009. *Killing Neighbours: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. New York: Cornell University Press; Browning, Christopher R. 2001. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. London: Penguin Books; Mueller, John. 2000. "The Banality of 'Ethnic War'." *International Security* Vol. 25, No. 1, 42-70; Straus, Scott. 2006. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

[6] Bellamy, Alex J. 2012a. "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy: Empire and the Ideology of Selective Extermination." *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 58, No. 2, 18; Bellamy, Alex J. 2012b. *Massacres and Morality: Mass Atrocities in an Age of Civilian Immunity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Sémelin, Jacques 2005. *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide*. London: Hurst & Company; Kiernan, Ben. 2003. "Twentieth-Century Genocides: Underlying Ideological Themes from Armenia to East Timor." In *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*. Edited by Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Weitz, Eric D. 2003. *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

discursive dynamics of particular atrocities is crucial, and the recurring patterns do not tell the whole story. But the fact that there are such patterns is not only important but useful, holding open the possibility that discerning them can support efforts to prevent mass atrocities.

This breadth in the way atrocities are justified, patterns in such justification, and the implications this creates for monitoring and prevention activities, have not been adequately addressed in the literature.[7] Speech and ideology feature prominently in the jurisprudence of the U.N. war crimes tribunal for Rwanda, the risk analysis framework of the Office of the Special Advisor for the Prevention of Genocide, the report of the Genocide Prevention Task Force and a wide range of academic research.[8] Yet references to "hate", "dehumanization" and related forms of blatantly vicious discourse still dominate such documents.[9] Whilst scholars have generated considerable insights regarding the ideological and discursive dynamics of genocides and mass atrocities, especially in deep, case-specific research,[10] analysis of the role played by speech and ideology remains one of the more underdeveloped components of the comparative theorising of genocides and mass atrocities, and the lacuna is largest with respect to monitoring and prevention.

In this paper, we begin to fill these gaps, in order to enhance both the theory and practice of mass atrocity risk monitoring and prevention. We do this in three steps. First, we provide a brief theoretical overview of the relationship between speech and ideology, and explain how these two phenomena relate to violence. Second, we combine two existing frameworks that we have independently formulated elsewhere—Benesch's 'Dangerous Speech' framework[11] and Leader Maynard's 'Six Justificatory Mechanisms' framework.[12] Together, these provide an integrated model for identifying the *contextual* and *content-based* risk factors associated with certain sorts of speech and ideology. They can thus provide a more comprehensive basis for monitoring activities that might support efforts to assess the risk of mass violence. Finally, we consider how this integrated model can inform attempts to counter dangerous speech and ideology, and help to prevent genocide and mass atrocities.

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[7] For exceptions, see: Leader Maynard, Jonathan. 2014. "Rethinking the Role of Ideology in Mass Atrocities." *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 26, No. 5, 821-841; Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality*; Slim, Hugo. 2007. *Killing Civilians: Method, Madness and Morality in War*. London: Hurst & Company; Sémelin, *Purify and Destroy*; Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides."

[8] Genocide Prevention Task Force. 2008. *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers*.Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace; United Nations. 2014. United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes*. New York; Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. 2012. *A Common Standard for Applying R2P*, APC R2P Ideas in Brief, Vol. 2/3; Straus, Scott. 2015. *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership and Genocide in Modern Africa*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Sanín, Francisco Gutiérrez and Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2014. "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 51, No. 2, 213-226; Cohrs, J. Christopher. 2012. "Ideological Bases of Violent Conflict." In *Oxford Handbook of Intergroup Conflict*. Edited by Linda R. Tropp. New York: Oxford University Press.

[9] For leading research on dehumanization, see: Smith, David Livingstone. 2011. *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave and Exterminate Others*. New York: St. Martin's Press; Haslam, Nick. 2006. "Dehumanization: An Integrative Review." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* Vol. 10, No. 3, 252-264.

[10] Ryan, James. 2012. *Lenin's Terror: The Ideological Origins of Early Soviet State Violence*. Abingdon: Routledge; Goldman, Wendy Z. 2011. *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin's Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Priestland, David. 2007. *Stalinism and the Politics of Mobilization: Ideas, Power, and Terror in Inter-war Russia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Fujii, Lee Ann. 2004. "Transforming the Moral Landscape: The Diffusion of a Genocidal Norm in Rwanda." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 6, No. 1, 99-114; Koonz, Claudia. 2003. *The Nazi Conscience*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; Hinton, Alexander Laban. 1998. "Why Did You Kill?: The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honour." *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 57, No. 1, 93-122; Jackson, Karl D. 1989. "The Ideology of Total Revolution." In *Cambodia 1975-1978: Rendezvous with Death*. Edited by Karl D. Jackson. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Mosse, George L. 1981. *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*. New York: Schocken Books; Fein, Helen. 1979. *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization During the Holocaust*. New York: Free Press.

[11] Benesch, Susan, "Dangerous Speech: A Proposal to Prevent Group Violence." Available from: http://www.worldpolicy.org/susan-benesch (accessed 15 Oct 2012).

[12] Leader Maynard, Jonathan. 2015a. "Combating Atrocity-Justifying Ideologies." In *The Responsibility to Prevent: Overcoming the Challenges to Atrocity Prevention*. Edited by Serena K. Sharma and Jennifer Welsh. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Leader Maynard, "Rethinking the Role of Ideology."

Analysing Speech and Ideology in Mass Violence

The relationship between speech and ideology (or, more generally, thought) has long been a subject of theoretical reflection in linguistics, philosophy, intellectual history, political theory and social theory.[13] Yet it generally lacks theoretical clarification in contemporary scholarship on mass violence.[14] This is unfortunate, since speech and ideology are vitally interrelated.

Following recent trends in the study of ideology in the social sciences, we conceptualize ideology broadly,[15] defining it as a distinctive system of normative and/or purportedly factual ideas, typically shared by members of groups or societies, which underpins individuals' understanding of their political world and guides their political behaviour.[16] As systems of ideas, ideologies are stored in memory, providing cognitive resources for thinking processes, including decision-making processes and, thereby, shaping agents' behaviour.[17] Each person's ideology is unique (their 'personal ideology'), but social scientists also analyze 'group ideologies': analytical constructs describing important similarities across the personal but heterogeneous ideologies of group members. Ideologies can also acquire important social dimensions as they are embedded in institutions and recognized in political discourse. By speech or 'speech act,' we mean any act of human communication, not only in the form of verbal discourse but also including non-verbal communication such as images, gestures, music, rituals, and so forth.

Ideologies are communicated by speech and, consequently, constructed and altered through speech.[18] They are also produced through an individual's own thinking, but genuinely creative thinking is arduous.[19] Most people avoid it most of the time, instead picking up and reusing prominent and familiar ideas from social discourse. The bulk of ideological development in a group or society therefore tends to be driven by the thinking of a relative minority, though these may not necessarily conform to the presumed 'intellectual elite', and various forms of bottom up

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[13] Geertz, Clifford. 1964. "Ideology as a Cultural System." In *Ideology and Discontent*. Edited by David Apter. London: Free Press of Glencoe; Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. 1967. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books; Searle, John R. 1969. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Whorf, Benjamin Lee. 1971. *Language, Thought, and Reality*. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press; Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart; Althusser, Louis. 1971. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)." In Louis Althusser. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 85-126; Skinner, Quentin. 1974. "Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action." Symposium on Quentin Skinner, *Political Theory* Vol. 2, No. 3, 277-303; Edelman, Murray. 1977. *Political Language: Words That Succeed and Policies That Fail*.New York: Academic Press; Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 8, No. 4, 777-795; Kay, Paul and Willett Kempton. 1984. "What Is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis?" *American Anthropologist* Vol. 86, No. 1, 65-79; Lakoff, George. *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*. Chicago: Chicago University Press; Searle, John R. 1995. *The Construction of Social Reality*. London: Penguin; Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 2001. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, 4th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd; Finlayson, Alan. 2013. "Ideology and Political Rhetoric." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. Edited by Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent, and Marc Stears. Oxford: Oxford University Press; van Dijk, Teun A. 2013. "Ideology and Discourse." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. Edited by Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent, and Marc Stears. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[14] There are exceptions, and this section draws on existing scholarship on genocide, violence, speech and ideology from a range of fields. For examples of sophisticated work on the role of speech and/or ideology in violence, see footnotes 8 and 9.

[15] van Dijk, Teun, 1998. *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. London: Sage Books, 3; Knight, Kathleen. 2006. "Transformations in the Concept of Ideology in the Twentieth Century." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 100, No. 4, 1-8; Humphrey, Matthew. 2005. "(De)contesting ideology: The Struggle Over the Meaning of the Struggle over Meaning." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* Vol. 8, No. 2, 422. See also: Geertz. 1984. "Ideology as a Cultural System." Earlier work does not always embrace such a broad conception of ideology, and for defenses of narrower pejorative conceptions, see: Thompson, John. 1984. *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Larrain, Jorge. 1979. *The Concept of Ideology*. London: Hutchinson & Co.

[16] Leader Maynard, "Rethinking the Role of Ideology," 823-825.

[17] van Dijk, Teun. 2013. *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*; Homer-Dixon, Thomas, Jonathan Leader Maynard, Matto Mildenberger, Manjana Milkoreit, Steven J. Mock, Stephen Quilley, Tobias Schröder, and Paul Thagard. 2013. "A Complex Systems Approach to the Study of Ideology: Cognitive-Affective Structures and the Dynamics of Belief Systems." *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* Vol. 1, No. 1, 175-196.

[18] van Dijk, Teun. 2010. *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*; Fairclough, Norman. 2010. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Harlow: Pearson, Ch.2; Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses."

[19] Slovic, Paul, David Zionts, Andrew K. Woods, Ryan Goodman, and Derek Jinks. 2012. "Psychic Numbing and Mass Atrocity." In *The Behavioural Foundations of Public Policy*. Edited by Eldar Shafir. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1333.

activism are often ideologically powerful.[20] Just as speech communicates and alters ideology, so ideology essentially underpins speech. Speech acts often express ideological claims, and draw on the speakers' underlying ideologies. And the impact the speech acts have on others is necessarily mediated by the existing ideologies of those individuals—since their ideologies provide the existing assumptions, beliefs and interpretative frameworks used to understand, reflect on and evaluate such speech.

Ideological claims might represent *instrumental* moves that serve a variety of interests. They might, for example, be ways for community or political leaders to legitimate themselves in the minds of domestic constituencies and audiences, or they might be used to solicit financial or symbolic support from external actors, like great power patrons or affiliated diasporas.[21] Ideological claims can be used in this way, regardless of whether those espousing them truly believe them. But ideological speech might also genuinely represent actors' personal ideologies—here ideology plays a *constitutive* role in providing actors' actual beliefs and understandings.[22] These could be *evaluative* beliefs about the permissibility or impermissibility of attacking certain sorts of targets, or of the moral praiseworthiness or reprehensibility of violence in general. Or they could be *descriptive* beliefs, about the threat posed by a certain group, or the likelihood that a shocking atrocity will deter future aggression against the in-group, which make violence appear necessary or desirable.[23]

Consequently, speech can matter since it offers evidence of the ideologies of actors producing it, or because it is likely to create certain effects in audiences. Scholars cannot properly assess a risk of violence by examining speech without considering ideology, or ideology without considering speech. One cannot acquire any deep understanding of actors' ideological positions without examining their actual discourse (broadly conceived). Familiar big ideological labels like 'communist', 'Islamist', or 'nationalist', so often used to code the ideological positions of key actors for social scientific analysis, encompass far too many distinct strains of belief-system to reliably predict or analyze behaviour. Describing actors' ideologies more specifically and accurately is possible, but only by consulting what they actually say. Conversely, successfully interpreting what actors meant by certain speech, discerning how that speech connects to other speech acts, evaluating the likelihood that it is sincere, and assessing its likely impact on audience behaviour, requires consideration of the probable ideology of the speaker and the ideological content expressed in the speech.[24] And predicting what impact the speech is likely to have on an audience is therefore impossible without some knowledge of the ideological environment, including recent history of the context in question, and the probable ideological commitments of the audience(s).

Ideas can be held by perpetrators with varying levels of consciousness and conviction. They might be explicit and fanatical beliefs that drive fervent participation in violence. Yet this is typically not the case. Much of the time, key ideas might be believed ambivalently, regretfully, presumptively, unthinkingly, or for lack of apparent alternatives. These weaker, more nuanced levels of endorsement can still be sufficient for the ideas to generate participation in violence in a variety of roles.[25] Frequently, the key burden for success for a particular ideology in turning a group toward violence is not how many people entirely internalize the ideology and become devotees or even perpetrators, but how many *partially internalize* the ideology enough to see violence as permissible or even desirable. Although perpetrators constitute only a small proportion of the total population of an in-group, even in cases of mass violence with high levels of civilian participation, they rely on the support and approval of other members of their social groups.

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[20] Tarrow, Sidney. 2013. *The Language of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[21] Sanín and Wood, "Ideology in civil war," 217-220.

[22] Ibid, 220-222.

[23] Though evaluation and description are intertwined.

[24] See also: Tully, James H. 1983. "The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics." *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 13, No. 4, 489-509; Skinner, Quentin. 2002. *Visions of Politics* Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 57.

[25] Leader Maynard, "Rethinking the Role of Ideology," 825-826; Leader Maynard, Jonathan. 2015b. "Preventing Mass Atrocities: Ideological Strategies and Interventions." *Politics and Governance* Vol. 3, No. 3, 68-71.

Ideas also influence behaviour in different ways. Whether deeply or shallowly felt, they can provide key motives for violence, or they can provide key legitimations for it, shaping perceptions of its permissibility even if they do not provide the primary reasons for wanting to engage in it. Or they may do both. They might sincerely drive the original decisions to engage in violence, or function as a post-hoc rationalization for acts conducted for other reasons (though such rationalizations might still be crucial for maintaining willingness to participate in lengthy, reiterative campaigns of violence). And ideas can also, of course, restrain violence.[26] The balance between the availability and power of ideological justifications and restraints in a particular context determines the overall ideological impetus towards violence—and this is crucial for thinking about how to counter such justifications, as we do in Part 3.

We do not suggest that dangerous speech and ideology are the only catalysts for mass violence, nor that they deterministically produce it. Human beings have autonomy to choose among actions, and their decisions are affected by myriad external factors, including a large variety of speech to which they are exposed over time.[27] Therefore it is rare to find definitive evidence that a person engaged in violence because of a particular act of speech, though exceptions include orders to kill or be killed, orders given by commanders to their troops, and certain inflammatory false rumours.[28] We can make educated and systematic estimations of the effects of speech given the best possible data on its context, content, and the likely ideological dispositions of speakers and audience, but our analytical tools often cannot reliably measure the impact of individual acts of speech on individual people, and we do not pretend to be able to predict them accurately. Indeed Benesch has criticized some of the judges of the international war crimes tribunal for Rwanda for asserting that speech 'caused' mass killings.[29]

Scholars have begun to search for evidence of links between speech and intergroup violence at scale. One study on the well-known case of the Rwandan radio station Radio Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) used econometrics and transmission patterns to suggest that killing was more intense in Rwandan villages that received RTLM broadcasts, than in others that did not.[30] A similar study on the effects of an intervention by ActionAid International Nigeria found that anti-violence campaigning, conversely, substantially reduced levels of subsequent political violence surrounding the 2007 national and state-level elections in Nigeria.[31] Still, the complex, multifarious links between speech, ideology and violence require greater, broader and deeper investigation.[32]

As is widely recognized in the literature, genocides and mass atrocities do not occur spontaneously, but represent the culmination of lengthy and often non-linear radicalizing trajectories.[33] Mass violence may recur with tragic frequency in human history,[34] but it is

[26] Straus, Scott. 2012a. "Retreating from the Brink: Theorizing Mass Violence and the Dynamics of Restraint." *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 10, No. 2, 343-363; Thaler, Kai M. 2012. "Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars: Theory and Evidence from Mozambique and Angola." *Civil Wars* Vol. 14, No. 4, 546-467; Goodwin, Jeff. 2007. ""The Struggle Made Me a Nonracialist": Why There Was So Little Terrorism in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly Review* Vol. 12, No. 2, 193-203.

[27] See also: Yee, Albert S. 1996. "The causal effects of ideas on policies." *International Organization* Vol. 50, No. 1, 96-103.

[28] Osborn, Michelle. 2008. "Fuelling the Flames: Rumour and Politics in Kibera." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* Vol. 2, No. 2, 315-327.

[29] Benesch, Susan, 2011. "The Ghost of Causation in International Speech Crime Cases." In *Propaganda, War Crimes Trials & International Law: From Speakers' Corner to War Crimes*. Edited by Predrag Dojčinović. Abingdon: Routledge.

[30] Yanagizawa-Drott, David. 2014 "Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 129, No. 4, 1947-1994. These findings are disputed, however, see: Straus, Scott. 2007. "What Is the Relationship between Hate Radio and Violence? Rethinking Rwanda's 'Radio Machete'." *Politics and Society*, Vol. 35, No 4, 609-637

[31] Collier, Paul and Pedro C. Vicente. 2013. "Votes and Violence: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Nigeria." *The Economic Journal* Vol. 124, No 574, 5327-5355.

[32] For a summary of further existing research, see: Leader Maynard, "Preventing Mass Atrocities," 68-71 & 74-5.

[33] Staub, Ervin. 1989. *The Roots of Evil*.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[34] Gerlach, Christian. 2010. *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3.

nevertheless unusual, not a normal condition of human existence.[35] Some degree of radicalization from the norm is thus necessary. Many parts of such radicalizing journeys are not principally ideological: existing policies are replaced by successively more extreme and provocative options, low level violence psychologically habituates perpetrators for more extensive campaigns, complex bureaucratic arrangements develop progressively and expand a group's capacity to organize violence on a mass scale, and so forth.[36]

But changes in speech, and the changes in ideologies they reflect and cause, are *part* of the radicalizing trajectory. In the months or years preceding mass intergroup violence, relevant groups of perpetrators and their supporters come increasingly to see violence as permissible and even necessary. Repertoires of ideas and arguments that encourage such a perception become increasingly formulated and disseminated through speech—spoken, written or otherwise—allowing greater numbers of potential perpetrators to see violence as increasingly thinkable, possible, and justified, and to possess the justificatory resources necessary to convince others. Such trajectories are complex, may be halting and uneven, and involve a mix of 'top-down', 'bottom-up' and 'horizontal' processes.[37] Although explicit and easily identifiable propaganda campaigns can be powerful, they are not the only form that matters. Much dissemination and radicalization occurs through diffuse and gradual processes of political, cultural and intellectual change.[38]

The mix of dissemination and radicalization processes is visible in a number of classic cases of mass violence. In the Soviet Union, for example, security policies towards perceived internal threats progressively radicalized from the early 1930s onwards, leading to the mass Stalinist violence of the 1937-8 period. Much of this was fairly centralized and elite-level. The party leadership around Stalin articulated securitized diagnoses of economic failings and alarmist interpretations of domestic conditions, producing a series of reports that were discussed amongst the Bolshevik Party Central Committee, and then propagated downwards throughout the extensive party apparatus (though there was also positive feedback up the system, and varying forms of mass participation).[39] In post-World War I Germany, by contrast, key ideas that would provide the foundations for Nazi atrocities initially circulated in a range of veterans networks and paramilitary organizations, that pulled in many young Germans, popularized contempt for Jews and the Weimar Republic, and glorified violence.[40] After the Nazi seizure of power the principal dynamics of dissemination shifted to the extreme, propagandistic indoctrination of large sections of German society through private and state media, the Nazi Party, a range of affiliated Nazi organizations, and the military.[41] In Rwanda, Hutu extremism developed amongst key elites many decades prior to the 1994 genocide. Their radical ideas were increasingly disseminated through the education system, quasi-official publications, and radio.[42] In the months before the genocide itself, radio networks like Radio Rwanda and RTLM disseminated radicalizing Hutu Power notions, and social and political leaders disseminated such ideas in speeches that were further propagated among friends, neighbors, and

[35] Mann, Michael. 2005. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 9-10; Midlarsky, Manus. 2005. *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 16; Straus, "Retreating from the Brink," 343.

[36] Fujii, "Transforming the Moral Landscape," 107-108.

[37] Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 88.

[38] Davis Biddle, Tami. 2002. *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Pulzer, Peter. 1988. *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*. London: Peter Halban; Hunt, Michael H. 1987. *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Mosse, *Crisis of German Ideology*.

[39] Arch Getty, John and Oleg V. Naumov. 1999. *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy*.

[40] Bartov, Omer. 2003. ""Fields of Glory": War, Genocide, and the Glorification of Violence." In *Catastrophe and Meaning: The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century*. Edited by Moishe Postone and Eric Santner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Weiss, John. 1997. *Ideology of Death: Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany*.Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, Ch. 15 & 16.

[41] Overy, Richard J. 2004. *The Dictators*. London: Allen Lane, Ch. 3-4 & 7-9; Burleigh, Michael. 2001. *The Third Reich: A New History*. London: Pan Books, Ch. 3; Weiss, *Ideology of Death*, Ch. 19-22; Aronsfeld, Ceasar C. 1985. *The Text of the Holocaust: A Study of the Nazis' Extermination Propaganda, from 1919-1945*, Marblehead, MA: Micah Publications.

[42] Kaufman, Stuart J. 2006. "Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice: Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence." *International Security* Vol. 30, No. 4, 71-74; Fujii, "Transforming the Moral Landscape," 102-103.

relatives by word of mouth. Through such dissemination and radicalization, as Stuart Kaufman summarizes, "the extremists were able to make their genocidal program accepted as part of the normal political landscape."[43]

Such processes of radicalization consistently include speech that justifies violence in characteristic ways, using recurring ideological and rhetorical patterns. To understand how this encourages violence, we need a model of the features of speech, and the ideologies behind it, that are dangerous.

Dangerous Speech and Dangerous Ideology: An Integrated Model

The force of a speech act, and specifically its capacity to encourage approval of violence in the minds of listeners, is the product of both the context and content of what is said (and these feed into and overlap with one another).[44] Even the most inflammatory or powerful justification of violence may have little chance of leading to atrocities if uttered in a context where it cannot be disseminated, where the audience strongly disapproves of violence, or where the speaker has no influence or authority. Conversely, a highly authoritative speaker engaging with a volatile audience and using powerful mechanisms of dissemination will not raise the risk of atrocities unless the content of what s/he says portrays violence as permissible or desirable, producing ideological notions that allow an individual to see atrocities as justified.

Identifying when speech is in danger of causing violence must therefore be a two-part inquiry. In this section we propose an analytical framework that describes the features of both context and content that lead to speech which may increase the risk of atrocities.

Context

The context can be described systematically with reference to four of its features or aspects, any or all of which can confer greater force on the speech act, i.e. make it more influential: the speaker, the audience, the socio-historical environment, and the means of dissemination.

First, in many cases the *speaker* or *source* of the message may be a powerful contextual element. A speaker might have authority over the audience derived from political office or de facto leadership. In other cases (and in some of the same ones, since one person may have multiple bases of influence), a speaker derives authority from religious position or status, or from their status as a public performer, such as an actor or athlete.[45] Or they may carry particular 'epistemic' authority in light of audiences' dependence on them for information that is deemed credible.[46] Even where there is no vocational basis for influence, a speaker may acquire influence with charisma,[47] or a persuasive speaking style that skillfully deploys rhetoric[48] and mobilizes an audience's affective inclinations.[49]

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[43] Kaufman, "Symbolic Politics," 75.

[44] Tully, "The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics"; Skinner, *Visions of Politics* Vol. 1.

[45] The psychological dynamics of authority were famously studied in: Milgram, Stanley. 2010. *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*. London: Pinter & Martin Ltd. See also: Mastroianni, George R. 2015. "Obedience in perspective: Psychology and the Holocaust." *Theory & Psychology* Vol. 25, No. 5. 657-669.; Blass, Thomas. 1999. "The Milgram Paradigm After 35 Years: Some Things We Now Know About Obedience to Authority." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* Vol. 29, No. 5, 955-978; Kelman, Herbert C. and V. Lee Hamilton. 1989. *Crimes of Obedience*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

[46] Hardwig, John. 1985. "Epistemic Dependence." *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 82, No. 7, 335-349; Baurmann, Michael. 2007. "Rational Fundamentalism? An Explanatory Model of Fundamentalist Beliefs." *Episteme* Vol. 4, No. 2, 150-166.

[47] Hoffmann, David. 2015. "Quantifying and Qualifying Charisma: A Theoretical Framework for Measuring the Presence of Charismatic Authority in Terrorist Groups." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* Vol. 38, No. 9, 710-733

[48] On the importance of rhetoric, see: Finlayson, Alan. 2012. "Rhetoric and the Political Theory of Ideologies." *Political Studies* Vol. 60, No. 4, 751-767; Frazer, Elizabeth and Kimberly Hutchings. 2007. "Argument and Rhetoric in the Justification of Political Violence." *European Journal of Political Theory* Vol 6, No. 2, 180-199; Billig, Michael. 1991. *Ideology and Opinions: Studies in Rhetorical Psychology*. London: Sage Publications.

[49] On recent analyses of the importance of affect and emotion in violence, see: Hall, Todd H. and Andrew A.G. Ross. 2015. "Affective Politics After 9/11." *International Organization* Vol. 69, No. 4, 847-879; Olusanya, Olaoluwa. 2014. *Emotions, Decision-Making and Mass Atrocities: Through the Lens of the Macro-MicroIntegrated Theoretical Model*. Farnham: Ashgate; Steele, Brent J. 2013. "Revenge, Affect, and Just War." In *Just War: Authority, Tradition, and Practice*. Edited by Anthony F. Lang, Cian O'Driscoll, and John Williams. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press; McDoom, Omar Shahabudin. 2012. "The Psychology of Threat in Intergroup Conflict: Emotions, Rationality, and Opportunity in the Rwandan

The second contextual element is the *audience* itself. No audience is homogeneous, and individual members of the audience vary in their propensity to commit violence, for any number of reasons. Analysis can and should focus on audiences, or audience members, most likely to respond violently.[50] In almost any human group or society, young men are more likely to attack other people than other demographic subgroups.[51] In addition, people of any age and gender can become more likely to resort to violence – or to condone it when it is committed on their behalf – when they are afraid of being seriously harmed by another person or group, and especially when they believe themselves – or their dependents – to be subject to an existential threat. The extent to which an audience is susceptible to dangerous speech is thus, itself, partly a question of the existing audience ideology.

The third element consists of the *social and historical context*, which can increase the chance that inflammatory messages will be accepted by the audience even where they are exaggerated or entirely false, as in the example with which we began this article. Other scholars have described social and structural characteristics that increase the chances of intergroup violence; in fact there has been so much work on cataloguing and examining the relative weight of such factors (often for early warning efforts) that we do not attempt to repeat it all here.[52] Some of the most relevant points are longstanding grievances between the relevant groups, a weak or dysfunctional justice system, competition among groups for scarce basic resources, and land disputes.[53] And again, assessment of the social and historical context is in part a question of the extant ideological environment. Notions of grievance and memories of historical injustice form part of the existing ideological landscape that justifiers of atrocity seek to capitalize on and intensify. We have also observed some other historical factors that can make speech more dangerous, such as previous episodes of violence following similar inflammatory speech. Such episodes put both the speaker and the audience on notice that speech can indeed be catalytic of violence.

In some cases, language itself is an influential feature of relevant social and historical context. A single word can play this role, by taking on a fearsome meaning, as when verbs meaning "to eat" and "to wash" were used to refer to killing in the run-up to elections in June 2015 in Burundi. Such expressions were all the more powerful because the same words were used in the same ways during past killing in Burundi, and in neighboring Rwanda, before the 1994 genocide.[54]

The last contextual element is the *means of dissemination* of speech. Where a community or audience relies predominantly on one source of news or information, the fact that a message comes from that source may, itself, render the message more influential. This was the case for broadcasts over the notorious Rwandan radio station RTLM, according to witnesses who testified at the Rwanda war crimes tribunal. Similarly, the International Criminal Court chose to indict

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Genocide." *International Security* Vol. 37, No. 2, 119-155; Suny, Ronald Grigory. 2004. *Why We Hate You: The Passions of National Identity and Ethnic Violence*, Berkeley Program in Societ and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series. Berkeley.

[50] Benesch, Susan. 2008. "Vile Crime or Inalienable Right: Defining Incitement to Genocide," *Virginia Journal of International Law* Vol 48, No 3, 458–528.

[51] Urdal, Henrik. 2006. "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence." *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 50, No 3, 607-629.; Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 286-287.

[52] For just a sampling of this work, see: United Nations, United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes*; Straus, Scott. 2012b. "'Destroy Them to Save Us': Theories of Genocide and the Logics of Political Violence." *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 24, No. 4, 544-560; Waller, James. 2007. *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Harff, Barbara. 2003. "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 97, No. 1, 57-73; Krain, Matthew. 1997. "State-Sponsored Mass Murder: The Onset and Severity of Genocides and Politicides." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 41, No. 3, 331-360; Fein, Helen. 1990. *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective*. London: Sage Publications; Staub, *The Roots of Evil*; Kuper, Leo. 1983. *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

[53] Awori, Kagonya, Susan Benesch, and Angela Crandall. 2013. "Umati: Kenyan Online Discourse to Catalyze and Counter Violence." Conference Paper at *12th International Conference on Social Implications of Computers in Developing Countries*. Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 19-22 May.

[54] Hatcher, Jessica and Desire Nimubona. 2015. "Words are weapons as Burundi heads to the polls." *IRIN*, 25 June. Available from: http://www.irinnews.org/report/101677/words-are-weapons-as-burundi-heads-to-the-polls (accessed 18 January 2016).

Joshua arap Sang, a Kenyan radio presenter, for crimes against humanity on the theory that his broadcasts over the airwaves of the Kalenjin-language station KASS-FM were very powerful, given the great influence of that station among Kalenjins in Kenya's Rift Valley where massacres occurred in early 2008. Perpetrators can easily become "epistemically dependent"—reliant on particular disseminators for their information, and thereby internalize even very radical notions where there is a practical monopoly on local public discourse.[55] This allows disseminators to saturate a given context with atrocity-justifying ideas, allowing even fantastical and abhorrent notions to appear as 'common sense', and something that 'everybody says'.[56]

Social media are starting to play a significant role in dissemination of dangerous speech and ideology. Increasingly, certain websites and online platforms are dominant sources of information for some people, who can easily come to believe in dangerous ideological claims when disseminated on such platforms via particular, often extremist, online networks: 'silos' or 'echo chambers.'[57] Even the choice of language itself can be a critical form of dissemination: the same message communicated in the "mother tongue" of an ethnic group can have more force than if it were delivered in a language shared by other groups, since this reinforces the sense of solidarity within the group, and may encourage a feeling of impunity given the presumption that one will only be understood by co-linguals.[58]

Two important clarifications are in order. First, although one of us is a legal scholar, this analytical framework is not intended to list the elements of a crime. Instead it articulates salient dangers created by certain contextual features, as a tool for monitoring and preventing mass violence. We believe that criminal prosecution for speech cannot be relied upon, especially alone, for the prevention of atrocities. It may even backfire in some cases, by making a speaker and his or her speech better known and therefore more influential than they would have been, without legal intervention.

Second, speech may be 'dangerous' even when only some of the prongs of our contextual analysis are relevant. For example, in some cases a speech act is highly dangerous even though the speaker is not particularly influential; indeed the speaker is sometimes unknown to the audience, especially when messages are disseminated online. As an example, in some communities in Pakistan and Afghanistan, to accuse a group of people of burning or defacing the Quran is such a dangerous speech act that it can easily trigger mob violence, even if the source of the accusation is neither influential nor authoritative.[59]

Only two elements are indispensable: the content of the speech act itself must be dangerous (see below), and the audience must be susceptible to incitement. An earlier version of this framework was mistakenly construed by some as a set of necessary conditions.[60] Certainly a very dangerous speech act is one in which all five prongs are maximized. A highly influential speaker would address a susceptible audience in highly inflammatory terms, in a volatile social and historical context, using a powerful means of dissemination. This would be prototypical dangerous speech, but it is far from the only form that it takes. Not only are the prongs not all necessary in every case, but even where they are all relevant, they weigh quite differently in proportion to one another.

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[55] Baurmann, "Rational Fundamentalism?"

[56] Fujii, "Transforming the Moral Landscape," 103-105; Kaufman, "Symbolic Politics," 75.

[57] Thompson, Robin L. 2011. "Radicalization and the Use of Social Media." *Journal of Strategic Security* Vol. 4, No. 4, 167-190; Schissler, Matt. 2014. "Echo chambers in Myanmar: Social media and the ideological justifications for mass violence." Conference Paper at *Communal Conflict in Myanmar: Characteristics, Causes, Consequences*, Yangon, Myanmar 17-18 March; Benesch, Susan, "Flower Speech: New Responses to Hatred Online." In *Internet Monitor 2014: Reflections on the Digital World: Platforms, Policy, Privacy and Public Discourse*. Edited by Urs Gasser, Jonathan L. Zittrain, Robert Faris, and Rebekah Heacock Jones. Cambridge MA: The Berkman Institute for Internet & Society at Harvard University. See also: Pariser, Eli. 2011. *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding from You*. London: Penguin Books.

[58] Author interviews (Benesch), Kenya, 2011 & 2012.

[59] Rubin, Alissa J. 2015. "Flawed Justice After a Mob Killed an Afghan Woman." *The New York Times*, 26 December 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/27/world/asia/flawed-justice-after-a-mob-killed-an-afghan-woman.html?_r=0 (accessed 18 January 2016). See also: Kayani, Amir, "Ahmadi Place of Worship Set Ablaze in Jhelum, Riots Erupt after Blasphemy Allegations." *Dawn*, 21 November 2015, http://www.dawn.com/news/1221273 (accessed 18 January 2016).

[60] Marcus, Kenneth L. 2012. "Accusation in a Mirror." *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* Vol. 43, No. 2, 357-393.

For example, where speech is produced by a very powerful or influential speaker, that speaker's identity may weigh heavily, and the medium by which the speech was disseminated may not carry much weight. In another case, the opposite could be true.

Content

As noted in our introduction the claims and arguments used to justify mass atrocities—the actual content of dangerous speech and dangerous ideology—are (like dangerous contextual factors) so similar from case to case that they form characteristic patterns. Based on past work,[61] we identify six justificatory mechanisms, of varying degrees of theoretical originality. Collectively, these provide a framework for thinking about the major recurring ways in which violence is made to look permissible, desirable and even necessary before, during, and after mass atrocities, and thus describe the content of dangerous speech that makes it likely to catalyze violence. These six mechanisms overlap heavily, so the borders between them are blurry, and individual speech acts tend to involve multiple mechanisms at once. Together, the six mechanisms provide a framework for more easily identifying dangerous speech and ideology in practice in monitoring and prevention efforts.

1. *Dehumanization*

   Targets of dangerous speech are described in a variety of ways that deny or diminish their humanity, reducing the moral significance of their future deaths, or the duties owed to them by potential perpetrators.[62] Violence against victims has been variously justified by describing them as either biologically subhuman ("cockroaches", "microbes", "parasites", "yellow ants"),[63] mechanically inhuman ("logs", "packages", "enemy morale"),[64] or supernaturally alien ("devils", "Satan", "demons").[65] Dehumanising discourses and conceptions have been identified in almost all major mass atrocities, prominently including those of Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Japanese occupation of China.[66] Often, outgroup members (or victims-to-be) are even compared with toxins, microbes, or cancer, suggesting that they are polluting, despoiling, or debilitating the entire in-group—leading to particularly prominent recurring demands to 'purify' groups or societies from the supposedly toxifying elements.[67] Multiple mechanisms explain this effect. Dehumanization can consciously defeat normative concerns about violence by allow perpetrators to believe that the targets of violence lack moral protections. Like guilt attribution and threat construction, dehumanization moves out-group members into a social category in which conventional moral restraints on how people can be treated do not seem to apply. They are now "outside the universe of [moral] obligation," as Helen Fein has described it.[68] But dehumanization can also work at a much less conscious level – perceptually eroding affective moral concern for certain

[61] Leader Maynard, "Rethinking the Role of Ideology"; Leader Maynard, "Combating Atrocity-Justifying Ideologies"; Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides"; Slim, *Killing Civilians*; Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality*.

[62] Haslam, "Dehumanization."

[63] Sémelin, *Purify and Destroy*, 38 & 243; Weitz, *Century of Genocide*, 156.

[64] Newman, Leonard S. 2002. "What is a 'Social-Psychological' Account of Perpetrator Behavior? The Person Versus the Situation in Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*." In *Understanding Genocide: The Social Psychology of the Holocaust*. Edited by. Leonard S. Newman and Ralph Erber. New York: Oxford University Press, 64 fn.4; Weitz, *Century of Genocide*, 222; Overy, Richard J. 2012. "'The Weak Link'? The Perception of the German Working Class by RAF Bomber Command, 1940-1945." *Labour History Review* Vol. 77, No. 1, 11-33.

[65] Chirot, Daniel and Clark McCauley. 2006. *Why Not Kill Them All?: The Logic and Prevention of Mass Political Murder*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 80; Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 44.

[66] Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, 66, 74-75, 79, 85, 92, 172 & 322; Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides," 32-33 & 45-51; Melson, Robert. 2003. "Modern Genocide in Rwanda: Ideology, Revolution, War and Mass Murder in an African State." In *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*. Edited by Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 333; Sémelin, *Purify and Destroy*, 38-39, 243 & 253.

[67] Sémelin, *Purify and Destroy*; Neilsen, Rhiannon S. 2015. "'Toxification' as a more precise early warning sign for genocide than dehumanization? An emerging research agenda." *Genocide Studies and Prevention* Vol. 9, No. 1, 83-95.

[68] Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*, 4-9.

categories of person, and encouraging emotional responses of revulsion or antipathy. A series of influential psychological studies by Albert Bandura and colleagues thus highlight the power of dehumanization by finding that even single dehumanizing words heard casually can frame outgroup members in such a way so as to substantially increase levels of aggression and violence against them.[69]

2. *Guilt Attribution*
Individuals, or an entire group, are said to be guilty of heinous past crimes against the in-group (or audience of the speaker) , which warrant a violent response. Violence is presented as just punishment (and perhaps vengeance)[70] for their wrongdoing. Such claims of guilt are often at the core of anti-civilian ideologies, and elites go to extensive efforts to cement them in the minds of killers.[71] In the ongoing Syrian civil war, for example, "security services and official media [have] spread blood-curdling, often exaggerated and sometimes wholly imaginary stories of the protesters' alleged sectarian barbarism".[72] Similarly, the Rwandan Hutu nationalist magazine *Kangura* stated: "The unspeakable crimes of the Inyenzi ['cockroaches', referring to Tutsi] of today… recall those of their elders: killing, pillaging, raping girls and women, etc."[73] Indeed, rumours or accusations of rape are particularly prominent—and play on sexual anxieties that fuel macho nationalism on the part of young male perpetrators.[74]
Critically, victims are often deemed guilty as a group, deserving collective punishment for the specific crimes of some of their "members".[75] Such processes expose the enormous atrocity-justifying potential of demonyms or group-labels, as predicted by prominent psychological research on social categorization.[76] Once real or imagined crimes committed by specific, individual human beings are repeatedly discussed in terms of "Jews", "Tutsis", "Muslims", "Japs" or similar pluralized identities, perpetrators prove remarkably willing to conceive of all members of the referenced category as equally and uniformly complicit.

3. *Threat Construction*
A speaker asserts that the in-group faces serious and often mortal threats from the victims-to-be, which makes violence seem defensive, and therefore proper and necessary. Tales of future wrongdoing (threat construction) can be even more powerful than tales of past crimes (guilt attribution), since the future is frightening. The significance of such processes is uncontroversial across research on genocide, mass atrocities, and armed conflict. What

[69] Bandura, Albert. 1999. "Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* Vol. 3, No. 3, 193-209; Bandura, Albert, Bill Underwood, and Michael E. Fromson. 1975. "Disinhibition of Aggression Though Diffusion of Responsibility and Dehumanization of Victims." *Journal of Research in Personality* Vol. 9, No 4, 253-269.

[70] See also: Balcells, Laia. 2010. "Rivalry and Revenge: Violence against Civilians in Conventional Civil Wars." *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 54, No 2. 291-313; Souleimanov, Emil Aslan and Huseyn Aliyev. 2015. "Blood Revenge and Violent Mobilization: Evidence from the Chechen Wars." *International Security* Vol. 40, No. 2, 158-180.

[71] Cohrs, "Ideological Bases of Violent Conflict," 61-62 & 66.

[72] International Crisis Group. 2011. "Uncharted Waters: Thinking Through Syria's Dynamics." *Crisis Group Middle East Briefing No. 31*, 2.

[73] Midlarsky, *Killing Trap*, 177.

[74] For the strong links between masculinity, sexuality, and nationalism, see: Nagel, Joane. 1998. "Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol. 21, No. 2; Wu, Guanjun. 2014. "Chinese Nationalism." Conference Paper at *Exploring Ideological Translations*. University of Nottingham, Nottingham UK, 10 July.

[75] Mosse, George L. 1990. "Toward the Final Solution: A History of Racism." In *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*. Edited by Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn. New Haven: Yale University Press, 357; Hinton, Alexander Laban. 2012a. "Introduction: Genocide and Anthropology." In *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader*. Edited by Alexander Laban Hinton. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 11; Slim, *Killing Civilians*, 143-151.

[76] Tajfel, Henri. 1974. "Social Identity and Intergroup Nehaviour." *Social Science Information* Vol. 13, No. 2; Haslam, "Dehumanization," 259 & 261-262; Slim, *Killing Civilians*, 175-176.

is critical and not as familiar is that notions of threat are frequently a product of ideological construction.[77]

This justification is so powerful since it is the collective analogue of the only iron-clad defence to homicide in myriad systems of penal law and cultural norms: self-defence. Where dehumanization makes atrocities seem acceptable, threat construction takes the crucial next step of making them seem necessary. Whether through the passionate assertion of enemy machinations to destroy the in-group, or the more ambivalent circulation of rumours, anecdotal incidents, and vague accusations, perpetrators can successfully propagate beliefs that the threat is real. Such beliefs can sometimes capitalise on genuine threats or at least reasonable insecurities—they need not be complete madness. But they provide reasons to believe that certain groups need to be targeted with violence. As Martin Shaw explains, mass killings are thus accompanied by a "construction of civilian groups as enemies, not only in a social or political but also in a military sense, to be destroyed", a process often conducted by key military, security and political authorities.[78]

In a strange yet common form of threat construction, a speaker accuses another group of planning to engage in the sort of violence that the speaker wants to see perpetrated against them, instead. This has been dubbed (originally in a Hutu propaganda manual discovered after the 1994 genocide) [79] "accusation in a mirror." [80] Examples of the technique are legion. In the speech with which we opened this article, Arthur Seyss-Inquart accused Jews of planning to annihilate the German people—a baseless claim that in fact mirrored what the Nazis planned and would attempt to do to the Jews. The idea that Jews would wipe out the German *volk*—if Germans did not pre-empt that effort—was a relentless feature of Nazi propaganda, of which Seyss-Inquart's speech was just a typical example. Speeches and articles by Hutu leaders before that genocide similarly warned that the Tutsi were planning to annihilate the Hutu. The same technique is also widely used in less famous cases of intergroup violence: examples found by Kenneth Marcus include the claim that Coptic Christians in Egypt were amassing weapons with which to attack the Muslim majority in that country.[81]

The degree of psychological projection involved can be remarkable—as a Viennese Austrian who participated in the slaughter of two thousand Jews in Mogilev in the Soviet Union wrote to his wife: "By the tenth car, I was aiming calmly and shooting dependably at the many women, children and babies. Bearing in mind that I have two babies at home, I knew they would suffer exactly the same treatment, if not ten times as bad, at the hands of these hordes."[82] As this quote illustrates, a strong degree of future-bias (see below) is also often present in threat-construction, with a rhetoric of absolute certainty in the future behaviour of others, perhaps in decades hence, key to the reasoning.

Several justificatory mechanisms work together to confer force, or persuasiveness, on accusation in a mirror. It is a powerful form of threat construction, first of all. It also attributes guilt to the victims-to-be for the crimes that they are said to be planning. Finally, it destroys an audience's perception that it has alternative courses of action, since a group convinced that it faces a mortal or existential threat can see no alternative other than to fend off that threat by any means available. It is in this sense that accusation in a mirror

[77] Shaw, Martin. 2007. *What is Genocide?*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 36, 41, 105, 114 & 131; Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?*, 61; Cohrs, "Ideological Bases of Violent Conflict," 66; Hinton, Alexander Laban, editor. 2002b. *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Part III.

[78] Shaw, *What is Genocide?*, 86 & 111.

[79] Reported in Des Forges, Alison. 1999. *"Leave none to tell the story": genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

[80] Kelman, Herbert C. 2007. "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict." In *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. Edited by I. William Zartman. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 84; Slim, *Killing Civilians*, 139; Malešević, Siniša. 2006. *Identity as ideology: understanding ethnicity and nationalism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 219 & 223-225.

[81] Marcus, "Accusation in a Mirror."

[82] Goldhagen, Daniel. 2010. *Worse Than War: Genocide, Eliminationism and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity*. London: Abacus, 337.

is a collective analogue of the doctrine of self-defence as a near-universal moral and legal justification for killing.

4. *The Destruction of Alternatives*
Violence is presented as inevitable, as necessitated by forces beyond the control of human agency, or as the only choice open to perpetrators. Decision-making always occurs within a delimited field of possibilities: human beings do not consciously consider every one of the infinite options in any situation, but focus decision making on those choices that appear salient.[83] This 'menu' of alternatives can be significantly expanded or contracted by ideology and speech. Eliminating the perceived viability of alternatives to violence is therefore *just as critical* as are assertions of the desirability or permissibility of violent options themselves. There are various ways in which this destruction of alternatives[84] can occur. It its most grandiose form, violence might be presented as a historical necessity, as an ineradicable feature of 'racial struggle', 'class conflict', 'human progress', 'the nature of war' and so forth. The Holocaust, Communist mass killings, and colonial genocides against native peoples, were all prominently justified by their perpetrators as simply mandated by iron laws of nature and historical change. Genocide thus became seen, in the words of one American perpetrator of genocidal policies against the Native Americans, "as ultimately beneficial as it was inevitable".[85] Hitler asked his dinner guests: "In any case, is it we who created nature, established its laws? Things are as they are, and we can do nothing to change them".[86] And citizens of the Soviet Union later testified that they thought the violence of the Stalinist era was simply the only possible and thus necessary path to Communism: "I had my doubts about the Five Year Plan... But I justified it by the conviction that we were building something great...a new society that could not have been built by voluntary means".[87] But often the destruction of alternatives is more contingent that this: alternatives might be destroyed by normatively disparaging them and associating them with reprehensible moral qualities (see 'Virtuetalk' below); or they might be presented as inefficacious or impractical, often as a matter of assertion or taken-for-granted self-evidence; or they may be framed as unacceptable given particular situations – 'supreme emergencies' or 'states of exception'[88]—so that mass atrocities seem the only possible course. Frequently, violence is imputed as inevitable in 'war' or international anarchy, and thus pointless to criticize. Enthusiastically championing mass aerial bombardment of German civilians in World War II, British newspapers proclaimed to their readers that: "This is the only policy. This is the only effective method available to us in self-defence… The invention of the bombing plane abolished chivalry for ever. It is now 'retaliate or go under'. We are not dedicated to passive and polite martyrdom. We *must* hit back…"[89] Irrespective of the method, the destruction of alternatives serves to 'deagentify' the violence: making it appear to be the product of irresistible inhuman forces rather than conscious choices by policymakers and perpetrators, and thereby promoting moral disengagement from their acts.[90] This can occur at a more macro or micro level. With macro-level destruction of alternatives, individual perpetrators might accept that they faced a choice to *participate* in the violence as an individual, but the violence itself takes on

[83] Foucault, "The Subject and Power."

[84] We borrow the phrase from Gordy, Eric. 1999. *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

[85] Gellately, Robert and Ben Kiernan. 2003. "Investigating Genocide." In *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*. Edited by Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 24.

[86] Trevor-Roper, Hugh. 1953. *Hitler's Table Talk*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 134.

[87] Figes, Orlando. 2002. *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*. London: Penguin Books, 111.

[88] Agamben, Georgio. 2005. *State of Exception* trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[89] Connelly, Mark, 2002. "The British People, the Press and the Strategic Air Campaign against Germany, 1939-45." *Contemporary British History* Vol. 16, No. 2, 47-48.

[90] Bandura, "Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities."

the appearance of a simple dictate of the situation or of natural laws, rather than a chosen policy selected by the perpetrators.[91] Often, of course, the destruction of alternatives occurs at the micro level too—many perpetrators affirm that they personally had no choice, perhaps due to coercion or due to sincere beliefs in specific situational pressures.[92] This is more likely to be rooted in individual conceptions than in speech and ideology, but these could play a role—situational pressures do not speak for themselves but are interpreted in light of how they are framed in speech and perceived in light of ideological assumptions.[93] Speech that inculcates fears about punishment for non-conformity to violent campaigns, that frames individual choice as absent, or that spreads intense peer-pressure and notions of required behaviour can be crucial to the destruction of alternatives at the individual level.

5. *Virtuetalk*
The valorization of violence by associating it with a range of praiseworthy characteristics, and the parallel denigration of resistance or non-participation as indicating a lack of proper character traits, a deplorable "weakness", or a range of other deficiencies. As a now substantial literature in psychology emphasizes, most ordinary political and ethical thinking is not intellectualized philosophy, but is guided by vague but quick and often deeply felt impressions and intuitions regarding what "looks" or "feels" good or bad.[94] Researchers have also long recognized that human beings are powerfully motivated to draw a satisfactory mental image of themselves, a positive moral self-identity, often shaped by notions of ideal group-identities, that produces considerable self-esteem.[95] Virtuetalk capitalizes on these psychological tendencies, directing and regulating individuals' moral emotions, by reconstructing violence as admirable. Violence is linked through verbal expressions, symbolism and imagery to a range of praiseworthy qualities: duty, honour, courage, toughness, manliness, and so forth. Not to participate in violence is to expose oneself to internal shame or social ridicule as an improper or inadequate member of the in-group, or (often) not a proper or adequate man—since virtuetalk tends to be heavily gendered, targeting the insecurities prominent amongst the young men who might join the ranks of perpetrators.[96] Typically the virtues chosen represent established social values, that carry considerable existing cultural status. Sometimes, though, virtuetalk may involve an explicit harshening of the dominant ideological discourse of virtue—a 'revalencing' of qualities like mercilessness, brutality, and ruthlessness as positive traits. In Nazi Germany, one SS general declared that "every man should be trained to be a fanatical hater"[97] and a Nazi police battalion instruction manual likewise stated that "he behaves correctly who, by setting aside all possible impulses of personal feeling, proceeds ruthlessly and mercilessly".[98] The Hutu Ten Commandments, disseminated in the *Kangura* newspaper in Rwanda in December 1990, likewise demanded that Hutu "stop having mercy on the Batutsi",[99] whilst a Radio Rwanda broadcast a month earlier stated that "since their goal is to exterminate and enslave us, we must not feel any mercy to them".[100] The

[91] Arendt, Hannah. 1976. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Orlando: Harcourt Books, 349 & 465.

[92] Fujii, *Killing Neighbours*, Ch. 6.

[93] Newman, "A 'Social-Psychological' Account," 60-62.

[94] Slovic et al., "Psychic Numbing," 127; Haidt, Jonathan. 2012. *The Righteous Mind*. London: Allen Lane; Haidt, Jonathan, Jesse Graham, and Craig Joseph. 2009. "Above and Below Left-right: Ideological Narratives and Moral Foundations." *Psychological Inquiry* Vol. 20, No. 2-3, 110-119.

[95] Tajfel, "Social identity," 67-72.

[96] Hinton, "Why Did They Kill?," 95; Hoess, Rudolf. 1959. *Commandant of Auschwitz*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 82.; Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 66, 72 & 129-30.

[97] Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, 200.

[98] Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 183.

[99] Fujii, "Transforming the Moral Landscape," 102.

[100] Ibid, 104.

Khmer Rouge similarly applauded "seething hatred and blood rancour against national and class enemies".[101] And in parallel to such praise, virtuetalk presents the failure to engage in violence as shameful—an indicator of treason, dishonour or weakness—so that in the words of one former Bolshevik: "I would still my doubts the way I had learned to... the concepts of conscience, honour, humaneness we dismissed as idealistic prejudices, 'intellectual' or 'bourgeois' and, hence, perverse."[102] Virtuetalk is crucial for explaining how perpetrators come to see violence as permissible and even desirable, and has not received sufficient analysis in scholarship thus far.[103]

6. *Future-Bias*
The confident anticipation of future goods that will be accrued through violence, and which are so extensive and so enduring in a relatively certain future that they easily outweigh the moral costs of victims' deaths in the here and now. Violence is rarely justified without any reference to its consequences,[104] many of which are implicit in the other justificatory mechanisms (it is assumed that good consequences will flow from the elimination of threats or the punishment of guilty parties). The future goods can thus be fairly basic—ensuring that no out-group dare threaten the in-group again, promising that military victory in a campaign will be achieved through extreme violence, or anticipating economic or scientific benefits from atrocities. Himmler justified Nazi massacres of Russian prisoners of war and civilians with the claim that: "Communism is a tremendous danger for the future. We must get away from the standpoint of soldierly comradeship. The Communist is from first to last no comrade. It is a war of extermination. If we do not regard it as such, we may defeat the enemy, but in thirty years' time we will again be confronted by the Communist enemy."[105] One German doctor, in a research plan for experiments on handicapped children in the spring of 1942, was confident that these acts would produce results: "…reaching far beyond other scientific discussion and research in the field of psychiatry, at last the most practical and immediate questions affecting the health of the nation can be most comprehensively resolved because thanks to the [euthanasia] programme a rapid anatomical and histological clarification can be achieved."[106] But the anticipated benefits can also be extravagant and utopian—promises that a positive transformation of society will be brought about through a temporary violent transition, or that national unity and prosperity for a long-mistreated people can be obtained. In light of the expectation that Soviet violence would protect the revolution and usher in Communist utopia, Lenin assured his followers that in the future "the cruelty of our lives, imposed by circumstance, will be understood and pardoned. Everything will be understood, everything."[107] Soviet ideology and the justification of massive violence and cruelty in the name of a promised future society of abundance convinced millions in the Stalinist era. The novelist Boris Pasternak wrote in a letter in 1935: "The fact is, the longer I live the more firmly I believe in what is being done, despite everything. Much of it strikes one as being savage [yet] the people have never before looked so far ahead, and with such a sense of self-esteem, and with such fine motives, and for such vital and clear-headed

[101] Weitz, *Century of Genocide*, 153.

[102] Kopelev, Lev. 1977. *No Jail for Thought*, trans. Anthony Austin. London: Secker & Warburg, 32-34.

[103] There are a few significant exceptions: Frazer and Hutchings, "Argument and Rhetoric"; Frazer, Elizabeth and Kimberly Hutchings. 2011. "Virtuous Violence and the Politics of Statecraft in Machiavelli, Clausewitz and Weber." *Political Studies* Vol. 59, No. 1, 56-73; Der Derian, James. 2009. *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial Media-Entertainment Network*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge; Fiske, Alan and Tage Shakti Rai. 2014. *Virtuous Violence: Hurting and Killing to Create, Sustain, End, and Honor Social Relationships*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[104] O'Boyle, Garrett. 2002. "Theories of Justification and Political Violence: Examples from Four Groups." *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 14, No. 2, 23-46.

[105] Burleigh, *Third Reich*, 518.

[106] Noakes, Jeremy and Geoffrey Pridham. 1988. *Nazism 1919-1945: A Documentary Reader*, 1st ed., 3 vols., vol. 3. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1009, Doc. 728.

[107] Lukes, Steven. 1985. *Marxism and Morality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 121.

> reasons."[108] Many individuals can be persuaded that even seriously harmful moral acts can be justified in certain circumstances if a significant enough need or benefit flows from them.[109] Dangerous speech can lead perpetrators to become convinced that they "know" that their actions serve certain ends, or produce certain benefits, often simply because their actions have been *defined as aiming at those end*s. Often, though, there are deeper foundations for confidence, with expectations for the positive future rooted in underlying ideologies: the assuredly improved future of a racially pure nation, a theologically-correct caliphate, a 'final solution' to a correctly diagnosed security threat, and so forth. Either way, the actual uncertainty (or even complete fantasy) of promised future goods is not factored into the consequentialist calculations, and the real and established suffering of victims in the here and now is measured up on an equal basis (or worse) with anticipated and far from certain future benefits.

This integrated model of the contextual and content-based factors can form the foundation for more sophisticated monitoring of dangerous speech and dangerous ideology, and thereby support efforts to assess the risks of genocide and other mass atrocities. Data collection can be difficult but is not an insuperable challenge. The uploading of videos of dangerous speech by supporters or witnesses online, the migration of dangerous speech and ideology itself online, especially into social media networks, and the typical need for perpetrators to engage in widespread dissemination of their ideological speech via print, video and radio media means that dangerous speech and ideology are more easily documented than ever before. In addition, the increasing deployment of crowd-sourcing technology and partially-automated online monitoring is opening up new methods for data-collection.[110] What is needed, though, is an analytical framework that can permit consistent, structured and theoretically informed examination of the data. Already, an earlier version of Benesch's Dangerous Speech framework was used to support the Umati project, monitoring dangerous speech in Kenya before and after the 2013 national elections there.[111] This new integrated model now offers the sort of framework that we believe can significantly advance the sophistication and accuracy of monitoring.

Countering Dangerous Speech and Ideology

This framework can also support prevention efforts, since efforts to counter dangerous speech and ideology will be more effective when they are based on a detailed understanding of when they are dangerous, and why.[112] This is difficult, of course, and in many cases it is impossible for outside actors to do it successfully.[113] There are no easy options in genocide and atrocity prevention, however, and efforts to monitor and counter dangerous speech and ideology are not especially costly or risky when compared with other means such as military operations, targeted sanctions, legal indictments, or on-the-ground fact-finding missions.[114] Moreover, prevention efforts are not an all or nothing endeavour—and even if interventions targeting speech and ideology do not prevent genocides or mass atrocities outright, they may reduce participation rates and thus save lives.

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[108] Figes, *Whisperers*, 190.

[109] Markusen, Eric and David Kopf. 1995. *The Holocaust and Strategic Bombing: Genocide and Total War in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Westview Press, 87.

[110] Tuckwood, Christopher. 2014. "The State of the Field: Technology for Atrocity Response." *Genocide Studieand Prevention* Vol. 8, No. 3, 81-86.

[111] Awori, Benesch, and Crandall, "Umati: Kenyan Online Discourse to Catalyze and Counter Violence."

[112] Kaufman, "Symbolic Politics," 85-86.

[113] Valentino, Benjamin A. 2004. *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 238.

[114] Leader Maynard, "Preventing Mass Atrocities." For a policy-orientated review of such tools, see: http://www.acmc.gov.au/publications/the-prevention-toolbox-acmc-supports-oxford-project-on-how-to-prevent-mass-atrocities/ (accessed 15 November 2015).

Efforts to counter dangerous speech and dangerous ideology, like other preventive effects, can be conducted at either the long-term 'systemic' level, aiming to strengthen obstacles to violence in contexts with a general risk of mass violence, or through more short-term targeted interventions, in response to escalating risks of immediate outbreaks of atrocities.[115] Existing work in the former category includes the programs of Radio La Benevolencija in West and Central Africa to inoculate audiences against inflammatory and hateful speech, and the reconciliation and peace-building projects of organizations like Search for Common Ground and Fondation Hirondelle. Past efforts in the latter category include the extensive saturation of Kenyan society with pro-peace messages in anticipation of the 2013 elections.[116] In Kenya, for example, the cast of the popular television drama Vioja Mahakamani produced four episodes in 2012 on dangerous speech, designed to inoculate audiences against such speech. They were independently evaluated by scholars at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, who found that Kenyans who watched the episodes were more sceptical about inflammatory speech than those who had not watched the episodes.[117] And as noted earlier, a parallel campaign in Nigeria analyzed by Paul Collier and Pedro Vicente appeared to substantially reduce levels of actual violence in the 2007 elections.[118]

Our model can support identification of the sorts of speech and ideology that ought to be countered, and the ideas and interventions that might stand a chance of succeeding at this. Scholars have already suggested appeals or norms that might obstruct the ideas and discourses that serve to justify mass atrocities: stressing, for example "humanism", "non-divisionism", "humanization", and "universalism".[119] We support these suggestions, but our integrated model highlights how such ideas would target only a limited part of the justificatory practices that can make atrocities look permissible or desirable. One can promote humanistic norms and the perception of universal rights successfully, for example, but if a society is still permeated by perceptions of violence as admirable and virtuous and a compelling narrative of threat-construction asserting the existence of hidden enemies within, atrocities will remain more than a theoretical possibility.[120] Humanism, nondivisionism, humanization and universalism frustrate some avenues through which mass atrocities can be justified, but leave others open. As well as highlighting this problem, our integrated model can help address it, and facilitate a more comprehensive strategy. Efforts to counter dangerous speech and ideology need to encourage scepticism that certain people are subhuman, collectively guilty, or pose an existential threat. In addition, they should cultivate antipathy towards violent virtuetalk, facilitate awareness of alternatives to violence, and encourage doubts over claims that violence will bring great benefits. To accomplish this, they should train political and civil society actors to identify and counter the hallmarks of dangerous speech and ideology that we identify here.

And prevention efforts are not simply a matter of countering the recurring content of justifications of violence, but also, as our model highlights, about eroding the contexts within which such justifications can be powerful. Long-term systemic efforts must address entrenched ideological components of the socio-historical context on which justifications capitalize, and push for diversity in the networks of information and news, to undermine epistemic dependence by audiences on unreliable or even malevolent sources of discourse. Short-term targeted efforts should seek to undermine the authority and credibility of those disseminating dangerous ideology, contest audience sympathies, and seek to sway reluctant perpetrators, especially those at the elite level who could potentially

[115] Reike, Ruben, Serena Sharma, and Jennifer Welsh. 2013. "A Strategic Framework for Mass Atrocity Prevention." Paper 3/2013. Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict, Oxford, UK. Available from: https://www.acmc.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/3-2013-A-Strategic-Framework-for-Mass-Atrocity-Prevention.pdf (accessed 15 November 2015).

[116] Benesch, Susan. 2014. *Countering Dangerous Speech to Prevent Mass Violence in Kenya's 2013 Elections*. Working Paper. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. Available from: http://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20140212-benesch-countering-dangerous-speech.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015).

[117] Kogen, Lauren. 2013. "Testing a Media Intervention in Kenya: Vioja Mahakamani, Dangerous Speech, and the Benesch Guidelines." Report written for the Fetzer Institute, Kalamazoo, MI.

[118] Collier and Vicente, "Votes and Violence".

[119] Simon, David. 2012. "Building State Capacity to Prevent Atrocity Crimes: Implementing Pillars One and Two of the R2P Framework." *Policy Analysis Brief*. Muscatine: The Stanley Foundation, 3 & 6; Bellamy, "Politics of Legitimacy," 180; Slim, *Killing Civilians*, 277.

[120] Leader Maynard, "Combating Atrocity-Justifying Ideologies."

be lobbied into resisting rather than supporting policies that lead to genocide or mass atrocities. At both the systemic and targeted level, online communities of influential actors committed to peace should be mobilized to counter ideas conducive to the justification of mass atrocities.

What clearly emerges from the complexity of the contextual and content-based components of dangerous speech and ideology is that preventive efforts of a long-term systemic or short-term targeted nature require sophisticated planning, strategizing and campaigning. The contextual rootedness of many ideas and appeals means that effective interventions cannot be conducted by external actors. Local expertise, credibility, and persuasive capacity is crucial.

Conclusion

Efforts to monitor and counter dangerous speech and dangerous ideology remain at a very early stage of theory and practice. In this paper, we have advanced an integrated model of the contextual and content-based risk factors that define dangerous speech and dangerous ideology: those communicative acts, and the sets of ideas they reflect and disseminate, that make genocide and other mass atrocities seem permissible and even necessary. This is only a first step in formulating more sophisticated monitoring and preventive strategies. But it is a vital one, if such strategies are going to be built on a more holistic appreciation of the role played by speech and ideology, and work to monitor and counter the full panoply, and not merely a narrow subset, of the words and ideas that encourage the worst of humanity's crimes.

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The Impossibility to Protect? Media Narratives and the Responsibility to Protect

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***Abstract**: The media plays an important role in communicating mass atrocities to audiences across the globe. This article critically examines how journalists' framing of mass atrocities may contribute to public discourse on the responsibility to protect principle, in particular the perceived obligation to intervene in cases of mass atrocities. It will draw from a broader conceptual framework on bystander responses to mass atrocities and utilise evidence from the analysis of newspaper accounts of the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides. It will argue that, in some cases, media narratives may actually erode political will and encourage passivity in response to mass atrocities.*

***Keywords**: media, mass atrocities, responsibility to protect, genocide, bystanders, Rwanda, Bosnia.*

Introduction

Our intuitive understanding of mass media is that it makes the world a smaller place. We are aware of events on the other side of the globe in a way that would be impossible without a globalized, accessible media. Yet this broadening of perspective does not inevitably lead to actionable empathy. Geographical, cultural, and emotional distance continue to render victims remote and diminished. In fact, in some cases, the narratives adapted by the media may actually contribute to the distancing of victims, figuratively making the world larger. Victims who are characterized as the objects of inexorable historical forces, in distant and dangerous contexts, are unlikely to be assisted by bystanders.

This article will consider the role of the media in shaping discourse around mass atrocities (genocide and crimes against humanity). It will argue that the media, in some cases, encourages passivity in response to mass atrocities—it does not compel action under the responsibility to protect but rather provides justifications for inaction. It will draw from Brakstad's research on Norwegian and international media narratives relating to the Rwandan and Bosnian Genocides. These data will then be interpreted through Anderson's conceptual framework for bystander techniques of neutralization. Finally, we will examine the policy implications of these findings in terms of the responsibility to protect and the will of bystander states to intervene in defence of others.

The Media and Mass Atrocities

In covering the wars and genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, the media played the role of both near and distant bystander. Journalists on the ground were at times direct bystanders to the genocidal violence, whereas editors, commentators, and journalists writing about the violence from home were, like the rest of us, distant bystanders. Initially we will look at some of the ways the violence was mediated: how the events were understood and explained, and what narratives the media collectively may have been creating or re-affirming.

The media coverage of the atrocities in Rwanda and, to a lesser extent, Bosnia has been repeatedly criticized. In criticism of the failure of international media in Rwanda, the coverage of Bosnia is often used as a comparison to highlight how the coverage of Rwanda had a lower priority and impact than Bosnia.[1] Undoubtedly, the coverage of Bosnia was both broader and more nuanced than the coverage of Rwanda.

[1] One example of this perspective is Myers, Garth, Thomas Klak and Timothy Koehl. 1995. "The Inscription of Difference: News Coverage of the Conflicts in Rwanda and Bosnia." *Political Geography Vol. 15, No. 1, 21-46.*

Kjell Anderson and Ingjerd Brakstad, "The Impossibility to Protect? Media Narratives and the Responsibility to Protect" *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 9, 3 (2016): 96–115. ©2016 *Genocide Studies and Prevention*.
http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.3.1331

However, if we approach the comparison from a different perspective, we find certain common narratives that framed how journalists and others wrote about the mass violence in both countries. In Rwanda the dominant narrative was overwhelmingly of perceived tribal war and, secondarily, of Western failure. Within these narratives there were closely related sub-narratives. The one-sided genocide was seen as a two-sided war, involving the entire Rwandan population. No distinctions were initially made between soldiers and civilians, in other words the so-called shooting war was not distinguished from the genocide. The violence was seen as both a sudden eruption and an historical inevitability.

In the coverage of Bosnia there were several narratives at play simultaneously, but the predominant image was of a powder-keg (the powder in this case being historical nationalist animosity) lit by the nationalist emotions that were finally breaking free after being supressed during the Tito-years. In short, we do find the same narrative dynamics in both Bosnia and Rwanda with sudden violence breaking out after being penned up for centuries and unfolding in faraway, almost mythical places—Sub-Saharan Africa and the classical European Other, the Balkans.

The examples we use in our analyses are drawn from a survey of Norwegian newspapers' coverage of Rwanda between 6 April and 31 December 1994 and of Bosnia between 2 April 1992 and 31 December 1995. The sources are two of the largest Norwegian newspapers and the leading Norwegian news agency, *Aftenposten*, *Verdens Gang* (VG) and Norsk Telegrambyrå (NTB).[2] These papers also included articles from international wire services and are broadly representative of the media narratives found in other Western countries at the time.[3]

After analyzing the relevant articles (see footnote 2 for methodology and selection criteria), we could identify two main narratives for Rwanda and three for Bosnia. The coverage of Rwanda was overwhelmingly dominated by an understanding of the violence as tribal war but secondly by the failure of the outside world to stop the violence. In the coverage of Bosnia, there were three main patterns of framing: 1) the break up and resulting war(s) in the former Yugoslavia was the result of cynical, criminal politicians playing on nationalist sentiments to manipulate their own population, 2) the war in Bosnia and especially the siege of Sarajevo was seen as an attack—and, because of the lack of intervention—the subsequent downfall of Europe, and 3) the war was an all-against-all quagmire, the inevitable result of ancient hatreds. In this article we focus on the latter narrative, where the culturally constructed Balkans dominated the understanding and coverage of the genocidal war.

We do not aim to give a full analysis of the coverage of either event, but rather to show how certain frames created by the media may have served to neutralize the will to intervene to assist

[2] The initial data gathering was done by using the search engine Retriever—collecting every article in the relevant time periods that included the terms "Bosnia*" or "Rwanda*." This preliminary search gathered 874 articles and news bulletins mentioning Rwanda and—unsurprisingly—the significantly higher number of 12,734 mentioning the word "Bosnia." In the case of Rwanda every article in this first search was relating in one way or the other to the war and/or the genocide, and so every article was kept for further analysis. In the case of Bosnia, however, a small portion of the articles turned out to be about sports, Eurovision or other events other than the ongoing violence. There was also a significant overlap in that several of the articles were almost identical. This overlap was the result of different newspapers buying the same articles from international news agencies like Reuters and that the local news agency Norsk Telegrambyrå (NTB) would publish several (between two and four) versions of the same article, with minor edits. This overlap accounted for a significant part of the 7,207 articles and bulletins from NTB, and for a lower but not insignificant number of the newspaper articles. Filtering out these double, triple and sometimes quadruple results, left 3,000 articles about Bosnia and Rwanda for further analyses. All the results for Rwanda were relating to the war and/or genocide. The total number of 874 articles was manageable to read through, so no further break down of the results were necessary. In contrast, the coverage of Bosnia was, in addition to spanning a larger time frame, far broader. After reading through the results for Bosnia, it was clear that further articles could be filtered out. For example there was an intense national Norwegian political debate on how to best accommodate Bosnian refugees. This debate, while obviously being related to the situation in Bosnia, was not about the war and genocide but about national politics in Norway. The substantial coverage of Bosnians in Norway and other similar cases where the word Bosnia was figuring prominently in the headlines as well as throughout the articles, is not relevant in this case and was therefore not included in the analyses.

[3] For critical analyses of the media coverage of Bosnia, see for example Cushman, Thomas and Stjepan G. Mestrovic, editors. 1996. *This Time We Knew. Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia. New York: New York University Press; and* Sadkovich, James J. 1998. *The U.S. Media and Yugoslavia, 1991-1995. Westport: Praeger Publishers.* For Rwanda, see Thompson, Allan, editor. 2007. *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide. London: Pluto Press*; and Gustafsson, Tommy. 2010. "Swedish television News Coverage and the Historical Media Memory of The Rwandan Genocide." *Scandia* Vol. 76, No. 2, 80-98.

victims of mass atrocities in Rwanda and Bosnia. A media framing that over-communicated place (Africa and the Balkans) and history contributed to an understanding of the political violence as natural or inherent as well as historically inevitable.

Bystanders and the Techniques of Neutralisation[4]

Before analyzing media discourse in response to mass atrocities we will first consider the narratives and social-psychological mechanisms which inform bystander behaviour. Through understanding bystander narratives we gain a framework for the analysis of media narratives in respect to their effect on the bystander will to intervene. Bystanders (in this context, those who witness mass atrocities but do not respond) may be divided into near bystanders (those present at the location of victimisation) and distant bystanders (those not present).[5] Anderson draws from Sykes and Matza's neutralization drift theory to argue that certain rationalizations, "techniques of neutralization" are employed by perpetrators as vocabularies of motive to reframe and justify their perpetration.[6] Such techniques enable perpetrators to maintain their moral self-identity, all the while committing immoral acts such as violating the moral prohibition on murder.

We hypothesize that bystanders also use techniques of neutralization to neutralize the moral norm of intervening to assist others in danger. This self-rationalization renders their decision not to intervene acceptable, thus evading cognitive dissonance and the moral judgements of others. Such inaction often stands in stark contradiction to moral norms requiring action to assist suffering others and to confront wrongful acts. This is not to say that bystanders are inherently moral actors, in fact they may, by default, seek out excuses for inaction. Moral neutralization then, we posit, also functions as a means of explaining immoral acts and omissions to others.

In situations of moral disengagement, where the bystander convinces themselves that moral rules are not applicable in that situation, the responsibility for intervention will lower, as will the emotional consequences (guilt) of non-intervention.[7] Moral neutralization facilitates moral disengagement by contextualizing the situation in a manner which removes or reduces the moral imperative to act.

There are five categories of bystander techniques of neutralization: first, the denial of the victim; second, the claim of ignorance; third, the claim of futility; fourth, the claim of jeopardy; and, fifth, the denial of responsibility.[8] These bystander techniques may be applied to individual bystanders or to states.

We will briefly examine each of these techniques. Firstly, the denial of the victim discredits victimization by positing that the victims are so foreign that they cannot be understood, that they are responsible for their own suffering, or that they are so numerous to be utterly incomprehensible. Distant bystanders often condemn victims through the subtle discourse of exoticism: the victims are very different from Us, therefore our moral obligations towards Them are diminished. In the most extreme form bystanders might even deny the humanity of the victims, though this is not often present in media accounts in bystander states. More commonly, bystanders may argue that the victims brought violence on themselves either through their own violence or provocations, or their

[4] The material in this section is drawn substantially from Kjell Anderson's 2011 PhD thesis *The Dehumanisation Dynamic: A Criminology of Genocide. This thesis forms the basis for the forthcoming volume Killing Without Consequence.*

[5] Of course some bystanders who are not present at the scene of the violence are not very distant. One may consider, for example, the position of family members of the victims, or those who hear victims directly recounting their victimization. This distance from the scene of the crime is even further reduced for those who are close to the victim and present in the country where the violence is taking place. Such bystanders may be in a position of potential victimization themselves.

[6] Anderson, Kjell. 2011. *The Dehumanisation Dynamic: A Criminology of Genocide*. PhD thesis. Galway: Irish Center for Human Rights, 8, and Sykes, Gresham M. and David Matza. 1957. "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency." *American Sociological Review Vol. 22, No. 6, 664-670.*

[7] Piliavin, Irving M., Judith Rodin, and Jayne Allyn Piliavin. 1969. "Good Samaritanism: An Underground Phenomenon?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Vol. 13, No. 4, 289-299.*

[8] Economist Albert Hirschman argues that people who do not want to act cite the futility, perversity, and jeopardy of proposed measures. Samantha power applies this theory to the United States' response to genocide and I am melding this idea with my own modified form of Skykes and Matza's neutralization-drift theory. See Power, Samantha. 2002. *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide.* New York: Basic Books, 125.

1. Denial of the Victim
    a. Exoticism
    b. Culpability
    c. Statistical abstraction
2. Claim of Ignorance
    a. Specific ignorance (not enough info. about specific situation for certitude)
    b. General ignorance (lack of knowledge about cultural and geopolitical context)
3. Claim of Futility
    a. Inevitability
        i. Metaphysical
        ii. Historical
    b. Ineffectiveness
    i. Powerlessness
    ii. Counter-Productivity
4. Claim of Jeopardy
    a. Geographical
    b. Tribal
5. Denial of Responsibility

Figure 1. Bystander Techniques of Neutralization.

inability to accept reasonable alternatives to violence. Apportioning the blame to all sides is also a means to avoid involvement. A final form of the denial of the victim is the abstraction of victims. Paradoxically, victimization *en masse* may reduce our perception of individual victimization. In a sense the denial of the victim represents our inability to come to terms with victimization itself.

Secondly, through the claim of ignorance passive bystanders often claim that the victimization they are witnessing is not clear—that there is not enough information available for reasonable certitude. The apparent uncertainty or decision paralysis of other bystanders further reinforces this shield of ignorance. When in dialogue with other doubting bystanders, a type of group-think may take hold.

A group of people (or perhaps even states) may also exhibit pluralistic ignorance where a subconscious decision is taken to ignore the victimization at hand sending cues to other bystanders that the apparent victimization is actually going unwitnessed or not even taking place at all.[9] As early as 1942 the Allies began receiving reports of the Holocaust but decision-makers denied and suppressed this information because it was deemed not reliable or incomplete.[10] Similarly, American diplomats on the ground in Rwanda received regular briefings on RTLM hate radio broadcasts and the training of extremist militias in Rwanda but failed to take action.[11]

American policy-makers in Washington took this willful blindness a step further by arguing in a discussion paper from the Office of the Secretary of Defence, "Be Careful. Legal at State was worried about this yesterday—Genocide finding could commit the USG [United States Government] to actually 'do something'."[12] State Department officials advised the USG to use the phrase "acts of genocide" as otherwise "our credibility will be undermined with human rights groups and the general public, who may question how much evidence we can legitimately require before coming to a policy conclusion."[13] Samantha Power argues that this avoidance of

[9] Staub, Ervin. 2003. *The Psychology of Good and Evil. New York: Cambridge University Press, 74, 87-89.*

[10] Power, Problem from Hell, 35.

[11] Dallaire, Romeo, Frank Chalk, Kyle Matthews, Carla Barqueiro, and Simon Doyle. 2009. *Mobilizing the Will to Intervene: Leadership and Action to Prevent Mass Atrocities. Montréal: Montréal Institute for Genocide Studies, Concordia University.*

[12] Ibid, "Will to Intervene," 102.

[13] Ibid, "Will to Intervene," 103.

the term genocide means that policy-makers "can in good conscience favour stopping genocide in the abstract, while simultaneously opposing American involvement in the moment."[14] Beyond the specific circumstances of a situation, bystanders may also claim ignorance on the basis of distance—cultural or physical.

Thirdly, through the claim of futility bystanders may argue that intervention to assist victims would be futile due to the inevitability of violence or the ineffectiveness of countermeasures. This inevitability may be rooted in the historicity of evil or even the metaphysical certainty of continuing evil. Bystanders may also argue that to take action would be too difficult or too complicated. Moreover, intervention might require power and resources that are simply unavailable. A variation of this justification is the idea that intervention would be existentially fruitless: supernatural or human evil are real and immutable characteristics of human existence so intervention would be pointless. They may also claim that intervention would be counter-productive—that it would only make matters worse, exacerbating the humanitarian plight of the victims.

Fourthly, the claim of jeopardy frames intervention as too risky. This discourse posits that intervention could expose the bystanders themselves to potential victimization. In Western countries considering intervention in Africa or Asia, jeopardy is often portrayed as geographical (the landscape itself is dangerous) or tribal (the people have culturally-ingrained and incomprehensible violent traits). Both the tribal and geographical aspects of the claim of jeopardy are closely related to notions of exoticism, which themselves neutralise empathy for victims. For example, Kenneth Calder, former Assistant Deputy Minister for Policy at the Canadian Department of National Defence recalls Canada's reaction to the possibility of intervening militarily in Rwanda in 1994: "It was just a kind of gut reaction. People were saying, 'When we deploy to Africa, we have problems more so than elsewhere'."[15] This perception of an entire continent was rooted more in cultural belief than tactical assessment.

Finally, bystanders justify their inaction by arguing that others are in a better position to intervene, therefore are more responsible for the consequences of non-intervention. Social psychological experiments show that individuals are much less likely to intervene if there are other non-intervening individuals present—they are effected by pluralistic ignorance and diffuse moral responsibility.[16] Policy-makers may even utilize the law as a means to argue that others are more responsible.

The greater the number of techniques of neutralization effectively invoked, the weaker the moral obligation to intervene. According to psychologist Ervin Staub, bystanders are also more likely to help if it is socially appropriate (we seek to behave in a manner consistent with other people's expectations).[17] Moreover, intervention requires action, which often entails greater personal risks than inaction. In a sense then, the impulse to intervene is not driven by empathy but rather by social expectations and contingencies.

States are both distinct institutional personalities as well as the aggregate of millions of individuals. Therefore, bystanding behaviour in states is the product of the individual characteristics of leaders, the perceived interests of states (as institutionalized in government structures), and the decision-making of other states. Individual bystanders, whether they are near bystanders or distant bystanders, all want to avoid moral guilt for their failure to respond to the suffering of others. This may be especially true for leaders who may utilize techniques of neutralization both for political-instrumental reasons and also for the sake of their own cognitive integrity (maintaining their view of themselves as good people). However, the weight of responsibility on long-distance bystanders is undoubtedly far less than that of people who actually witness killing in their midst.

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[14] Power, *Problem from Hell, xviii.*

[15] Dallaire et al, "Will to Intervene," 69.

[16] The experiments of Latané and Darley found that with an increasing number of bystanders there was a decreasing willingness to help. However, as Staub asserts, there are also contradictory findings with regards to the relevance of the diffusion of responsibility as a determining factor in intervention. See Staub, Ervin. 2003. *The Psychology of Good and Evil*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 74. For more on the experiments of Latane and Darley, see Latane, Bibb and John Darley. 1970. *The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn't He Help?* New York: Appleton.

[17] Staub, *Psychology*, 125-130.

Observing other peoples' suffering is unpleasant, so near bystanders will either help or seek to leave the scene.[18] Not helping others may also bear certain internal costs (guilt) or external costs (social or even legal sanctions where so-called Good Samaritan laws are in place). The bystander techniques of neutralization counteract the moral imperative to assist others. We hypothesize that this makes the bystander techniques of neutralization, as manifested in public discourse, a mediating factor for political will. As our analysis will demonstrate some of these techniques of neutralization were embedded in media narratives in the reporting on mass atrocities in Bosnia and Rwanda.

Media Analysis: Rwanda and Bosnia

The media framed the Rwandan and Bosnian atrocities in a manner which echoed several of the bystander techniques of neutralization. In our analysis of the reporting of the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides, our objective is to focus less on the actual objective reality of media reportage and more on its implications and rootedness in stereotypical discourses. A general observation on the reporting from both Rwanda and Bosnia is that reporters got closer to accurately reporting what happened as real events when they were simply describing what was happening rather than trying to explain it. These more descriptive reports tend to approach genocide and attacks on civilians as real events that actually took place.

On the other hand, when these events were analyzed by journalists or editors at their desks at home, they were often abstracted to a level where there were no longer real perpetrators operating in a recognizable world. We are now reading about history unfolding and Europe dying (in the case of Bosnia) rather than real people being murdered by other real people for morally unacceptable but still comprehensible reasons. An armed attack on civilians can be both understood and stopped; in contrast, history unfolding in a mythical landscape removed from reality is incomprehensible and inexorable. As readers we are left to be horrified by tribal hatreds and collective insanity spurred on by history itself, but it is difficult to relate to this drama as something tangible taking a place in a comprehensible world.

In other words, when the events were framed using the Place and History frames mentioned above, bystander understandings of the situation and the responsibility to intervene were also altered. These history and place frames touch on several of the bystander techniques of neutralization, including the denial of the victim, claim of ignorance, claim of futility, and claim of jeopardy.

Media framing and Master Narratives

Media framing can be defined simply as a way of "making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue."[19] The way an event is framed is thus largely determined by previously existing narratives. Broadly speaking, the narratives on war and mass violence can be divided into two categories: one political and one cultural. In the first case, the events are seen as rational—there are political reasons behind the violence and the perpetrators are concerned with political or financial gain. The instigators are seen as cynically playing on national or ethnic sentiments to secure their own power and the violence on the ground is perceived as orchestrated from above.[20]

In the cultural frame we find the stereotype of ancient ethnic or tribal hatreds. According to this understanding the violence is tribal, emotional and primordial. It is not controlled from above; rather, it springs out of a deep resentment in the population as a whole. It is violence from below. These two narratives are simplistic versions of academic theories on ethnic violence, the first roughly reflecting instrumentalist theories and the latter drawing from the primordialist

[18] Ibid, 82.

[19] Sidahmed, Abdel Salam, Walter C. Soderlund, and E. Donald Briggs. 2010. *The Responsibility to Protect in Darfur: The Role of Mass Media. Plymouth, U.K.: Lexington Books,* 46.

[20] See Mueller, John. 2000. "The Banality of 'Ethnic War'." *International Security Vol. 25, No. 1; Kaufman, Stuart J. 2006. "Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence." International Security, Volume 30, Number 4, 45-86; Kaufman, Stuart J. 2001. Modern Hatreds. The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Gagnon, Jr., V. P. 2004. The Myth of Ethnic War. Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.*

tradition.[21] We will be focusing on how the media created narratives that drew on an extremely simplified version of the primordialist view and how place and history constituted frames that reinforced the bystander techniques of neutralization.

By assigning the events to an almost unreal universe through place and history framing, the violence was implicitly, and often explicitly, portrayed as a natural and normal state when in fact genocidal violence was the historic exception in both cases.[22] The narrative of ancient hatred, cyclic violence and hopelessness are all components of the Western master narratives about both Africa, traditionally inhabiting the role of the Dark Continent, and the Balkans, serving as the dark part of the European continent.[23]

A master narrative says little, if anything, about the events it supposes to describe but more so about the society that produces it. The media narratives on mass violence are both socio-culturally generated and reflective of existing culture.[24] These narratives are shaped both by how we view the Other and by how we see ourselves vis-à-vis the other. In *Inventing Western Civilization* anthropologist Thomas C. Patterson has identified an obsession with peoples and places categorized as uncivilized as an essential feature of civilization.[25]

It is often assumed that the reproduction of images and textual impressions of suffering in the media actualize suffering and bring the audience into direct contact with the suffering of others; this so-called empathy framing is crucial to creating a CNN effect[26] in support of victims of human rights abuse, thus contributing to a demand for robust policy responses, including military intervention.[27] As we will argue, however, images of suffering—when framed as a constant or as inevitable—can paradoxically also lead to a greater distance between the observer and the observed, thereby implicitly providing an argument for non-intervention. Place and history framing serves as a technique of neutralization for the bystanders (both for the producers and the consumers of these narratives) by framing the events as ultimately inevitable, consequently denying the victims and inculcating notions of jeopardy.

The cliché of ancient ethnic or tribal hatreds was the dominant narrative in the coverage of Rwanda and to a significant (albeit less dominant) degree in Bosnia. In the following analysis we will highlight examples of two closely related components of this stereotype, history and place, and discuss how these two frames created an image of apathetic inevitability.

When comparing the media coverage of the wars and genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda, it is often observed that where Rwanda was portrayed as a place of darkness and violence, far removed from Us and from any of the celebrated values that are perceived as enlightened and Western, Bosnia was seen as part of Europe. Consequently, Bosnia's European*ness* raised the spectre of The Holocaust, barbarous violence in the midst of European civilization. The attack on Sarajevo especially was seen as an attack on Europe itself. However, it is clear that parallel with this interpretation there existed a narrative that saw Bosnia not as Europe, but as the Balkans; and the Balkans were—much like Rwanda—seen as exotic, inherently dark, backwards and violent. By way of contrast the ideal Europe, the Europe imaginary, was a place of civilization, free from the tribalism, irrationalism, and conflict which characterised much of the world outside of Europe.

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[21] The primordialist tradition is often attributed to Clifford Geertz' 1963 book *Old Societies and New States. For a critical analyses of primordialism and political mass violence, see* Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds.*

[22] Even though mass violence had occurred before the 1990s both in Rwanda and in the Balkans, genocide was the exception, not the rule.

[23] For more on the cultural construction of the Balkans, see Todorova, Maria. 1994. "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention." *Slavic Review Vol. 53, No. 2, 453-482; Todorova, Maria. 1997. Imagining the Balkans. Oxford: Oxford University Press; and* Goldsworthy, Vesna. 2012. *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[24] Fairclough, Norman. 1995. *Media Discourse. London: Hodder Education, 34.*

[25] Patterson, Thomas C. 1997. *Inventing Western Civilization. New York: Monthly Review Press, 21.*

26 Livingston, Steven. 1997. "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention." Research Paper R-18. Cambridge, MA: The Joan Shorenstein Center, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

[27] Sidahmed et al, editors, *The Responsibility To Protect, 56.*

Hearts of Darkness

> "Rwanda, May 1994. A journey in human cruelty."[28]
> "There is a hatred between people down there that is difficult for us to comprehend."[29]

In the early spring of 1994, most journalists and outside news consumers had very limited, if any, knowledge about Rwanda. The country was, in short, a very distant place. Once the events in Rwanda started making headlines, this distance increased by framing the genocide as an almost natural result of the county's locality and (perceived lack of) historic development. Not only the geographical distance, but also the cultural and historical distance was systematically over-communicated. The war and genocide were perceived not as political, but as tribal, and the perpetrators were even described as warriors. Words like tribal and warrior immediately invoke certain images for readers and conjure an exotic, almost mythical place—a dark place of perpetual violence and suffering for its population, producing a guilty conscience but also resignation for us, the distant observers.

Already at the very beginning of the genocide, the media established that the violence would be gruesome and a lot of people would die. Based on a history of violence, "mass murder and revenge" that had previously taken place in the country, "there is little reason for hope."[30] Rwanda was to be inundated by an unstoppable force of incomprehensible nature.

This terminology and the broader narrative of a hopeless and helpless Africa remind the reader of the distance. Instead of bringing the events closer to us we are instead left with the impression that there are places that are simply outside our comprehension. We, the distant bystanders, cannot possibly understand what is happening in Rwanda.

The political mass violence of April 1994 was seen as yet another example of a cycle of violence: "Throughout history Hutu and Tutsi have been slaughtering each other without the rest of the world paying much attention. The two parties have aimed their aggression exclusively at each other, and there is no danger of the conflict spreading."[31] This proved to be a tragically false, and oddly ahistorical, analysis of the situation.

The violence in Rwanda was seen as the latest episode in a constant of violence that had been going on for decades, and this time was no different:

> Except from evacuating foreigners there doesn't seem to be much the outside world can do. No one is ready to accept the humanitarian and moral challenge in preventing the two tribes from yet again opting for mass extermination instead of dialogue. But we know that the combination of inherited hatred and a large population on a small territory makes the rows between Hutus and Tutsis especially gruesome. The next round will not be an exception.[32]

This observation was printed on April 9th, at the very beginning of the genocide. The violence is described as cyclic, gruesome but also called a "row", which is a description of children fighting rather than systematic political violence.

The perpetrators were driven by "wild rage" and a "thirst for revenge."[33] They did not act rationally and had nothing to gain politically from the genocide: "The conflict has no ideological

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[28] "Africa's Killing Fields." *Aftenposten*, 25 May 1994. Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=020002199405250077&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[29] "Sannesmoen returned home from Rwanda yesterday: - In constant fear for my life." *Aftenposten, 15 April 1994. Available from:* https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=020002199404150093&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[30] "Rwanda's Slaughter." *Aftenposten, 9 May 1994. Available from:* https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=020002199405090091&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[31] "Behind the News: Vicious Cycle of Revenge." *Aftenposten*, 9 April 1994. Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=020002199404090050&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[32] "Behind the News".

[33] "11 UN soldiers executed." *Verdens Gang (VG), 8 April1994. Available from:* https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=055016199404085852801&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

overtones. No larger strategic or economic interests are at risk."[34] The framing of the Rwandan genocide was purely cultural, and the political context was not only under-communicated, it was virtually non-existent.

The Balkans

The Balkan Peninsula has long served as an inspiration to the Western imagination,[35] an exotic and mythical part of Europe that was still conveniently close, supposedly slightly dangerous, charmingly old-fashioned and inhabited by people with strange costumes and temperament that, according to the *Norsk Telegrambyrå* (*NTB)* in May 1992 left "the outside world shaking their heads over the insanity." Still "no one [was] able to follow through on the demands that these trigger-happy men come to their senses."[36]

Like the Rwandans, the people of the former Yugoslavia were repeatedly referred to as trigger-happy and warrior-like. Perceived local customs and temperament were frequently used as an explanation for the violence and as a reason why intervention would be useless. Like in Rwanda, violence was seen as an integral part of the region: "When Yugoslavia's numerous peoples are at each other's throats, this unfortunately happens according to local tradition, following their unappeasable Balkan recipe."[37]

Prisoners of History

The othering of Rwanda and the Balkans through history framing highlights both their lack of civilization and our possession of it. Patterson argues that

> [w]hereas civilization consists of the refined institutions, moral values, and cultures of states and their elites, nature is the essential (natural) condition from which they emerged and to which they are therefore opposed. Uncivilized peoples represent the primary (primitive) or unrefined stages of the human condition which, depending on how the civilized (ruling) classes portray their own history, they either avoided altogether or passed through at an earlier time.[38]

This observation is useful for analyzing history framing. Both Rwanda and Bosnia are seen as stuck in the past, still suffering a fate that we, the civilized, have long left behind.

In the coverage of Bosnia and to a slightly lesser degree Rwanda, history itself was seen as an actor. The peoples of the former Yugoslavia were all "[p]risoners of history"[39] and the history of the area was used as causal precedent for the 1992-95 violence. During the Second World War the Ustaše were purging Serbs, and "[t]his time it's the Serbs who practice 'ethnic cleansing'."[40] This image of a historically founded "vicious cycle, impossible to break"[41] contributed to the creation of a narrative of continuation, that the violence in Bosnia in 1992 was a continuum of previous violence—the latest chapter in a long history of violence.

In almost all instances where journalists attempt to give the reader a historic background for the war, history as context is turned into history as fate. If it happened once, it must happen again.

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[34] "Behind the News".

[35] Hansen, Lene. 1997. Western Villains or Balkan Barbarism? Representations and Responsibilities in the Debate over Bosnia. Copenhagen: Institute of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Anzulovic, Branimir. 1999. Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide. New York: New York University Press, and Todorova, "From Discovery to Invention".

[36] "Failure in the Balkans." *Norsk Telegrambyrå* (*NTB*), 6 May 1992. Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=05501319920506064l&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[37] "Deadly Freedom." *Aftenposten,* 25 August 1992. Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=02000219920825004l&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[38] Patterson, Western Civilization, 21.

[39] "Prisoners of History." *Aftenposten,* 6 September1992. Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=02000219920906004l&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[40] "Serbs with Nazi-like discrimination." *NTB, 29 August 1992. Available from:* https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=05501319920829365l&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[41] "A Cleansed Serb Town." *NTB,* 20 August 1992. Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=05501319920820248l&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

In this understanding, history is not created by people; people (some more than others) are simply unwitting pawns in a predetermined history/fate—"Just like in Croatia the current events are dictated by historical differences. And now new hatred is sown that will plague people in decades to come."[42] The idea that the current (and future) political situation was dictated by the past reveals a view of history not as the sum of political decisions but as a force in and of itself.

The violence is viewed through a fatalistic lens and makes it possible for the observer to condemn what is happening without having any realistic belief that it could be stopped, that we would have to do anything. "In a continuation of the Second World War neighbours are killing each other in blind acts of revenge."[43] Because something was it must also be and cannot be stopped. Once history is introduced as an explanation, the conflict and the violence are seen as not only unstoppable, but in fact necessary. The war and so-called ethnic cleansing are unequivocally condemned, but at the same time perceived as natural and framed as an evil that could purge the population of their demons.

This view was expressed even more explicitly when talking about Rwanda; only a week into the genocide, journalists were already reporting "…There is no hope to stop this now. They are going to slaughter each other, and only after a bloody showdown might they be able to start over."[44]

Both the Rwandans and the people of the former Yugoslavia were bound by their place of birth and by history. In over-accentuating distance not only through geography, but also through history, the events were de-realized on multiple levels. By framing the events as history-driven they became part of a narrative of inevitability. This narrative was also accompanied by the denial of the victim where the inability to comprehend victimization (whether because of sheer numbers, or primordial hatreds) becomes paralytic; we are resigned to inaction in the face of grave, essential, and eternal evil. Intervention in such situations is not a meaningful possibility. To intervene would mean to place oneself in the midst of an incomprehensible and insurmountable bloodletting. We may feel empathy for the victims but it is an empathy grounded in distance, more akin to sympathy. The danger and incomprehensibility of the violence, as presented in the media, has removed all notions of our own moral agency.

Media Narratives and the Will to Intervene

The Responsibility to Protect

The mass atrocities in Rwanda and Bosnia occurred before the crystallization of the responsibility to protect principle. In fact, the principle itself emerged partly in response to the international community's failure to act in these catastrophic cases. Nonetheless the principle provides an interesting normative lens through which to view the obligation to intervene and the neutralization of this obligation.

The concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) originated with the 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), a commission of experts tasked with determining appropriate policy responses to situations of mass atrocities such as Rwanda and Srebrenica. The report determined that humanitarian intervention was justifiable under the following circumstances:

> ….there must be serious and irreparable harm occurring to human beings, or imminently likely to occur, of the following kind:
> A. **large-scale loss of life,** actual or apprehended, with genocidal intent or not, which is the product either of deliberate state action, or state neglect or inability to act, or a failed state situation; or

[42] "Bosnia is New Croatia." *Aftenposten, 11 April 1992. Available from:* https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=02000219920411002 7&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[43] "Failure in the Balkans." *NTB*, 6 May 1992. Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=055013199205060641&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

[44] "Now the slaughter begins for real." *NTB*, 13 April 1994. Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=055013199404131342&serviceId=2 (accessed May 2010).

> B. **large-scale 'ethnic cleansing'**, actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape.[45]

In addition to this "just cause" threshold the report also required that intervention should only occur under the "right authority."[46] Furthermore, the commission embraced the following precautionary principles: intervention should only occur with the right intention and as a last resort, and it should be proportional with reasonable prospects of success.[47] It is important to note that the Responsibility to Protect doctrine went beyond military intervention to include a range of policy responses under the categories "the responsibility to prevent," the "responsibility to react," and "the responsibility to rebuild." The concept of R2P was subsequently enshrined as a UN policy in the 2005 Outcome Document of the UN Millennium Summit.[48] R2P is now widely cited as a guiding framework in determinations of whether to intervene in response to mass atrocities; a kind of globalized Good Samaritan principle.

In spite of the emergence of the doctrine there is still significant debate among bystander states as to when to intervene in response to mass atrocities. The existing framework for the invocation of the responsibility to protect is comprised of general, unarticulated criteria. When making decisions to intervene, policy makers always apply subjective and situational lenses to their interpretation of events and resultant normative and legal obligations for intervention. This interpretive process is applied to available and influential information. Media narratives help to shape public discourse, which in turn shapes our way of thinking and speaking about mass atrocities. Policy-makers may be directly influenced by such discourse but also act partly in response to popular perceptions and public pressure. The media, it would seem, contribute to the formation of political constituencies for the responsibility to protect.

The Role of the Media in Public Policy Debates

The media may play an important role in communicating information and encouraging, or discouraging, humanitarian action. They mediate between those in zones of safety and zones of suffering.[49] Subjectivity is embedded in every aspect of the process of reporting. Reporters seek to present facts but also to make these facts comprehensible and meaningful to their intended audience. This process entails the selection of facts, characterization of facts, and interpretation of factual information. This subjective analysis may occur on both sub-conscious and conscious levels. Reporters may, at times, intentionally select and present facts in a certain light in order to achieve political ends, such as encouraging humanitarian intervention. For example, Pullitzer Prize winning reporter Roy Gutman said that he consciously chose to emphasize the commission of atrocities in the Bosnian civil war in order to draw attention to this humanitarian catastrophe.[50]

It is the media which present such stories to ordinary citizens and policy-makers alike. These policy-makers make decisions on the basis of a situation-specific constellation of personal and institutional factors. Thus, their decisions are based on both individual and collective political interests and personal inclinations. The Responsibility to Protect provides a normative framework for bystander states with regards to responses to mass atrocities.

However, the influence of the mass media on foreign-policy making is hotly contested. There are several possible effects of the media on the formulation of foreign policy. The media may bring an issue to the attention of policy-makers. In the event that there is substantial policy uncertainty the media may put significant pressure on policy makers to swiftly develop a policy in response to a

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[45] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS). 2001. "Final Report – The Responsibility to Protect." Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, xii.

[46] The United Nations Security Council, or, if action is not authorized in a timely manner the UN General Assembly, or sub-regional or regional organizations acting pursuant to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, with the caveat that they must subsequently seek authorization from the UN Security Council.ICISS XII-XIII.

[47] ICISS XII.

[48] UN World Summit Outcome Document. G.A. Res. A/Res/60/1, Oct. 24 2005, paras. 138-140.

[49] Ignatieff, Michael. 1997. *The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience. New York: Henry Holt & Company.*

[50] Personal communication between Kjell Anderson and Roy Gutman, Stockholm, Sweden, 15 November, 2013.

critical issue.[51] This agenda-setting effect of media appears to be particularly strong.[52] For example, former Canadian National Defence Minister David Collenette argues that he was unaware of the Rwandan genocide until the spread of "horrific press reports." Oulette recalls, "We didn't know. It was not something that was in the papers. Therefore, the public didn't know, and therefore, the politicians didn't talk about it or didn't look at it as an urgent priority."[53]

The media may not dictate what people should think, but it does tell people what to think about. The attention that the media pays to a particular issue may result in the *de facto* ranking of foreign policy issues on the basis of their perceived saliency.[54] Moreover, media effects are strongest on issues of which the public might not otherwise be aware.[55]

This agenda-setting effect may be so strong that policy-makers simply refuse to address an issue until it has been discussed in the media. Human Rights Watch's Allison Des Forges recalls a meeting with US National Security Advisor Anthony Lake during the Rwandan Genocide, "He just said, 'Make more noise. We listen to noise'." Des Forges rejected this justification arguing that "It's a cheap excuse. It's basically saying force us to do it because we're not going to take the political risks involved to do the right thing on our own."[56]

The media may also help to create constituencies for humanitarian intervention by galvanizing public support.[57] The presence of strong support for humanitarian intervention does not often force policy-makers into intervening, rather it enables that intervention by showing it to be politically acceptable. Moreover, the so-called CNN effect might prove to be weak in cases of high-risk interventions involving ground troops.[58]

Finally, as we have argued, the media may "frame" the debate through narratives. Framing is a matter of defining the ways in which we speak about a certain policy debate. Livingston argues that in many cases the media merely echoes and reinforces government policy positions.[59] We cannot claim here to offer any definitive answers as to the impact of mass media on public policy, rather, we simply argue that media discourses may echo and reinforce existing narratives that facilitate passivity among bystanders. In our subsequent analysis we will be focusing on how the media discourses outlined thus far shape the decision of bystanders to intervene in response to mass atrocities.

The Media and Political Will

Proponents of the responsibility to protect doctrine often argue that politicians lack the political will to intervene in defence of others.[60] This political will entails the willingness to take politically risky decisions in furtherance of normative principles and indirect interests. Such decisions offer the prospect of scant personal or collective gain and substantial risk. The source of political will is, arguably, partly personal and partly contextual. The framing of atrocities often serves to reinforce existing cultural myths and stereotypes, further distancing victims and emphasizing the risks of intervention and the acceptability of non-intervention.

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[51] Robinson Piers. 2002. *The CNN-effect. The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention.* London: Routledge, 32. See also Panagioutou, Nikos. 2005. "The Role of Mass Media in Public Policy: The Case of the Greek Press," paper for 2nd London School of Economics PhD Symposium on Modern Greece, June 10.

[52] McCombs, Maxwell E. and Donald L. Shaw. 1972. "The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 36, No. 2, 176-185.*

[53] Dallaire et al, "Will to Intervene", 73.

[54] Soroka, Stuart N. 2002. "Issue Attributes and Agenda-Setting by Media, the Public, and Policy-Makers in Canada." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research Vol. 14, No. 3, 266.*

[55] Soroka, "Agenda-Setting," 269.

[56] Dallaire et al, "Will to Intervene," 98.

[57] Robinson, *CNN-effect, 40.*

[58] Ibid, *126.*

[59] Steven Livingston. 1997. "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention." (Research Paper R-18) Cambridge, MA: The Joan Shorenstein Center, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. See also Sidahmed et al, *The Responsibility to Protect in Darfur, 47-48.*

[60] See, for example Dallaire et al, "Will to Intervene".

Media effects on policy-makers may be particularly strong in cases of policy uncertainty.[61] In the case of third-party bystanders to mass atrocities, political will often seems to require that sufficient levels of outrage be generated so as to make the defence of others compelling.[62] Interestingly, political scientist Barbara Harff found that the magnitude of atrocities, and appropriate level of empathy, are dictated less by the number of people victimized and more by the nature of the victimization itself (i.e. if the violence is especially gruesome or evocative).[63] Nonetheless, we would argue that saliency of mass atrocities is not determined by accounts of extreme violence; rather these accounts can actually function as distance-framing (the denial of the victim). When violence reaches a certain level of extremity it may actually become abstract.

Political will, in the sense of the will to defend others, differs from the will of individual bystanders to intervene in that political decision-makers act within larger decision-making structures, which may themselves be prone to caution and inertia. The institutionalization of decision-making itself greatly slows down response times.

Neville Chamberlain was famously dismissive of the prospects of British intervention in response to Nazi German expansionism, arguing that it was "a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing."[64] How can political will be mobilized to intervene in defence of others? Gareth Evans argues that the creation of such political will involves: ensuring knowledge, encouraging concern, building confidence, leadership, and creating appropriate institutional processes to implement effective responses.[65]

Let us examine each of these factors in turn, as they relate to bystander neutralization and media narratives. In the age of globalization, no one can claim a lack of knowledge as an excuse for not responding to mass atrocities; indeed, in a sense, we are all distant bystanders to atrocities occurring on the other side of the world. Of course media accounts of such situations are often lacking in depth and sustained engagement. Moreover, such accounts often revel in a kind of historical determinism which is distinctly ahistorical. Discourses of exoticism (the claim of ignorance) impede policy-makers' ability to comprehend a given situation. Therefore, policy-makers cannot rely solely on media accounts of mass atrocities. Moreover, knowledgeable observers, such as non-government organizations and scholars, must provide information to policy makers in a succinct and impactful manner. Knowledge, where it is grounded in cultural myth, may also mislead decision-makers as political conflicts come to be understood as tribal eruptions.

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide Bill Clinton explained the international community's non-intervention: "All over the world there were people like me sitting in offices day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed in this unimaginable terror."[66] Yet American policy-makers were in fact aware of much of what was happening in Rwanda and instead exhibited a kind of willful blindness towards the humanitarian crisis. This is evinced by their determined effort to avoid the use of the term genocide. Similarly, in the case of Bosnia, it was simply not true that bystanders did "not know" or "appreciate" the violence unfolding, rather they retreated to the "twilight between knowing and not knowing."[67] Thus, knowledge is not only about the mere availability of information, but also the saliency of this information. In many circumstances it is simply implausible for bystanders to claim ignorance.

This brings us to the second prerequisite for the development of political will: ensuring concern. The level of empathy that bystanders feel towards the victims of mass atrocities may influence their decision to intervene (although this is also mediated by other factors). If bystanders feel a kinship with the victim they are more likely to intervene. This is borne out by the research

[61] Robinson, *CNN-effect, 118.*

[62] See Anderson, Kjell. 2013. "Syria and Serendipity of Outrage," blog post for The Hague Institute for Global Justice. Available from: http://goo.gl/MNvGzM, published on 4 September (accessed on 10 July 2014).

[63] Harff, Barbara. 1987. "Empathy for Victims of Massive Human Rights Violations and Support for Government Intervention: A Comparative Study of American and Australian Attitudes." *Political Psychology Vol. 8, No. 1, 8.*

[64] Evans, Gareth. 2008. *The Responsibility to Protect. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 229.*

[65] Ibid, 223-243.

[66] Ibid, 225.

[67] Power, Problem from Hell, 506.

on individual bystanders to genocide, which shows that perpetrators sometimes rescue people known to them personally.[68] Positive intimate relationships enable perpetrators to break through the abstraction of victims—they are once again individuated and personalized.

Distant Bystanders may also abstract victims of mass atrocities, particularly when these victims are geographically and culturally remote (as victims in Bosnia and, especially, Rwanda were perceived). In such situations the norm of reciprocity, found in so many religious and cultural traditions, may not seem to apply. What interest is there in the protection of others when it is highly unlikely that these others will ever have the opportunity or motivation to act in protection of you? In the West, with its power and its privilege, the defence of others can rightfully be seen as a one-way proposition. This asymmetry of needs is often reflected in discourses that bemoan the seeming perpetual conflict and poverty of Africa.

The urgency of the plight of actual and potential victims is another aspect of ensuring concern. Are these victims in immediate physical jeopardy or is their problem more akin to a long-term state of physical insecurity or political and economic marginalization? In situations where the dangers faced by victims are more immediate, one would expect the urgency to intervene would be more acute. Yet, one could also posit that where the destruction of the victims is seen as inexorable or already accomplished, the urgency to intervene may also be lesser. Why expose oneself to risks where it is already too late to save the victims? In Rwanda and Bosnia media accounts were often so fatalistic that the death of the victims seemed a foregone conclusion.

Much as perpetration is eased by the diffusion of responsibility in crowds, bystander apathy is also facilitated by a lack of individual accountability for the decision not to intervene. If the bystander is the only person capable of assisting the victim, then the likelihood of intervention greatly increases.[69] In such situations individuals become personally responsible for their failure to ease the suffering of the victim. Bystanders will take their cues from other bystanders and a type of 'conspiracy of blindness' may settle in where a group of individuals wordlessly collude in ignoring the plight of a victim.

In order to encourage concern among policy-makers within states, you must also sometimes go beyond normative principles and humanitarian concerns to demonstrate that intervention is in the national interest. This entails the evolution of the concept of national security beyond state borders, and even beyond the normative concerns of human security doctrine, to consider global security.[70] We must remember that mass atrocities are global traumas generating instability, refugee flows, environmental destruction, poverty, and further violence. Responding to mass atrocities, even in distant countries, is often in the national interest.

The media plays a crucial role in encouraging concern through its agenda-setting function. Roméo Dallaire notes that media coverage in Rwanda wasn't extensive until a month and a half into the genocide, and this increased media coverage may have contributed to the UN Security Council's decision to approve a mandate for UNAMIR II on May 17: "I think it was wear and tear by media, the continuing of the genocide, and the realization that this goddamn thing wasn't ending."[71]

Would-be interveners must also be confident that intervention will bring about a desirable and intended result. If they lack the adequate material or emotional means (in the case of individuals) to interdict victimization, then they may decide that intervention is not worth the risk or effort. In the collective context states often seem to be reluctant to act in isolation, as acting in isolation may expose them to additional normative and material risks.

The risks of intervention will also be considered under the aegis of building confidence. Does intervention entail the loss of security, material goods, or prestige? Individual assistance to victims of state-directed mass atrocities will often occur covertly. States might also consider the effects of intervention (or non-intervention) on their bilateral and multilateral relations. The likelihood

[68] Munroe, Kristin Renwick. 2004. *The Hand of Compassion: Portraits of Moral Choice During the Holocaust. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 214.*

[69] Staub, *Psychology, 73.*

[70] Dallaire et al, "Will to Intervene," 4.

[71] Ibid, 101.

of intervention decreases where material and physical costs are high.[72] Effort is another, closely related, determinant of the likelihood of individual or collective intervention to protect victims of mass atrocities. In situations where the victim(s) can be assisted with minimal effort, the likelihood of intervention should increase.

Media discourses emphasizing place, in particular the jeopardy associated with the state where intervention is to take place, arguably reduce confidence in the potential for successful intervention. In general, the de-politicization of political violence which often occurs in popular perceptions of mass atrocities renders violence incomprehensible, precluding consideration of successful intervention.

Beyond these factors political will also requires effective processes. Paradoxically, individuals and states that may be too weak to effect results individually may be able to do so collectively. Intervention to prevent or stop violence often requires the courage to act alone, although, in the global context, acting alone may be of questionable legality. The only decision-making body in the world with the authority to authorize the use of force in circumstances other than individual or collective self-defence is the United Nations Security Council. Even in the absence of UN Security Council authorization, states may still seek to construct a "coalition of the willing" to diffuse the political and military risks of independent action.

Finally, leadership also plays an essential role. Leaders who do not consider intervention essential will inevitably fail to act. The media can play a critical role here in ensuring that political costs of inaction are higher than the costs of action. They accomplish this, not so much through advancing an activist agenda, or encouraging empathy, but rather through accurate reportage which encourages substantial engagement with the problem of mass atrocities. Individual and collective interests also play a role—bystanders may consider whether it is in their best interests to act. Will intervention bring material or emotional rewards? Will individuals gain or lose prestige through intervention? In the state context, prestige and political capital may be of particular relevance to political leaders while they may also consider the general material interests of the state.

Mass media and cultural narratives may play an important role in neutralizing the obligation for bystanders to intervene. The media shapes the discourse by framing the debate around the responsibility to protect and humanitarian intervention. As we have already illustrated, the way in which journalists frame the discourse may provide bystanders with ready justifications for non-intervention; justifications which themselves may be a mere shield for self-interested isolationism in contradiction to the universalist notions of reciprocity which are fundamental to human rights discourse. Indeed, as Alex Bellamy argues, the ambiguity of the concept of R2P may in fact reduce its "compliance pull."[73]

Many of the discourses found in the media reinforce the bystander techniques of neutralization and the factors which discourage intervention. It is interesting to note that the Responsibility to Protect doctrine was never mentioned explicitly in the New York Times or in major American broadcast outlets during the entire duration of the crisis in Darfur.[74] It is our contention, however, that the exclusion of explicit mention of the responsibility to protect or calls for humanitarian intervention is less important than the media's tendency to craft a discourse discouraging active policy responses to mass atrocities.

In some sense, the bystander techniques of neutralization, and media narrative framing, are facilitated by the ambiguities inherent in the R2P framework. In the absence of clarity, many bystanders will be reluctant to intervene.[75] Unfortunately, modern situations of mass atrocities are often lacking such clarity. When two sides are armed and committing atrocities, as is the case in Syria, who are the victims? Under the precautionary principle of "right intention," the ICISS report

[72] Staub, *Psychology, 76.*

[73] Bellamy, Alex J. 2010. "The Responsibility to Protect – Five Years On." *Ethics and International Affairs Vol. 24, No. 2, 161.*

[74] Sidahmed et al, editors, *To Protect, 102.*

[75] Staub, *Psychology, 79.*

requires that military intervention must be clearly supported by the victims.[76] Such a construction presupposes that victimization will be entirely asymmetrical. In reality, would-be interveners may lack clarity over the identity of the victims or the legality of their intervention.[77]

Moreover, R2P calls for the intervention only in cases where there are "reasonable grounds for believing lesser measures would not have succeeded."[78] What are these reasonable grounds, and how does such a calculation relate to the claim of jeopardy where bystanders argue deliberately that to intervene would be too dangerous as a means of avoiding a responsibility to intervene? Is the success of the overall mission measured in its result? Is there a level of casualties on the side of the intervening state(s) which is so great that the mission is considered to be unsuccessful, even if it achieved its objective? Assessments of risk may be derived from tactical assessments, but these assessments may also be interpreted through cultural understandings produced (and reproduced) in the mass media. Perceived jeopardy may increase significantly if, once intervention has begun, the media broadcasts images of casualties among the intervening country's forces.[79]

One might ask whether states (and even individuals) gain more benefit from *seeming moral* than from *being moral*? Bystanders have multiple action alternatives when facing situations of victimization. They may intervene to assist the victim, or, alternatively, they may contribute to the victimization. They may also choose to be willfully blind, ignoring the victimization or they may even leave the location of victimization so as to avoid empathetic distress. Finally, they may posture, performing minimal acts to assist the victim yet avoiding substantial engagement. This kind of moral posturing has the benefit of allowing bystanders to maintain their self-image as moral beings, acting in assistance to victims, while still avoiding the risks that come with more substantial forms of engagement. Moral behavior is not always altruistic—rather it can, at times, be purely selfish and instrumental.

Moral posturing seems to be especially prevalent in the sphere of international relations. States may express outrage, passing resolution after resolution demanding compliance with international law yet fail to take any action to change the situation on the ground. Alternatively, they may reframe mass atrocities as a "humanitarian crisis." Viewing atrocities through such a lens removes the culpability of the perpetrators and the necessity for bystanders to "choose sides" or take military action. Through such acts they can maintain their role, and their self-image, as being defenders of the downtrodden without engendering any substantial risks. This is particularly true when states are geographically distant and not faced with the direct fallout of mass atrocities such as mass refugee movements. The media, through its discourses of inevitability, may even contribute to moral posturing by focusing less on meaningful policy responses and more on the unfathomable nature of the violence itself.

Some states, and some individual bystanders, may even benefit from the victimization of others through, for example, the weakening of their rivals or the appreciation of their reputation relative to the outrages committed by their peers. Of course, states and individuals may also act as profiteers in times of mass atrocities, taking advantage of instability and the absence of a strong state in order to exploit the country where violence is taking place, or to directly profit through selling the means of violence to the antagonists or perpetrators.

Not all states or individuals are equally equipped to intervene in response to mass atrocities. This reality was reflected in the Bosnia v. Serbia case at the International Court of Justice where the court found that the responsibility to prevent genocide is a differential responsibility.[80] In other words, states with a greater capacity to prevent mass atrocities, in a given state, also bear a greater moral and legal responsibility for the failure to prevent. This responsibility is objective, existing

[76] ICISS, The Responsibility to Protect, xii.

[77] Such doubts as to the legality of their intervention will also decrease their likelihood of intervention. In experiments Staub showed that individuals who were presented with a situation of a person in distress in another room were less likely to aid the person in distress if they believed they lacked permission to enter the room. See Staub, *Psychology, 84.*

[78] ICISS, The Responsibility to Protect, xii.

[79] Robinson, *CNN-effect, 39.*

[80] Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro). Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1996, 595.

irrespective of any subjective rationalizations seeking to minimize or void the responsibility to protect.

One could even argue that the Responsibility to Protect engenders a specific legal obligation to intervene militarily in response to genocide, crimes against humanity, and other mass atrocities. Yet, current practice is far too inconsistent to really evince the crystallization of a legal norm beyond a normative pledge. One might ask what level of specific involvement in the conflict prevention and resolution in other countries is required in order to fulfill one's responsibility to protect? Is diplomatic engagement enough? Is referral to the International Criminal Court sufficient? Or are these mere forms of moral posturing?

One of the central dilemmas with regards to the responsibility to protect is our seeming inability to universalize victims. Not all victims seem to be created equal. Situations of apparent ambiguity and symmetry between antagonists do not lend themselves to engendering the outrage required for bystander intervention. We seek out stark contrast—good and evil, right and wrong—and to apply these dichotomies to actors with complex means and motives. Situations such as the civil war in Syria, where multiple belligerents commit atrocities and use violence to advance their interests, seem to be the antithesis of the vision of victimization arising out of the Holocaust, a vision which has defined the international human rights discourse and movement.

In reality, both Rwanda and Bosnia were simultaneously armed conflicts and genocides; this seems to have the effect of muddying interventionist discourse and increasing resistance to intervention. In situations where victims do not belong solely to a single side and where they are not completely disempowered, then the responsibility to protect does not seem to apply. Of course, such an interpretation does not flow from the normative definitions of the principle itself but rather from our subjective interpretations of its invocation.

Bystander techniques of neutralization, in the form of media discourses, may have the effect of eroding the political will to intervene pursuant to the responsibility to protect doctrine. They increase impressions of jeopardy, ambiguity, and victim culpability, among other things, creating a scenario where the obligation to intervene becomes increasingly treacherous, unnecessary, or even unjust. The question of causation remains uncertain in our hypothesis—the media is not always a producer of knowledge—but rather it often reproduces common understandings. It is also reliant on the government as a source of information, and arguably, for normative framing. This relationship is undoubtedly interactive as the media both produces and consumes narratives found in popular perceptions and decision-making institutions. At any rate we believe that media discourses reinforce the narratives and processes which undermine the will to intervene. If political will is partly comprised of a personal and institutional weighing of risks and benefits then reporting which emphasizes risks (both concrete and metaphysical) and cultural biases that preclude deeper engagement will erode this will.

Conclusion

Genocide and crimes against humanity are crimes committed by individuals with criminal intent. They are not metaphysical phenomena driven by historical determinism, whereby tribal groups come to inevitable, fatal blows. Violence, as seen through the media, is de-politicized and dramatized. Indeed, there is a powerful fatalism which underlies much of the reporting that emerged out of the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides where 'genocide was bound to happen, and now that it is here, it is unstoppable.'

The victims themselves are cast as lambs to the slaughter; they are noble in their victimhood, suffering in silence, devoid of agency. This ennobling martyrdom of victims brings fatal effect—victimhood is their fate and their lot. In Bosnia, it was said that "Europe is dying,"[81] yet in reality Europe is another abstraction, albeit a geopolitical one, and the only death that was real was the death of individual victims.

This narrative of failure began early in Rwanda, right from the beginning of the genocide. The media focused more on the inevitability of the West doing nothing than the possibility of the West

[81] "Are We Letting Europe Die in Sarajevo?" *Aftenposten, 17 September 1993.* Available from: https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/search (accessed May 2010).

acting. The actual perpetrators of violence in Rwanda were often obscured by this cosmopolitan navel-gazing, which cast the West as the real, immutable perpetrator.

Guilt itself can function as an engine of apathy. Without effective policy responses guilt is just another form of paralysis. There is a certain self-gratifying sorrow which appears to represent empathy for the victims, all the while precluding intervention to bring about the end of victimization. Our fact of inaction may be eased by our resultant, apparent emotional distress.

The effect of this disempowering media discourse may be profound. Genocide prevention is no longer a policy question. We are witnesses to history rather than its authors. With the advent of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine, such inaction should be a thing of the past; and yet, in Syria, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, atrocities continue to be cast as inevitable tragedies without evoking a need for practical, policy responses.

We can question whether the obligation to intervene is actually present, and if so, is this obligation more about seeming moral than taking constructive action? It is beyond our scope here to offer definitive answers to these queries but we maintain that media narratives, in certain forms, may make it easier for bystanders to abstain from constructive action to end violence. Suffering, in fact, is not ignored but rather reconstituted as something outside of our power to effect.

Media discourses often render victim worlds as remote. Yet, perhaps the media does not drive this bystander apathy, but is rather reflective of it. We must ask ourselves whether we really want to relate with the plight of victims. Or is such empathy even possible? Do we want to visit victim worlds, or do they challenge our very metaphysical security? For people living in relative comfort, suffering on an extreme level may be completely incomprehensible. What are our responsibilities towards those whose suffering we cannot comprehend?

Figure 2. Freedom from Fear (Painting), Norman Rockwell. Source: Norman Rockwell Museum via Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_from_Fear_(painting)#/media/File:Freedom_from_Fear.jpg.

This desire to remain firmly rooted in zones of safety with an "appropriate" distance from danger, and ignorance to its effects, is well represented by the Norman Rockwell painting *Freedom from Fear*. In the painting a father is tucking his children into bed while clutching a newspaper in his hand. Above the fold the words "bombing" and "horror" are clearly visible. This artwork is intended to illustrate the universal right to be free from fear. However, what it actually tells us is that freedom from fear is not a matter of universal safety, but rather the right to be insulated from the suffering of others in distant and foreign lands. Distance and futility framing create a security blanket that allows us, distant bystanders, to watch and sympathize from a safe distance. We can only engage with distant suffering in superficial ways when it is perceived as inevitable, alien, and outside of our control.

In Rockwell's painting the media does not bring the world closer, but rather atrocities only echo distantly on the newspaper pages we hold as we go about our daily routine. The world remains a vast place, where suffering is bounded by geography.

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Eliminating Rivals, Managing Rivalries: A Comparison of Robert Mugabe and Kenneth Kaunda

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***Abstract**: This article seeks to explore the role that leadership plays in both the perpetration and avoidance of mass atrocities. Many scholars have argued that leadership is pivotal to the outbreak of such violence but there is almost no scholarship which explores the role that political leaders play in mitigating or aggravating the risk of atrocities over time. Why is it that mass atrocities occur in some places but not in others, despite the existence of similar risk factors? By conducting a comparative analysis of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, this paper investigates the impact that the strategies of each leader had on the risk of mass atrocities. Both countries share similar colonial backgrounds, and display comparable structural risk factors commonly associated with genocide and other mass atrocities. Both Kaunda and Mugabe were key leaders in their countries' liberation struggles, and both leaders played pivotal roles during the crucial formative years of independence. Yet the two countries have taken dramatically different paths—while Zambia has remained relatively stable and peaceful, Zimbabwe has experience mass violence and repression.*

***Keywords**: Robert Mugabe, Kenneth Kaunda, leadership, structural risk factors.*

Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe share very similar histories, but their struggles for independence, and stewardship as post-colonial inaugural leaders left remarkably different imprints on their countries. Kaunda was born into Northern Rhodesia, and Mugabe, Southern Rhodesia—both British protectorates at the time. Both became politically conscious after these two protectorates—along with Nyasaland—merged to form the Central African Federation. Both men were imprisoned by British colonial administrators, and both were at the forefront of long liberation struggles. Yet these two leaders steered their countries in very different directions. Zambia is a peaceful, stable and democratic country after Kaunda conceded to multi-party elections in 1991. By contrast, Zimbabwe remains bogged down by Mugabe's entrenched and violent regime since the country gained independence in 1980; its population continues to suffer the effects of pervasive corruption and poverty, and at times various groups have been the target of state-perpetrated atrocities.[1] Why is it that under the charge of these two leaders, Zimbabwe experienced mass atrocities, while Zambia did not?

Theoretical claims in the scholarship on comparative genocide studies fail to adequately explain this difference. Research into the causes of genocide and other mass atrocities focus overwhelmingly on positive cases—cases where such violence has occurred. While such studies have made valuable contributions to our understanding of both long-term risk and escalating factors, one key blind spot remains. Currently there is very little research that investigates why mass atrocities *do* occur in some countries where risk factors are present while they do *not* occur in others.[2] One consequence of this is that local and national processes of effective risk mitigation —and prevention—are poorly understood. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon pointed out this limitation in a 2009 report on the Responsibility to Protect: "More research and analysis are needed

[1] We define atrocities as widespread and systematic attacks on unarmed civilians, usually codified as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

[2] Two exceptions are Mayersen, Deborah and Stephen McLoughlin. 2011. "Risk and Resilience to Mass Atrocities in Africa: A Comparison of Rwanda and Botswana." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 12, No. 3, 247-269; and Straus, Scott 2012. "Retreating from the Brink: Theorizing Mass Violence and the Dynamics of Restraint." *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 10, No. 2, 343-62.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.3.1318

on why one society plunges into mass violence while its neighbours remain relatively stable…"[3] To better understand this critical question, it is necessary to compare cases that were similar in risk, yet different in outcome.

At independence, both Zambia and Zimbabwe contained long-term risk factors associated with mass atrocities. Both had pronounced horizontal inequalities between black and white populations;[4] both experienced growing political tensions based on ethno-linguistic difference;[5] and both leaders developed authoritarian tendencies to consolidate their power.[6] Zambia had the added pressure of one province repeatedly calling for secession,[7] while Zimbabwe bore the scars of a recently ended civil war.[8]

This article seeks to account for the dramatically different paths of these two neighbouring countries by conducting a comparative analysis of the leadership Robert Mugabe and Kenneth Kaunda. We argue that although both countries share a similar past and were initially comparable in terms of risk factors, the two countries ultimately followed different paths due the influence of their inaugural leaders. The two leaders differed markedly in their rhetoric, ideology and strategies. We investigate the impact that the strategies of each leader had on the risk of mass atrocities and in doing so we will focus on the role of the leader in either mitigating or aggravating this risk in the formative years of their rule.[9]

The article will unfold as follows. First, we present an overview of the relevant literature and highlight the remaining gaps therein. Second, we provide a brief introduction into the background of the leaders. Third, we analyse the risk factors at independence, and investigate the ways each leader dealt with these risk factors, through choices made and strategies adopted. Fourth, we will assess whether there are any other factors to which the different levels of violence in the two countries might be attributed. Finally, we will conclude by arguing the leader may indeed be seen as a crucial determinant of whether risk factors are actually transformed into mass atrocities. We conduct a qualitative analysis of mostly secondary sources. While we acknowledge the limitations of such an approach, we argue that that such an approach is sufficient in proposing a research agenda that focuses on the role of leaders in both positive and negative cases. Field-based research—particularly based on interviews of elites who were close to both leaders during the early years of

[3] Ban Ki-moon. 2009 "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect." A/63/677. New York: United Nations, 10-11.

[4] For the relationship between horizontal inequality and risk, see Stewart, Frances. 2008. "Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and Some Hypotheses." In *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multi-ethnic Societies.* Edited by Frances Stewart. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, and Nafziger, E. Wayne and Juha Auvinen. 2002. "Economic Development, Inequality, War and State Violence." *World Development* Vol. 30, No. 2, 153-163.

[5] For more on identity-based cleavages, see Harff, Barbara. 2003. "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 12, No. 1, 57-73; and Stanton, Gregory. 2004. "Could the Rwandan Genocide have been Prevented?" *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 6, No. 2, 211-228.

[6] On the relationship between regime type and mass atrocities, see Krain, Matthew. 2000. "Democracy, Internal War, and State-Sponsored Mass-Murder." *Human Rights Review* Vol. 1, No. 3, 40-48; Fein, Helen. 1995. "More Murder in the Middle: Life-Integrity Violations and Democracy in the World, 1987." *Human Rights Quarterly* Vol. 17, No. 1, 170–91; Regan, Patrick M. and Errol A. Henderson. 2002. "Democracy, Threats and Political Repression in Developing Countries: Are Democracies Internally Less Violent?" *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 23, No.1, 119-136; Rummel, Rudolph J. 1994. "Power, Genocide and Mass Murder." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 31, No. 1, 1-10.

[7] Contested secession can often provoke a political crisis which leads to conflict characterized by mass atrocities. The secessionist conflicts in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Sri Lanka, Bangladesh (East Pakistan) and Chechnya were marked by widespread and systematic violence against civilians.

[8] On the links between war and (repeated) atrocities see Shaw, Martin. 2007. "The General Hybridity of War and Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 9, No. 3, 461–73; Fein, Helen. 1993. "Accounting for Genocide after 1945: Theories and Some Findings." *International Journal on Group Rights* Vol. 1, No. 2, 79–106; Alvarez, Alex. 2001. *Governments, Citizens, and Genocide: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Harff, Barbara. 2003. "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 12, No. 1, 57-73; and Midlarsky, Manus I. 2005. *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 43-44.

[9] In relation to the impact that leaders and elites play in the causal path to mass killing, see Valentino, Benjamin. 2004. *Final Solutions: Mass Killing in the Twentieth Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Valentino focuses solely on elite strategies that precede episodes of mass killing, whereas our analysis looks at the interaction between leadership strategies and structural risk factors associated with mass atrocities.

independence—would go further in accounting for the behaviour and decision-making of Mugabe and Kaunda, and would potentially complement and extend the claims we make in this article.

A Framework for Understanding the Impact of Leaders on Risk Escalation and Risk Mitigation

An approach to understanding the impact that leaders have in both the perpetration and avoidance of mass atrocities needs to consider the relationship between individual leaders and broader structural risk factors. We base our frame of analysis of these two leaders on three premises. First, theories on the causes of mass atrocities focus overwhelmingly on structural factors, largely overlooking the impact that leaders have. Second, scholarly research that investigates the relationship between leadership and power—particularly the abuse of power—does not consider how such abuse increases the risk of atrocity crimes. Third, to date we have a limited understanding of why some countries—containing risk—experience atrocities while others with comparable risk do not. Embedded in this is a lack of understanding of the role that leaders might play in aggravating risk, or mitigating risk, and thus preventing mass atrocities. If leaders play an important role here—as we believe they do—an analytical framework is necessary for developing a more substantive account of their impact on processes of risk escalation and risk mitigation.

Scholars theorizing on the causes of mass atrocities focus overwhelmingly on structural factors. Key risk factors include: politicised identity-based divisions;[10] horizontal inequalities;[11] prior atrocities;[12] authoritarian regimes with exclusionary ideologies;[13] and an unstable neighbourhood.[14] By contrast, there is very little scholarship that focuses on leadership and individual agency. Although historical studies of single events like the Holocaust do inevitably talk about leadership,[15] individual agency in general is under-theorised in the scholarship on genocide and other atrocities. One exception is Valentino, who argues that an examination of the strategies and policies of political elites should be the starting point in investigating the causes of political mass violence. In doing so, he argues that macro-level social structures tell us little, given what he claims is their tenuous causal links to violent outcomes. While there is indeed no direct causal link between structural risk factors and outcomes of atrocity crimes,[16] such crimes are rarely, if ever, planned and ordered by elites in the absence of such factors. Other scholars have argued that the choices that leaders make is very much contingent upon the contextually specific factors of risk already in existence, justifying the need to understand the relationship between structural risk and the decisions, attitudes and actions of leaders.[17]

In the scholarship that does focus explicitly on leadership and power, and the abuses of power, there is very little engagement with the scholarship on the causes of mass atrocities more generally. Byman and Pollack, for example, focus on power of leaders to shape events more broadly. They argue that International Relations theory has overlooked the influence that leaders have in influencing key international events and turning points, highlighting that international scholars overwhelmingly opt for structural arguments to explain change in the international system. Using three cases to demonstrate the gravitas that political leaders have played in shaping events, they highlight a need for better understanding the impact of leaders on such violent phenomena as

[10] Stanton, "Could the Rwandan Genocide have been Prevented?" 213-214; Kuper, Leo. 1981. *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century.* Middlesex: Penguin Books, 53-55; Fein, "Accounting for Genocide," 82.

[11] Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities"; Langer, "When do Horizontal Inequalities Lead to Conflict?".

[12] Harff, "No Lessons Learned", 63.

[13] Ibid; Krain, "Democracy, Internal War and State-Sponsored Murder"; Rummel, "Power, Genocide and Mass Murder".

[14] Goldstone, Jack A. and Jay Ulfelder. 2004. "How to Construct Stable Democracies." *The Washington Quarterly* Vol. 28, No. 1, 13-14.

[15] See, for example, Chandler, David P. 1999. *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot.* Bankok: Silkworm Books; Kershaw, Ian. 1998. *Hitler: A Biography.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc.

[16] See Harff, "No Lessons Learned."

[17] See, for example, Byman, Daniel. 2002. *Keeping the Peace: Lasting Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 34; Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah. 2009. *Worse Than War: Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity.* New York: Public Affairs, 74-84; Staub, Ervin 2010. *Overcoming Evil: Genocide, Violent Conflict and Terrorism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 174.

ethnic conflict and mass killing.[18] Other studies that have theorised on the nature and impact of harmful leadership, include for instance the work of Post, who focuses on the psychology of destructive leaders arguing, through a variety of case studies, that "clear actor specific models of their psychology and decision making" are essential to counter these leaders effectively.[19] He does not however engage with the literature identified above on the structural preconditions which may lead to mass atrocities specifically. Padilla et al. set up a three-tiered framework called the Toxic Triangle in order to understand how and why leaders become destructive. Their Triangle considers the susceptibility of followers, and the manner in which negative and hateful ideologies are used by individual leaders to cement power, but does not consider how such triangles may lead to mass atrocities, as distinct from repressive environments and does not engage with literature on genocide and mass atrocities. While their claims allude to some of the preconditions associated with mass atrocities (such as ideologies of hate, instability and upheaval), they do not consider how such destructive tendencies lead to the perpetration of mass atrocities.[20] Finally, Wriggins offers a comprehensive theoretical approach to understanding what post-colonial leaders do to consolidate power and strengthen influence. It discusses various forms of intimidation that leaders have adopted, noting briefly the most extreme tactic of liquidation, whereby an opponent may disappear (1969, 159-179),[21] the use of more collective violent tactics to cement power are not considered. How and why leaders use their power to commit mass atrocities, or to mitigate the risk associated with such violence is profoundly understudied.[22]

Also poorly understood is why it is that some countries experience atrocities while others do not, despite comparable risk factors present. UN Secretary-General acknowledged this in relation to mass atrocities in his 2009 report, "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect." In a recent report, he further elaborated on this gap by proposing a framework for understanding national sources of resilience in the mitigation of risk.[23] This represents the first framework within the UN that considers not only risk, but the sources of risk mitigation in the context of mass atrocity prevention. Although his identification of six sources of resilience mapped out the varied processes of risk mitigation, it focussed overwhelmingly on structural factors. Overlooked in this report is the role that leadership can play in aggravating risk, or strengthening a country's resilience. While there has been some progress in recent years in better understanding why atrocities are committed in some places but not in others, the impact that leadership has on different outcomes remains poorly understood.

This is despite the acknowledgement of many genocide scholars that leadership is crucial. Hamburg, for instance, stresses that "genocides are precipitated by leaders of extremist and violent political or religious sects or regimes who take advantage of predisposing elements and cultural myths, then skilfully work on them to incite their population to genocide."[24] Speaking of the causal

[18] Byman, Daniel L. and Kenneth M. Pollack. 2001. "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In." *International Security* Vol. 25, No. 4, 146.

[19] Post, Jerrold M. 2004. *Leaders and Their Followers in a Dangerous World: The Psychology of Political Behavior.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 61.

[20] Padilla, Art, Robert Hogan and Robert B. Kaiser. 2007. "The Toxic Triangle: Destructive Leaders, Susceptible Followers and Conducive Environments." *The Leadership Quarterly* Vol. 18, No. 3, 176–194.

[21] Wriggins, W. Howard. 1969. *The Ruler's Imperative: Strategies for Political Survival in Asia and Africa.* New York: Columbia University Press, 159-179.

[22] Other work which looked at destructive leaders, or abusive dictatorial rule but does not engage explicitly with the literature on structural preconditions to analyse how mass atrocities occur, includes de Vries, Kets. 2004. *Lessons on Leadership by Terror: Finding Shaka Zulu in the Attic.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited; Chirot, Daniel. 1994. *Modern Tyrants: The Power and Prevalence of Evil in Our Age.* New York: The Free Press; Moghaddam, Fathali M. 2013. *The Psychology of Dictatorship.* Washington, American Psychological Association; Ezrow, Natasha and Erica Frantz. 2011. D*ictators and Dictatorships: Understanding Authoritarian Regimes and their Leaders.* New York: Continuum, 2011; de Mesquita, Bruce Bueno and Alastair Smith. 2011. *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behaviour is Almost Always Good Politics.* New York: Public Affairs; and Jackson, Robert H. and Carl G. Rosberg. 1982. *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant.* Berkeley, University of California Press.

[23] Ban Ki-moon. 2013. "The Responsibility to Protect: State Responsibility and Prevention." A/67/929-S/2013/399, 8-11.

[24] Hamburg, David. 2008. *Preventing Genocide: Practical Steps toward Early Detection and Effective Action.* Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

paths to ethnic conflict, Byman argues that elites can have "agendas of their own that lead to conflict or increase the scope and scale of existing tension."[25] He also points out that elites "can dampen conflict as well."[26]

If leadership is a key ingredient in both the perpetration and prevention of mass atrocities, then a better understanding of this dimension would contribute to the scholarship on the causes of mass atrocities, as well as contribute to the growing literature on the ways that risk can be mitigate and resilience strengthened in countries. Our study of Kaunda and Mugabe aims to help address some of these gaps. First, it addresses the question of why it is that atrocities occur in some countries but not in others, despite risk. Second, it focuses on each country's inaugural leader, and by doing so we consider the role of individual agency in the relationship between risk and resilience.

Where does the role of leadership fit in a broader understanding of the causes and prohibitors of mass atrocities? A four-tiered framework provides an analytical lens to better understand this question, incorporating the following:

1. The presence of structural risk factors (as outlined above);
2. Evidence of crisis or upheaval that increases the salience of these risk factors;
3. An examination of the role of political leaders in either aggravating or mitigating risk associated with mass atrocities.
4. A consideration of other factors that could have an impact on the escalation or mitigation of risk.

The first two factors create a benchmark for selection of both positive and negative cases (that is cases where the dependent variable is different). Zimbabwe's selection as a positive case is on the basis that mass atrocities were committed there between 1980 and 1988, through the torture and massacring of members of the Ndebele minority group. Approximately 20,000 Ndebele speakers were massacred by government forces,[27] eclipsing the violence that had accompanied the war of liberation prior to independence. Zambia's selection is on the basis that it contained some structural risk factors, and had recently experienced the upheaval of decolonisation. On this basis, we argue that in the first decade of independence in Zambia, mass atrocities were possible. The third tier casts an analytical lens over the decisions the leader made that led to different outcomes. This framework of analysis provides a more substantive investigation of the role of leadership in relation to the commission of mass atrocities, presenting an opportunity. The fourth tier excludes alternative explanations that may have led to this outcome.

At independence, the countries of these two leaders contained sufficient similarities to justify the comparative analysis. They were both former British colonies, which, between 1953 and 1963 were ruled as a single administrative bloc, known as the Central African Federation. At the cusp of independence, both countries had powerful European communities that controlled most of each territory's wealth, creating profound economic inequalities. While it is clear that Zimbabwe's European community was larger than Zambia's—about 5 percent of the population compared to 3 percent in Zambia, the white minority in both territories controlled the vast majority of the wealth, including the best farmland, and the resource extraction industry.[28] At independence, both countries' nascent democracies were characterised by serious factional divisions based on ethno-linguistic difference.[29] It is also true that both countries experienced very different liberation struggles. In Zambia, a predominantly non-violent campaign in the 1950s and early 1960s preceded

[25] Byman, Daniel. 2002. *Keeping the Peace: Lasting Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 34.

[26] Byman, *Keeping the Peace*, 25.

[27] Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace & Legal Resources Foundation (CCJPZ & LRF). 1999. "Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980-1988," 471.

[28] Good, Robert C. 1973. *U.D.I.: The International Politics of the Rhodesian Rebellion.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 15-16; Roberts, Andrew. 1976. *A History of Zambia.* London: Heinemann, 212-213.

[29] Posner, Daniel N. 2003. "The Colonial Origins of Ethnic Cleavages: The Case of Linguistic Divisions in Zambia." *Comparative Politics* Vol. 35, No. 2, 129; Roberts, *Zambia,* 241; Ranger, Terence. 1982. *The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe.* Gweru: Mambo Press.

a largely peaceful transition to self-rule. By contrast, in Rhodesia, the movement toward majority-rule independence was hijacked by Ian Smith's Universal Declaration of Independence in 1965, which heralded 15 more years of repressive white-minority rule. This became the catalyst for an increasingly violent struggle, which escalated into a protracted civil war.[30] Yet this difference should not rule out the value in comparing the two leaders during the early years of independence. To rule out such a comparison on this basis risks making the presumption that at independence, atrocities were inevitable in Zimbabwe, and impossible in Zambia. Neither situation was true. In fact, in 1980, Zimbabwe was widely regarded as having a bright future—once the war was over, most were hopeful for Zimbabwe's future at the time.[31] Moreover, in Zambia the prospect of a cohesive, unified and stable future was far from certain. As this analysis will show, almost immediately the spoils of government were being fought over by various factions with the governing party and amongst opposition parties—factions along ethno-linguistic lines.[32] What we aim to do with this analysis, is to contribute to an emerging research agenda within comparative genocide studies, which seeks to better understand why atrocities occur in some places but not in others; or to compare "what goes wrong" with "what goes right", in relation to mass atrocity risk.

Given that this analysis utilizes a comparison between one positive case (Zimbabwe) and one negative case (Zambia), questions about the basis of negative case selection are worth further reflection. Under what conditions are negative cases justified? Is it only justified in cases where the dependent variable was imminent, or highly likely? We use Mahoney and Goertz's possibility principle. They argue that negative cases should be selected on the basis of possibility, rather than likelihood or imminence. According to Mahoney and Goertz, a negative case is deemed possible when it fulfils two criteria—the first is that they share at least one independent variable associated with the dependent variable; and the second is that a case should be excluded if it contains conditions that make the outcome impossible.[33] Regarding the first principle, Zambia fulfils this requirement through the presence of risk factors discussed above. To fulfil the second principle, we utilize Mahoney and Goertz' discussion of genocide as an illustration. Using genocide scholar Barbara Harff's work, they identify the "absence of upheaval" as fulfilling the second—without upheaval, genocides, politicides and other forms of mass violence rarely, if ever occur.[34] Harff defines upheaval as "an abrupt change in the political community," caused by various factors including war, regime change and decolonization.[35] Zambia's recent decolonization (in the period under study) fulfils the second principle.

Background of Leaders

While Kaunda and Mugabe steered their countries to dramatically different fates, an overview of their lives reveals remarkable similarities. Both leaders were influenced by their religious upbringing. Kaunda's religious instruction came initially from his father, who himself was a teacher and missionary from Nyasaland.[36] Mugabe was raised by his devout Catholic mother after his father abandoned the family when he was still a child.[37] While both were initially expected to become clerics, they chose to become teachers and political activists instead.[38]

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[30] Maxey, Kees. 1975. *The Fight for Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia since UDI.* London, Rex Collings; Wills, A. J. 1985. *An Introduction to the History of Central Africa: Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.

[31] Sachikonye, Lloyd M. 2002. "Whither Zimbabwe? Crisis and Democratisation." *Review of African Political Economy* Vol. 91, 13.

[32] Molteno, Robert. 1974. "Cleavage and Conflict in Zambian Politics: A Study in Sectionalism." In *Politics in Zambia.* Edited by William Tordoff. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[33] Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2004. "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 98, No. 4, 657-658.

[34] Mahoney and Goertz, "The Possibility Principle," 658.

[35] Harff, "No Lessons Learned," 62.

[36] Kaunda, Kenneth. 1962. *Zambia Shall be Free.* London: Heinemann, 5.

[37] Moorcraft, Paul. 2011. *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 44; Meredith, Martin. 2002. *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe.* New York: Public Affairs, 19.

[38] Holland, Heidi. 2008. *Dinner with Mugabe: The Untold Story of a Freedom Fighter who Became a Tyrant.* London: Penguin

Both leaders joined opposition movements that sought to end white minority rule in their respective countries, Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) which were joined together in 1950 to form the Central African Federation along with Nyasaland (later Malawi). In Northern Rhodesia, as the 1950s progressed, Kaunda and the ANC organized boycotts against white-owned businesses that had engaged in the discriminatory treatment of Africans.[39] This evolved into a struggle to end the CAF, and to gain independence for Zambia, principally through strategies of non-violent disobedience.[40]

In Zimbabwe, a moderate black opposition party was launched in 1957, headed by Joshua Nkomo.[41] Mugabe was not involved in politics until 1960 when friends persuaded him to become active and he would hold is first speech in front of thousands of other protestors.[42] Within the opposition movement, which by that time had become known as the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), Nkomo's tactics were criticised for being too compromising and not making enough headway. Mugabe was among those critics and became part of the breakaway faction the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which believed attacks on whites and their property were necessary.[43] Initially the differences between the two groups seemed relatively minor but they were magnified as they drew support from different ethno-linguistic groups and were backed by different countries.[44]

Frustrated with the political struggle, both parties eventually developed military wings; ZAPU relied on ZIPRA to fight their battles and ZANU on ZANLA.[45] Animosity among the groups resulted in violent gang warfare.[46] In the first years, before the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI), there were also occasional outbursts of violence against the white population, but after the UDI guerrilla attacks became more frequent and a guerrilla war ensued in which the nationalist parties fought Smith's white minority regime and each other.[47] After having been imprisoned for ten years, Mugabe became the de facto commander in chief in the final years when it became clear the Rhodesians would ultimately loose.[48]

Kaunda too, spent time in prison, and came to head a more militant breakaway faction. His first imprisonment—for two months—occurred in 1955, under the charge of distributing "prohibited publication".[49] A power struggle with the ANC's leader, Harry Nkumbula, in 1958, resulted in Kaunda and other leading members leaving and forming a new organization called the Zambian African National Congress (ZANC).[50] ZANC distinguished itself from the ANC by adopting more militant ideas—they decried the ANC's willingness to negotiate with the government, and established themselves by staging rallies throughout the countryside—rallies that frequently contained inflammatory language and provoked disturbances against white settlers and colonial authorities. The CAF government banned the ZANC in 1959, and

Books, 11; Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine,* 44. Kaunda's training as a teacher was initially a first step towards becoming a cleric, but his political activism soon took over.

[39] Burdette, Marcia M. 1988. *Zambia: Between Two Worlds.* Boulder: Westview Press, 30; Kaunda, *Zambia Shall Be Free,* 73-74.

[40] Kaunda, *Zambia Shall Be Free,* 60-80.

[41] The opposition party started out as the African National Congress (ANC), until this was banned in 1959, when it became the National Democratic Party (NDP), and when this was banned in 1961, the movement would become known as the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and when that was banned, for a while was called Peoples Caretaker Council (PCC) but would continue to be known as ZAPU (Meredith 2002, 24-32).

[42] Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns,* 26-27.

[43] Ibid, 28-32; Chan, Stephen. 2003. *Robert Mugabe: a Life of Power and Violence.* London: I.B. Taurus, 6; Maxey, *The Fight for Zimbabwe,* 5.

[44] Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns,* 32-33; Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine,* 46.

[45] Chan, *Robert Mugabe,* 7.

[46] Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns, 33.*

[47] Maxey, *The Fight for Zimbabwe, 54-64;* Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine,* 35-36.

[48] Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine,* 47-48.

[49] The publication in question was a copy of the British anti-colonial magazine, *Africa and the Colonial World.*

[50] Roberts, *Zambia,* 220.

jailed many of its leaders, including Kaunda.[51] When UNIP was formed in the wake of ZANC's prohibition, Kaunda—upon his release in 1960—continued to define the movement by calling for an instant end to the Federation, and by promoting both non-racialism and pan-Africanism.[52] While Kaunda stressed the need for non-violence, he did not shy away from tactics that promoted inter-racial antagonism, and on occasion, violence. A. J. Wills pointed out that Kaunda's "inflammatory speeches led to a growing number of disturbances" in 1960,[53] including the blowing up of bridges, and the attacking of buses and schools as part of UNIP-instigated intimidation. Kaunda advocated non-violence, but also promised a swift end to white rule, and a rapid rebalancing of economic inequities. These populist messages had broad appeal, and enabled Kaunda to become the dominant leader in the liberation struggle.

While violence remained limited in Zambia, in Zimbabwe the rivalry between ZANU and ZAPU and their struggle against Ian Smith's repressive white minority rule grew ever more violent. Within the liberation struggle Mugabe chose a particularly violent path and his forces were the most ruthless. ZANLA terrorised the population into supporting them through large disciplinary massacres.[54] Those who were considered sell outs or collaborators of the Rhodesian cause were brutally mutilated and murdered—often entire households were destroyed. Several large-scale massacres were committed of farmworkers to scare them into giving up their jobs at white owned farms.[55] Nkomo's ZIPRA forces were generally more selective in the violence they inflicted on the population than Mugabe's ZANLA forces.[56]

Despite many similarities, these two leaders chose radically different strategies in the years approaching independence. Kaunda's use of violence was highly constrained, while Mugabe favoured large-scale violence as an overall strategy to achieve his objectives. The choices these leaders made during the liberation struggle were reflective of the strategies with which they would rule their countries in the years that followed. At a structural level, both leaders were faced with similar levels of risk in relation to mass atrocities and at independence the possibility of mass atrocities did not appear inevitable in either country. It is how they responded to such challenges that cemented the path towards or away from mass atrocities.

The Presence of Risk factors at Liberation

As their countries' inaugural leaders, both Kaunda and Mugabe were faced with a number of challenges associated with the risk of mass atrocities, despite the initial optimism arising from their victorious liberation struggles. One key factor present in both countries was ethno-linguistic division.

Collective tensions based on ethno-linguistic affiliation surfaced in both countries during the struggle for liberation. These affiliations were relatively new—the product of colonial and missionary policies—but they became the basis of coalition-building prior to independence, and following the establishment of multi-party democracies. In Zambia, for example, four ethno-linguistic blocs emerged during colonial rule—Bemba, Tonga, Nyangi and Lozi.[57] Although the territory comprised as many as seventy-three tribal groups and accompanying languages and dialects, missionary schools chose four languages for instruction and scripture translation. As a result, most Zambians spoke one of these as a first or second language.[58] While such divisions initially adopted a political dimension during the liberation struggle,[59] it was in the independent state's multi-party framework where they threatened to become institutionally entrenched.[60]

[51] Burdette, *Zambia,* 31; Roberts, *Zambia,* 220.

[52] Burdette, *Zambia,* 52.

[53] Wills, *History of Central Africa,* 351.

[54] Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine,* 55.

[55] Ibid, 55, 75, 77.

[56] Ibid, *55, 77.*

[57] Posner, "Colonial Origins", 129; Roberts, *Zambia,* 241.

[58] Posner, Daniel N. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 57.

[59] Phiri, Bizeck Jube. 2006. *A Political History of Zambia: From the Colonial Period to the 3rd Republic.* Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 102.

[60] See Molteno, "Cleavage and Conflict".

Zambia's independence heralded almost immediate tensions both within UNIP and between UNIP and other parties, the result of coalition-building along these ethno-linguistic lines. It was during this first decade that recruitment and political competition came to be dominated by ethno-linguistic affiliation.[61] Alliance-building along these collective lines was seen as a means of securing power and wealth in a country with enormous economic challenges. By 1967, two major blocs had formed in UNIP—Lozi-speakers and Nyanja-speakers on one side, and Bemba and Tonga-speakers on the other. Both blocs were vying for key positions within the government, and threatened to erode the nascent country's unity.[62] With Kaunda in the middle, both sides accused the other of favouritism. From 1967, these divisions provoked different blocs to form breakaway parties, to the extent that by 1971, all of Zambia's major political parties were characterized by these ethno-linguistic distinctions.[63] The first decade of Zambia's nationhood was marked by the possibility of ethno-linguistic divisions becoming entrenched and institutionalised.

In Zimbabwe, colonialism also created ethno-linguistic schisms between different groups. While Zimbabweans had always identified themselves politically, as belonging to the community of a particular chief, colonialists differentiated between groups on the basis of their preconceived notions of the origin of the different groups, based on the geography of the country and on perceived differences in language.[64] The missionaries established ethno-linguistic maps early on primarily distinguishing the Shona and Ndebele as different ethno-linguistic groups, but also differentiating smaller sub-groups.[65] The group to which a person belonged subsequently determined the access to resources and the job one would occupy, reserving specific jobs for specific groups.[66] The colonialists believed initially that the Ndebele were superior to the Shona, with similar hierarchical differentiations being made for the subgroups, and this has ultimately created tensions between these groups.[67] The groups therefore were an artificial creation that stemmed from colonial times but have resulted in genuine identification with a particular group.[68]

The nationalist struggle made many value their pre-colonial past in a new light and ethnicity became important to mobilize the masses.[69] After the ZANU-ZAPU split ZANU came to rely on the predominantly Shona support base and ZAPU on support from the Ndebele. Politicians thus started to use the ethnic schisms as a political tool to increase their own standing and it became a dividing force.[70] As violence escalated, the war also came to form an additional risk factor which was present in Zimbabwe but not in Zambia.[71]

Further compounding the risk in Zambia, were repeated calls for secession. In Zambia the threat of secession added to the risk for mass atrocities. Secession has also often been associated with the onset of protracted violent wars,[72] many of which were accompanied by mass atrocities. Previously

[61] Ibid, 63.

[62] Roberts, *Zambia,* 241-245.

[63] Lozi policians in UNIP formed the United Party (UP) in 1966. When the party was banned in August 1968, the Lozi then changed their allegiance to the ANC, which already had a strong Tonga base. In 1971 Bemba leader (and former vice president), Simon Kapwepwe and his Bemba supporters deserted UNIP to form the United Progressive Party (UPP).

[64] Ranger, Terence. 1982. *The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe.* Gweru: Mambo Press, 14-15.

[65] Ibid, 4-5, 14; Mombeshora, Solomon. 1990. "The Salience of Ethnicity in Political Development: The Case of Zimbabwe." *International Sociology* Vol. 5, 428.

[66] Ranger, *Tribalism in Zimbabwe,* 10-14.

[67] Ibid, 85; Chimhundu, Herbert. 1992. "Early missionaries and the ethnolinguistic factor during the "invention of tribalism" in Zimbabwe." *Journal of African History* Vol. 33, 91-93.

[68] Ranger, *Tribalism in Zimbabwe,* 19; Chimhundu, "Early Missionaries", 94.

[69] Mombeshora, Solomon. 1990. "The Salience of Ethnicity in Political Development: The Case of Zimbabwe." *International Sociology* Vol. 5, 432; Muzondidya, James and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni. 2007. "'Echoing Silences': Ethnicity in Post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007." *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* Vol. 7, No. 2.

[70] Mombeshora, "The Salience of Ethnicity," 433, 437-439; Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Echoing Silences," 281-282.

[71] On the risk of atrocities during war, see Shaw, Martin. 2007. "The General Hybridity of War and Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 9, No. 3: 461-73; Fein, "Accounting for Genocide"; and Alvarez, Alex. 2001. *Governments, Citizens, and Genocide: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. For more on the risk atrocities re-occurring Harff, "No Lessons Learned"; and Midlarsky *The Killing Trap*, 43-44.

[72] Toft, Monica Duffy. 2012. "Self-Determination, Secession, and Civil War." *Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 24, 592.*

known as the Lozi Kingdom (known also as Barotseland), the territory negotiated a separate treaty in 1964, known as the Barotseland Agreement. This guaranteed them some autonomy, in particular through the preservation of their traditional ruling structures. However, these conditions were gradually abrogated, and Kaunda abandoned the Barotseland Agreement in 1969.[73] Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, tensions between Lozi traditional rulers and Lusaka surfaced frequently, with the rulers calling for secession on numerous occasions, although this was counterbalanced by a younger generation of Lozi elected politicians who actively supported the integrity of the Zambian state.[74]

In addition, both countries had to deal with the colonial legacy that had resulted in white privilege and back deprivation and gross economic inequality which posed yet another risk factor.[75] While the European population in Zambia was smaller by proportion than it was in Zimbabwe, in Zambia the best farmland, and nearly all of its commerce were in the hands of expatriate Europeans.[76] UNIP had premised self-determination on a redistribution ticket, promising benefits for all. These calls raised expectations among the population that economic wealth would be more equitably shared, through a dramatic increase in service provision, and improved business opportunities for all. In delivering his populist message of redressing these inequities, Kaunda often promised more than he could deliver. Consequently, in the process of raising expectations, some UNIP officials promoted anti-white sentiment, and encouraged suspicion of more moderate political leaders. At independence, there was a growing expectation that the new state would redress these inequalities, and the nationalist movement that UNIP fostered, increased the pressure for immediate, rather than gradual change.[77]

In Zimbabwe too, all the best farmland had been given to the white farmers, but redistribution could only happen under limited circumstances. A compromise was reached on the issue of land redistribution in the Lancaster House Agreement when a peace settlement was agreed upon. It provided that for the first ten years of independence land could only be redistributed on a willing buyer, willing seller basis.[78] However, despite the existing inequality, upon independence, Zimbabwe's economic prospect nevertheless appeared promising.[79] Zimbabwe was considered Africa's breadbasket. In comparison to its neighbours it was relatively industrialised, with a rather diverse economy, had better human resources than most of the countries in the region, had a middle income status and foreign governments were quick to offer aid.[80] Mugabe's initial moves towards reconciliation and his policy of maintaining a capitalist economic system while investing in education and health care, added to this initial optimism that eventually turned out to be mistaken.[81]

Zambia and Zimbabwe shared many of the same risk factors, most notably the enthno-linguistic divisions and horizontal inequality, which were compounded in Zambia by the risk of secession and in Zimbabwe by the legacy of the violent liberation struggle. It seems each could have descended into mass violence at this point. Nevertheless, even though hopes had been particularly high for Zimbabwe's future, the people of Zimbabwe would soon be faced with violence and despair while in Zambia they continued to live in relatively peace.

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[73] Tordoff, William and Robert Molteno. 1974. "Introduction." In *Politics in Zambia.* Edited by William Tordoff. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 29; Lindemann, Stefan. 2010. "Inclusive Elite Bargains and Civil War Avoidance: The Case of Zambia." Working Paper No. 77 – Development as State-Making, UK Aid, 12, 15; Sishuwa, S. 2012. "Understanding the Barotseland Question." *The Post Online* [Zambia], 31 January.

[74] Lindemann, "Inclusive Elite Bargains," 12.

[75] Nafziger and Auvinen, "Economic Development," 156-157.

[76] In the late 1950s, the white population of Northern Rhodesia was 72,000, with a ratio to indigenous Africans approximately 1:30. While the proportion was relatively small, they controlled the best agricultural land, the mines, banks and all other major commercial enterprises (Roberts 1976, 212-214). Similarly in Zimbabwe, at independence, 6,000 white farmers owned 42% of the land (Palmer 1990, 165).

[77] Phiri, *A Political History,* 12.

[78] Palmer, Robin. 1990. "Land Reform in Zimbabwe 1980-1990." *African Affairs* Vol. 89, 164-166.

[79] Compagnon, Daniel. 2010. *A Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 192.

[80] Sachikonye, Lloyd M. 2002. "Whither Zimbabwe", 13; Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns,* 46.

[81] Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy,* 3, 193.

The Role of the Leaders in Mitigating or Aggravating Risk

The two leaders decided to deal with these risk factors differently. Even though both would speak with a conciliatory tone immediately after being elected, their subsequent tactics diverged dramatically. Kaunda's belief system led him on a balancing act throughout which he continuously tried to unify the nation's different groups, albeit with the added motive of maintaining political dominance. Mugabe continued to use the violent tactics which he had grown accustomed to during the violent war of liberation and rather than accommodating his former enemies, he decided to eliminate them to secure his hold on power.

Kaunda's conciliatory efforts were entrenched in his overarching philosophy of humanism—a combination of socialism, biblical teaching, liberalism and antiracism. First developed in 1967, Humanism was a product of Kaunda's attempt to build a post-colonial Zambian identity. Inspired by his own faith in Christianity, Kaunda regarded humanism as "this high value of man and respect for human dignity," which he believed was inherent in traditional Africa.[82] Kaunda believed that human dignity could only be maintained in a society that fostered individual freedom and security, through a system of law which was established to protect citizens from people who acted against the common good.[83] To realize this, Kaunda declared that two things were necessary. First, the government needed to protect its citizens from violations of their dignity and freedom. Second, the individual was duty-bound to demonstrate loyalty to the state.[84] For this to occur, Kaunda insisted that a government should be free of violence and exploitation.

Kaunda's humanist lens was apparent in the way he responded to growing ethno-linguist divisions during the First Republic.[85] During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Kaunda stepped up efforts to prevent ethnic competition between political parties and within the ruling UNIP.[86] He made frequent changes to positions at every tier within the public sector, resulting in rapid turnover of both identity and personnel.[87] Many politicians at the time were increasingly using the language of ethnicity, or tribalism, to attract support and power. In response, Kaunda was careful to divide up important ministerial posts to people from various ethno-linguistic groups in order to maintain a power balance between these main groups. Achieving ethno-linguistic balance within the UNIP government was a near-impossible challenge as alliances between groups shifted and political demands changed.[88]

Kaunda initially adopted a similar approach in response to calls for secession. The signing of the Barotseland Agreement in 1964 was a means of gaining the support of the Lozi Kingdom's traditional rulers. He also empowered a younger cadre of Lozi representatives in the UNIP government by giving them four cabinet positions—as many as the numerically dominant Bemba.[89] Kaunda was not hesitant in supporting these younger leaders, as a means of undermining the tribal leaders' calls for secession. While this strategy was effective in weakening these calls, it was perceived by other politicians—the Bemba faction in particular—as an act of favouritism. This then provoked tensions between the Lozi politicians and other blocs. In an effort to avoid greater divisions within the government, Kaunda eventually reneged on the Barotseland Agreement. This then provoked an exodus of Lozis from UNIP to the newly formed UP.[90] Dissatisfied Bemba politicians also left UNIP in 1971, to form the United Progressive

[82] Venter, Albert and Michele Olivier. 1993. "Human Rights in Africa: Nyerere and Kaunda." *International Journal on World Peace* Vol. 10, No. 1, 26-28.

[83] Ibid, 26.

[84] Ibid, 26.

[85] Zambia's political history is typically categorized by three distinct periods – the First Republic, from 1964-1973, characterized by its multi-party democracy; the Second Republic—the period of 'one party' rule from 1973-1991; and the return to multi-party politics in the Third Republic from 1991 to the present.

[86] See, for example, Molteno, "Conflict and Cleavage."

[87] Burdette, *Zambia,* 30; Kaunda, *Zambia,* 69; Lindemann, "Inclusive Elite Bargains," 13.

[88] Burdette, *Zambia,* 30; Kaunda, *Zambia,* 71-72.

[89] Tordoff, William and Robert Molteno. 1974. "Government and Administration." In *Politics in Zambia.* Edited by William Tordoff. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 246-247.

[90] Molteno, "Cleavage and Conflict," 91.

Party (UPP). Clearly, managing calls for secession provoked other problems, which also needed to be solved.[91]

But despite the magnitude of these challenges, Kaunda stopped short of using violence to cope with the different groups. This stands in stark contrast with Mugabe, who believed violence was an integral part of politics. During the Rhodesian war he summed up his perspective on electoral democracy:

> Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote we shall have, shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer—its guarantor. The people's votes and the people's guns are always inseparable twins.[92]

This was brought to fruition in the elections that were to follow. All parties used intimidation during the countries' first election campaign after independence, but none to the extent that ZANU did. Killings were combined with threats that the war would be continued if ZANU would not win.[93]

Soon after winning the elections, Mugabe briefly changed into "a model of moderation."[94] Mugabe in a public speech assured the country that "there is no intention on our part to use out majority to victimise the minority. We will ensure that there is a place for everyone in this country. … Let us deepen our sense of belonging and engender a common interest that knows no race, colour or creed."[95] In addition, he willingly offered his former competitor Nkomo a seat in his government. The conciliatory tone, however, would soon change.[96] After a series of violent events orchestrated by units under South African control, Mugabe indicated the honeymoon was over. He accused the white population of colluding with South Africa, of not showing remorse and started to berate the white community as a whole.[97] Joshua Nkomo and his ZAPU party did not fare any better. The first signs that the tensions between the parties would again turn violent emerged soon after independence at Entumbane in November 1980 and again in February 1981. The first violent episode erupted after a close associate of Mugabe held an inflammatory speech in Bulawayo were former ZIPRA and ZANLA guerrillas were housed.[98] When fighting broke out again, Mugabe deployed the former Rhodesian army against former ZIPRA soldiers to quell the violence.[99] ZAPU, ZIPRA and their predominantly Ndebele supporters were increasingly portrayed as villains and by 1983, all of the military or political leadership of ZAPU had been arrested or forced into exile and violence and disappearances of former ZIPRA military personnel was common.[100]

The situation would soon deteriorate as Mugabe's forces killed approximately 20,000 people in Matabeleland. Although the overriding objective was probably the destruction of Nkomo's

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[91] Indeed in the chaos of growing divisions within UNIP, many parliamentarians left to form new parties, mostly characterised by ethnicity, further threatening the political stability of the new country. Kaunda's response was to place bans on such parties, and finally establishing a one party state in 1972, with UNIP the only permitted party within parliament. This saw a growing concentration of power within the executive office, and provoked other challenges to political stability. For more on both internal and external pressure for Kaunda to lift the ban on political parties in 1991, see Bratton, Michael. 1992. "Zambia Starts Over." *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 3, No. 4; Larmer, Miles. 2009. "Zambia Since 1990: Paradoxes of Democratic Transition." In *Turning Points in African Democracy*. Edited by Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Lindsay Whitfield. Cumbria: James Currey; and McLoughlin, Stephen. 2014. *The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Understanding Risk and Resilience*. Oxon: Routledge.

[92] Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns,* 225.

[93] Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns,* 10; Kriger, Norma J. 2004. *Guerilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980-1987*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 4-5.

[94] Ibid, 13.

[95] Ibid, 13.

[96] Ibid, 13, 19.

[97] Ibid, 52.

[98] Ibid, 61.

[99] Ibid, 62.

[100] Jackson, Paul. 2011. "The Civil War Roots of Military Domination in Zimbabwe: The Integration Process Following the Rhodesian War and the Road to ZANLA Dominance." *Civil Wars* Vol. 13, No. 4, 385; Catholic Commission for Justice, "Breaking the Silence"; Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Echoing Silences," 285.

support base, given the extent to which political support and ethnicity were intertwined, the effect was that the Ndebele were almost exclusively targeted.[101] The pretext for the violence were arms caches which had been found and the threat posed by violent dissident activity but this was highly exaggerated by the government.[102] The dissidents were largely leaderless, and there is no evidence that they were supported by ZAPU.[103] Mugabe sought the help of North Korea to train the fifth brigade of the national army, composed entirely of his Shona speaking followers, and send them into Matabeleland where they unleased a reign of terror.[104] The Brigade was to be called *Gukurahundi*—which translates as "the rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains."[105]

The violence ended with the Unity Accords in 1987, merging ZAPU and ZANU into ZANU-PF. For ZAPU it was essentially "a surrender document."[106] The violence has had long term effect of deepening the ethnic-linguistic divisions in the country. National integration has become more difficult as the violence enhanced feelings of Ndebele distinctiveness, was a source of resentment and caused many to view the Shona more generally as responsible.[107]

Through these policies Mugabe aggravated and enhanced the already existing ethno linguistic cleavages while killing thousands in the first few years in power.[108] Kaunda on the other hand was guided by his inclusive ideas and accommodated political policies to minimise tensions between the groups. In their economic policies, however, both Kaunda and Mugabe acted uncompromisingly harsh towards any political opponents. Both initially improved the economic situation of their countries, focussing on social services but eventually keeping their conies happy, and maintaining their position of power, was prioritised over the welfare of their respective populations.

In the beginning the economic policies of the countries seemed to be commendable and the future looked bright. Kaunda's efforts to redress the country's profound economic inequalities resulted in improved wealth and service provision. Between 1964 and 1970, annual earnings of indigenous Zambians rose by 97 percent. The manufacturing sector doubled its output, and the number of people employed rose by nearly 40 percent.[109] In Zimbabwe, similarly, the economy experienced a major boom in the first two years of independence, growing 24 percent in just two years, which benefitted both the black and white population.[110] Mugabe invested in education and the social sectors especially in the rural areas but despite these improvements, the new economic successes predominantly seemed to benefit the new black elite.[111] According to Compagnon, "those who were not part of the patronage system found it difficult to survive in post-Independence Zimbabwe."[112]

The economic policies of both of these leaders were tied to maintaining their positions of power and neutralising any opposition. In Zambia trade licences were no longer issued for non-members of UNIP, loan applications in ANC strongholds were revoked, and even water taps were disconnected.[113] Kaunda's intolerance of his political opponents and their supporters translated

[101] Phimister, Ian. 2008. "The Making and Meanings of the Massacres in Matabeleland." *Development Dialogue* No. 50, 198, 209-210.

[102] Phimister, "Massacres in Matabeleland," 198; Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Echoing Silences", 285; Catholic Commission for Justice.

[103] Catholic Commission for Justice.

[104] Catholic Commission for Justice; Phimister, "Massacres in Matabeleland", 198.

[105] Catholic Commission for Justice.

[106] Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo J. 2008. "Nation Building in Zimbabwe and the Challenges of Ndebele Particularism." *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* Vol. 8, No. 3, 48.

[107] Muzondidya and Ndovlu-Gatsheni, "Echoing Silences", 286.

[108] Ibid, 286; Phimster, "Massacres in Matabeleland", 210.

[109] Tordoff and Molteno, "Government and Administration", 363.

[110] Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns,* 45-46; Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy,* 193-194.

[111] Sachikonye, "Whither Zimbabwe", 13; Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy,* 193-194; Addison, Tony and Liisa Laakso. 2003. "The Political Economy of Zimbabwe's Descent into Conflict." *Journal of International Development* Vol 15, 458.

[112] Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy,* 194.

[113] Phiri, *A Political History,* 142-143.

into economic discrimination. By the early 1970s, it was becoming clear that supporting UNIP had benefits, and supporting the opposition had palpable disadvantages. While Kaunda did not resort to acts of violence against opposition supporters, openly opposing UNIP had clear economic consequences, and such discriminatory practices inevitably targeted specific ethno-linguistic groups, according to their allegiances.[114]

In Zimbabwe too perks were handed out to those willing to conform to the party line. The new and large public sector became an important tool for Mugabe's patronage as it allowed him to assign many desirable positions to his cronies and their family.[115] While in the 1980s corruption was almost nothing in comparison to the scale it would become, the seeds had been sown.[116]

These formative years showed glimpses of what was to come in the years thereafter. Zimbabwe would continue to be bogged down in economic malaise and episodes of brutal political violence while Zambia eventually was to remain relatively stable.[117] Kaunda eventually resigned under extreme pressure that resulted from both popular opposition and from within the ranks of his own party, as a consequence of his mismanagement.[118]

Other Factors that May Explain the Difference in the Level of Violence

In this section, we consider other factors that may have impacted on the two countries' different paths. We find that typically prohibitive factors in relation to mass atrocities, such as democratic constraint on power and a strong independent judiciary,[119] were weak in *both countries.* The clear point of distinction is each country's decolonization process. For Zambia, it was largely non-violent, whereas in Zimbabwe, it was achieved only after a protracted civil war. However, neither Zimbabwe's civil war, nor Zambia's peaceful independence struggle made atrocities inevitable in one country nor impossible in the other. With all these factors taken into account, what we see is one leader (Kaunda) acting as lone voice against growing ethno-linguistic division, and one leader (Mugabe) proactively aggravating ethnic division through his violent policies, which culminated in the *Gukurahundi*, as a way of cementing his power and neutralizing rivals.[120]

At independence, both countries started with tangible constraints on the power of the executive. Both states initiated multi-party electoral systems, which spawned parliaments with a diverse range of voices. While both victorious parties received strong majorities, opposition parties were also strongly represented. However, these constraints were slowly eroded in both countries. In Zambia, Kaunda began prohibiting opposition parties in the late 1960s, and by 1973 he introduced a blanket ban on all opposition parties, effectively heralding a long period of one party rule.[121] In Zimbabwe, Mugabe also brought about a de facto one party state. Yet while opposition parties were subject to violent intimidation, he did not prohibit them, as Zambia had. Both leaders also increased their own power, lessening constraints on the executive. In Zimbabwe Mugabe allowed little flexibility for opposition voices; he did not tolerate dissent and it was virtually impossible to express any opposition to Mugabe within the party.[122] In Zambia, Kaunda eroded the power of the cabinet, and transferred key portfolios to the office of the president.[123] In terms of institutional constraints in relation to the risk of mass atrocities, both countries displayed similar patterns—both started with democratic systems; both marginalized opposition voices; and both substantially increased their own power. If anything, Zambia became less democratic than Zimbabwe through its outright ban on political parties. Thus, regime type alone

[114] Ibid, 143.

[115] Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy,* 193-194.

[116] Chan, *Robert Mugabe,* 43.

[117] Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy,* 193-194.

[118] Phiri, *A Political History,* 166-169.

[119] See, for example, Goldstone, Jack A. and Jay Ulfelder. 2004. "How to Construct Stable Democracies." *The Washington Quarterly* Vol. 28, No. 1; Krain, "Democracy, Internal War"; McLoughlin, *The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities.*

[120] Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsgeni, "Echoing Silences", 286; Phimster, "Massacres in Matabeleland, 210.

[121] Roberts, *Zambia,* 247-249.

[122] Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy,* 15.

[123] Phiri, *A Political History,* 162-165.

does not explain why Zambia effectively managed risk, while atrocities were committed in Zimbabwe.

While an independent judiciary can act as a safety net in the face of discriminatory government policies,[124] in both countries the judiciary was steadily marginalised, or manipulated during the first decade of independence. In Zambia, Kaunda gradually replaced all High Court judges who made decisions against the government, until the judiciary was stacked with judges known to favour the government. While he did not contradict or ignore rulings in the High Court—including those that challenged government policy—his appointment of regime-friendly judges resulted in a weakened judiciary.[125] In Zimbabwe, there appeared to be more constraint – the judiciary maintained its independence during the country's formative years, and there is no indication that Mugabe went as far as Kaunda by appointing regime-friendly judges. As Compagnon puts it, "There is near consensus that in the early years Mugabe endorsed the JSC [Judicial Service Commission, an independent commission headed by the chief justice] recommendations and did not seek to impose partisan judges, although nothing in the constitution barred him from doing so."[126] Hatchard, likewise points out that in the 1980s "the executive … respected the independence of the judiciary".[127]

However, when it came to the atrocities in Matabeleland, the judiciary did not constrain Mugabe's actions. From independence until 1990, Mugabe utilized emergency powers to act with impunity in Matabeleland. By declaring a state of emergency, this triggered the operation of the Emergency Powers Act, which enabled Mugabe to "make regulations for, *inter alia,* the public safety and maintenance of public order."[128] This act—originally introduced by the Smith government in 1965—was the legal mechanism Mugabe utilized to deal with a number of issues in the country for the entire first decade of independence, including the troubles in Matabeleland. While the provision of emergency powers was not intended for such a long period of time—indeed, the Act dictated a maximum of six-month stretches—Mugabe's extended use of emergency powers for a such lengths is most likely indicative of an intention to "circumvent the constitutional process and to rule by decree."[129] In Zimbabwe, Mugabe manipulated the constitution through his use of emergency powers, circumventing the judiciary, and casting a thin veil of legal legitimacy over his increased powers. As an institution with the potential to constrain the actions of government, the role of the judiciary in both countries does not provide any clarity to the different paths each country took. It did not facilitate risk mitigation in Zambia, nor did it have an inhibitory effect on the perpetration of atrocities in Zimbabwe.

The strongest point of difference between the two countries is the character of the decolonization process. In Zambia, it was ostensibly peaceful—it allowed for growing African representation within the colonial Legislative Council, which then precipitated a vote for independence. This is not to diminish the enormity of challenges the country faced at independence. Kaunda presided over a country that was profoundly poor, with very limited resources. The main source of wealth—copper and other minerals—were in the hands of European expatriates, as was the best farmland. However, the road to independence was marked by effective strategies of civil disobedience that led to an accumulation of social and political victories in the lead-up to independence, heralding a relatively non-violent beginning to independence.

Zimbabwe's road to independence was in stark contrast to this—after Ian Smith's UDI in 1965, the prospects of a similar path to liberation were destroyed. Even Kaunda believed that independence in Rhodesia could only come about through a military intervention of sorts, and publicly declared his support for such action. Kaunda appealed for the British to stage a swift military intervention to overthrow the Smith regime and allow for universal enfranchisement—

[124] McLoughlin, *The Structural Prevention*, 66-67.

[125] Burdette, *Zambia*, 332.

[126] Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy*, 143.

[127] Hatchard, John. 1991. "The Constitution of Zimbabwe: Towards a Model for Africa." *Journal of African Law* Vol. 35, No. 1-2, 92.

[128] Ibid, 89.

[129] Ibid, 89.

this, he believed, was the only way to avoid a protracted and violent struggle for independence.[130] This is what indeed happened, thus Zimbabwe's independence commenced on the back of a long and bloody conflict, which saw fighting break out not only between guerrilla forces and the Smith regime, but also between different guerrilla forces. It was this latter dynamic that spilled over into the early years of independent statehood.

Yet, not even this dynamic is sufficient to explain the perpetration of mass atrocities in Matabeleland. Unresolved tensions escalated into violence on several occasions in the first couple of years of independence. Most of this violence arose from skirmishes between the two militias that were active in the civil war—Nkomo's ZIPRA, and Mugabe's ZANLA.[131] While the country was in the process of integrating these militia into the national army, problems frequently surfaced, and both camps had to deal with renegade (former) guerrillas. Elements in both militias did not immediately transfer allegiance to the new state. ZIPRA militants in particular had difficulty with integration into the army. They were the smaller force, and largely spoke Sindebele, while the majority of soldiers in the army spoke Shona.[132] There were several violent encounters between the groups, most notoriously at Entumbane.[133] Although there were possibly hundreds of casualties arising from these skirmishes,[134] these events did not by themselves lead to widespread atrocities being perpetrated.

The transformation of this violence into the perpetration of atrocities in Matabeleland was the direct result of Mugabe's extreme response to the instability. He set up a new a new military contingent, the Fifth Brigade, and recruited North Korean military advisers to provide training.[135] He further demonized and isolated Nkomo, accusing him of cooperating with South Africa, which was destabilizing the region, and finally dispatched the Fifth Brigade to Matabeleland, to target not only ZIPRA militants, but also unarmed civilians, killing 20,000 people.[136] While rogue ZIPRA and ZANLA elements did indeed provoke sporadic clashes, the mass atrocities in Matabeleland did not inevitably arise from these clashes. They were the direct product of Mugabe's Fifth Brigade, under orders to target not only the small contingents of militants, but the broader public, who were mostly unarmed civilians.

Institutional constraints that typically have an inhibitory effect on mass atrocities were, if anything, stronger in Zimbabwe than they were in Zambia. Despite this, the first decade of independence witnessed an eroding of democratic and judicial accountability in both countries. As such, these characteristics provide little explanation as to why risk was managed in Zambia, and why atrocities were perpetrated in Zimbabwe. In Zambia, the only force that resisted the tendency towards the entrenchment of ethno-linguistic differences in Zambia's nascent parliament was Kaunda himself. In Zimbabwe, Mugabe sidestepped judicial accountability by enacting emergency powers that Ian Smith had initiated. While ongoing tensions between ZIPRA and ZANLA provoked sporadic violent clashes, they do not provide an explanation for the dramatic and extreme targeting of unarmed civilians in Matabeleland. It was only after Mugabe established, trained and despatched the Fifth Brigade to the region that atrocities were perpetrated, and the clashes between militants spilled over into the civilian population.

Conclusion

Despite the dramatically different paths Zambia and Zimbabwe have taken since independence, the two countries share striking similarities in terms of their historical backgrounds, and structural risk factors in relation to mass atrocities. The different paths these two countries took can be strongly attributed to the strategies and behaviour of their inaugural presidents—Kenneth Kaunda

[130] Kaunda, *Zambia,* 162.

[131] Meredith, Martin. 2007. *Power, Plunder and the Struggle for Zimbabwe's Future.* New York: Perseus, 59-60.

[132] Ibid, 60.

[133] Ibid, 60-61.

[134] Ibid, 62.

[135] Ibid, 62.

[136] Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy,* 25-26; Meredith, *Power, Plunder,* 60-73; Phimster, "Massacres in Matabeleland", 198.

and Robert Mugabe. More specifically, the role that both leaders played in steering their countries along different trajectories can be understood through an examination of how they responded to structural risk factors contingent in each country during the early years of independence.

The historical background of these countries had much in common. Both were former British protectorates, which had encouraged European migration and entrepreneurship, while systematically discriminating against their indigenous African populations. This resulted in the expatriate white population controlling the lion's share of wealth and fertile agricultural land in both territories. The concentration of white economic and political power intensified after the two territories (along with Nyasaland) joined to form the Central African Republic in 1953. This entity also amplified calls for majority-rule by each territory's growing liberation movements. Eventually their paths towards independence differed significantly but Zambia's peaceful beginning and Zimbabwe's violent independence struggle did not mean that the outcome of peace in the former and violence in the latter were inevitable.

The key distinguishing factor which explains the divergent paths of Zambia and Zimbabwe can be found in their inaugural leaders—Kaunda and Mugabe. An early indication of their difference in strategy was the contrasting ways that each leader managed the impact that colonial constructions of ethnicity had on the risk of mass atrocities. In Zambia, Kaunda's guiding philosophy of humanism saw him engaged in a complex and time-consuming process of managing rivalries based on ethno-linguistic allegiances. By frequently reshuffling ministerial posts and top-level public sector positions, he effectively mitigated against the possibility that such identity-based differences would become institutionally entrenched. Kaunda's inclusive ideology informed his inclusive approach to nation-building, an approach which attempted to transcend such differences. As Kaunda himself said, "with any luck, this generation will think of itself not in tribal terms as Bemba, Lozi or Tonga, but as Zambians. This is the only guarantee of future stability."[137] Despite the growing identity-based divisions in the 1960s, this occurred largely at the elite level—in Zambia's particular context, such divisions had not permeated more broadly. This meant that Kaunda's strategies to temper such divisions at the elite level were sufficient to contain the problem. Mugabe's seasoned wartime strategy of targeting not only the Rhodesian state but also his main rival faction, ZIPRA, the military wing of Nkomo's ZAPU carried over into independence. The attempts by South Africa to destabilize the country, and the clashes with former ZIPRA guerrillas, can be seen as triggers for Mugabe's violent response. However, even though explanations that focus on the 1980-1982 period are important, they do not help to explain the Fifth Brigade's brutal tactics which they relied on from the very start of the Gukurahundi.[138] In order to understand the intensity of the violence during this period, it is necessary to take Mugabe's political strategy into account. With political competition in Zimbabwe's nascent democracy materializing along ethno-linguistic lines, Mugabe's strategy to cement ZANU's victory and his own political dominance was to erode Nkomo's Ndebele support base by massacring 20,000 of them in Matabeleland in 1983, three years after independence.[139]

This analysis has focused on the ways that these two leaders interacted with the structural risk factors associated with mass atrocities, most of which were products of each country's colonial history. The comparable level of risk in Zambia and Zimbabwe suggests that the presence of structural risk does not necessitate a particular outcome. In these two cases, the behaviour and strategies of the two inaugural leaders prompted patterns of violence or constraint that had a decisive influence on the perpetration of atrocities, or the effective mitigation of risk over time.

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[137] Kaunda, *Zambia,* 91.

[138] Phimster, "Massacres in Matabeleland", 205.

[139] Ibid, 198, 210.

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More Lessons Learned From the Holocaust—Towards a Complexity-Embracing Approach to Why Genocide Occurs

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***Abstract**: Why do genocides occur? This paper applies qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to revisit this question, and analyses 139 cases of genocide and non-genocide. The paper demonstrates the importance of both priming, contextual conditions which provide a political opportunity structure conducive to genocide, as well as triggering, more proximate conditions which constitute immanent motivations. Most centrally, sufficiency is demonstrated for genocide occurrence when an autocratic regime and the salience of an elite's ethnicity are present, and are combined with either an exclusionary ideology or political upheaval. As such, the autocratic nature of the state provides an opportunity structure allowing genocide to occur, while the salience of elite ethnicity can serve as a motivation. Finally, the ideology and the political upheaval serve as an additional motivation or opportunity structure, respectively. While political upheaval can play a part in causing genocide, its role is much more understated than is suggested in previous literature.*

***Keywords**: genocide, QCA, conflict processes*

Introduction

Why genocides occur has been one of the central debates within the study of genocide over previous decades and has been informed by studies from a range of disciplines. It is an important research endeavour as it is pivotal to identify the conditions under which genocide occurs if there is ever to be any possibility of preventing genocide from occurring. In an attempt to shed fresh light on the debate this paper conducts a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of the 40 genocide cases and 100 non-genocidal incidents which occurred between 1955 and 1998. The data used here builds on data from the Political Instability Task Force's State Failure Problem Set as is common in much of the emerging quantitative genocide literature and in Barbara Harff's seminal statistical paper "*No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955.*"[1] While drawing on the same dataset as several papers before, this paper takes the dataset further and interrogates the cases from a new methodological perspective, QCA. With this alternative method which is based on set-theory it is possible to tease out deeper insights from the data and allow for a richer analysis of why genocides occur.

Specifically, QCA provides a method for capturing the general patterns of genocide occurrence while also allowing for complexity better than other methods used hitherto, constituting a significant step forward in the understanding of the causes of genocides. Although genocide is a complex phenomenon, this paper suggests ways of breaking down central conditions which coalesce across certain subsets of categories by applying an alternative methodology thus far not used to address this question. This paper demonstrates that QCA – which is neither traditionally qualitative nor quantitative – is a suitable and possibly preferential methodology for studying genocide occurrence as it uses Boolean algebra to identify multiple pathways to genocide with different combinations of conditions acting as causes of genocide in different cases. QCA systematically provides different profiles of condition combinations which provoke genocide outbreak, thereby identifying necessary

[1] Harff, Barbara. 2003. "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder Since 1955." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 97, No. 1, 57-73. Other quantitative genocide literature based on PITF data includes Colaresi, Michael and Sabine C. Carey. 2008. "To Kill or to Protect: Security Forces, Domestic Institutions, and Genocide." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 52, No. 1, 39-67. Esteban, Joan, Massimo Morelli, and Dominic Rohner. Forthcoming. "Strategic Mass Killings." *Journal of Political Economy*. Goldsmith, Benjamin E., Charles R. Butcher, Dimitri Semenovich, and Arcot Sowmya. 2014. "Forecasting the Onset of Genocide and Politicide. Annual out-of-sample forecasts on a global dataset, 1988–2003." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 50, No. 4, 437-452. Krain, Matthew. 1997. "State-Sponsored Mass Murder: The Onset and Severity of Genocides and Politicides." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 41, No. 3, 331-360. Montalvo, Jose G. and Marta Reynal-Querol. 2008. "Discrete Polarisation with an Application to the Determinants of Genocides." *The Economic Journal* Vol. 118, No. 9, 1835–1865. Rost, Nicolas. 2013. "Will It Happen Again? On the possibility of forecasting the risk of genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 15, No. 1, 41-67. Ulfelder, Jay and Benjamin Valentino. 2008. "Assessing Risks of State-Sponsored Mass Killing." *Working Paper*.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.3.1306

and sufficient conditions. This paper demonstrates that sufficient and necessary causes can be found when examining genocides. The findings are less parsimonious than previous statistical results but offer a more realistic picture of the complex conditions that can be seen as sufficient or necessary for genocide to occur. This research, thus, has the potential of providing a framework for policy makers and civil society actors for anticipating when genocidal situations are more likely to arise, providing configurations of conditions of when genocide has occurred in the past.

This paper will first clarify some issues around the concept of genocide, before presenting a theoretical framework of different determinants emphasised in previous research and explaining the merits of the chosen QCA approach. Subsequently, the case and condition choice will be explained in detail, as well as their respective operationalisations. Finally, the results of the QCA will be presented and expanded in an empirical analysis, before bringing together these results to identify the central determinants of genocide and demonstrate how these results are a step forward for the study of genocide occurrence.

Why Do Genocides Occur?

This section will discuss various conditions identified previously as central to causing genocide occurrence. It is helpful to split them into two types of categories: priming, contextual conditions and motivating, triggering conditions. The first priming conditions provide a context which is opportune for genocide, and suggest conditions can help to overcome certain societal or international restrictions; these conditions should as such not suffice to cause genocide, but instead they necessitate a triggering conditions, something about why key actors want genocide to occur and thus instigate it. In the following discussion of various conditions, the presence of an autocratic regime and an economically autarkic economy can be seen as setting the context, while an exclusionary ideology has a more triggering character; other conditions could play into both categories to varying degrees. It is to be expected that any situation of genocide arises out of a context conducive to it, combined with triggering motivations. Thus, the QCA solutions are expected to combine several of the following conditions to create individually sufficient pathways to genocide. Genocide is taken here to mean "the promotion, execution, and/or implied consent of sustained policies by governing elites or their agents—or, in the case of civil war, either of the contending authorities—that are intended to destroy, in whole or part, a communal, political, or politicized ethnic group."[2] This definition of genocides and politicides is the foundation of Harff's comprehensive list of genocides and politicides which underlies the dataset used in this paper.

Political Upheaval

The most commonly cited determinant of genocide occurrence, in both qualitative and quantitative studies, is political upheaval and direct threats to governments which also finds a prominent position in Harff's study.3 Harff defines political upheaval as "an abrupt change in the political community caused by the formation of a state or regime through violent conflict, redrawing of state boundaries, or defeat in international war."4 In this context, Melson and Krain emphasise the importance of revolutions,[5] but it is also a category in which decolonisation or other radical system changes or collapses would equally be well placed. The logic behind all these is that political upheaval provides a context and a political opportunity structure which is conducive to starting genocide. With the constraints of a previous system removed, the legitimacy of the political community and

[2] Harff, "No Lessons Learned ", 58.

[3] Chalk, Frank and Kurt Jonassohn. 1990. *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Harff, "No Lessons Learned". Krain, "State-Sponsored Mass Murder". Goldsmith et al. "Forecasting the Onset of Genocide and Politicide". Melson, Robert. 1992. *Revolution and Genocide. On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Rost, 'Will It Happen Again?'. Rummel, Rudolph. 1994. *Death By Government.* New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers. Weitz, Eric D. 2003. "The Modernity of Genocides; War, Race, and Revolution in the Twentieth Century." in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective.* Edited by Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, 53-74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[4] Harff, "No Lessons Learned ", 62.

[5] Melson, *Revolution and Genocide.* Krain, "State-sponsored mass murder".

its identity (including which groups constitute it) can be called into question.[6] Political upheaval provides the opportunity to re-define the demos, the circle of people included as constituents of the state, in a deinstitutionalised setting.[7] In the context of political upheaval, rules of conduct between the state and its population can become re-defined and enable a regime intent on genocide to implement a new eliminationist policy. The period of transition, and the often concurrent chaos, can also serve as a smokescreen for action against the targeted group, given that internal and external observers could be distracted by other macro-political transformation processes. Besides providing a contextual background, political upheaval can also be a motivational impulse and thus trigger genocide. In the throes of political upheaval, reigning elites may feel particularly threatened by certain groups they believe could try to exploit the upheaval to topple them, and thus desire to have these groups removed. The empirical founding of the impact of political upheaval since World War II is immense and Harff finds a significant impact on the risk of genocide occurrence, while Krain suggests that extra-constitutional changes (a similar concept) have a significant impact on this likelihood.[8]

War

A further condition often associated with genocide occurrence is war,[9] and for Krain a country's involvement in civil war is the single most significant determinant of genocide occurrence in his statistical study.[10] War is here defined as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths."[11] War can be seen as a contextual condition which – as suggested above for political upheaval – provides a conducive opportunity structure for genocides to emerge: war allows the destruction of a population to happen as other policy options are closed off or the state becomes increasingly autonomous from other internal social forces, such as public opinion.[12] Moreover, war provides the opportunity to scapegoat certain unwanted groups and portray them as internal enemies of the state who are coalescing with the external enemies one is fighting militarily in the war, triggering a genocide against them. Also, in particular in the context of guerrilla wars, wars can motivate governments to include genocide in military strategy as rebels are particularly dependent on their local populations for support and security.[13]

Both political upheaval and war thus encompass a political opportunity structure founded on an exceptional situation which removes the standard constraints of government from the political elites. However, there are two key differences between war and political upheaval in the mechanics of how they affect genocide occurrence. First, political upheaval can be non-violent, while war inherently brings with it the internal mobilisation of arms, minimally through the secondment of military troops, oftentimes also in the armament of civilian defence groups, paramilitaries or similar groups. This expansion of available weapons and their distribution to wider circles of the population make it possible to then implement a genocidal policy quickly and effectively, particularly if these civilian or paramilitary groups are encompassed in a strong military or other hierarchy of authority; furthermore, such armament and genocidal operations can go largely unnoticed in the more general context of military war action. Second, war – both civil and international – tends to strengthen the political elites' hold on power (in the areas under their control) as security fears in the population can increase popular support and facilitate rallying

[6] Melson, *Revolution and Genocide*, 21.

[7] Mann, Michael. 2005. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[8] Harff, "No Lessons Learned". Krain, "State-Sponsored Mass Murder".

[9] Melson, *Revolution and Genocide.* Rummel, *Death By Government*. Weitz, "Modernity".

[10] Krain, "State-Sponsored Mass Murder ".

[11] Gleditsch, Nils Petter, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand. 2002. "Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 39, No. 5, 615-637.

[12] Melson, *Revolution and Genocide*, 19.

[13] Valentino, Benjamin, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay. 2004. "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare." *International Organization* Vol. 58, No. 2, 375-407.

around the leadership in order to avert a military defeat; further, war is normally fought between two or more clearly demarcated parties, while political upheaval can include struggles for power between unclear and diffuse constellations of actors. Both these aspects differ fundamentally from political upheaval in which the political elites wanting to pursue genocide capitalise on political uncertainty and destabilisation.

Elite Ethnicity and Ethnic Cleavages

Defined as "states with re-existing internal cleavages and real opposition,"[14] pluralistic states have often come into existence during the process of colonisation and decolonisation when multi-ethnic states emerged as borders were determined arbitrarily by colonial masters.[15] While ethnic fractionalization measures the actual degree of these internal cleavages, much more significant is the actual impact this has and the perception of these cleavages within the societies themselves. Thus, Harff suggests the incorporation of the ethnic character of the ruling elite, i.e. whether the ethnicity of the ruling elites is salient. The concept used here does not differentiate between whether the political leadership comes from a minority or a majority ethnic group but solely asks whether its ethnicity is important.

The causal logic underlining this condition is that if elites are disproportionately from one section of society and this power differential based on ethnicity is perceived as such and regarded as salient in the population, underrepresented groups may challenge this. These challenges to the elites' political power could prompt them to frame security and ideology in communal terms, e.g. advocating racial denigration or exclusion of the other groups. These ethnic factors, as argued here, could participate in causing genocide in conjunction with other conditions, such as political upheaval (as this creates a situation of uncertainty in which elites have incentives to mobilise along ethnic lines). Given the broad definition of genocide beyond just ethnic groups, it cannot be expected that the salience of elite ethnicity will be a determining feature for all genocides, but when present it will be able to help explain mechanisms for victim group identification and, to a certain degree, elite motivation.

A further condition that is sometimes mentioned is political and economic discrimination of a minority. However, such discrimination can lead to this group's political mobilisation and, in turn, to repression by the state. This repression can escalate into genocide. However, this is only an intervening condition and the discrimination will stem from other sources, such as disproportionate elite representation or an exclusionary ideology. Since political and economic discrimination of a group could only be an indicative warning sign of genocide, rather than the actual reason for genocide happening, it will not be included as a condition here. The decision to include only the salience of elite ethnicity is a pragmatic choice for the application of QCA,[16] but it is also theoretically more interesting to include this than discrimination as a condition in the analysis.

Autocratic Regime

Rummel adapted Lord Acton's iconic phrase on corruption to read "*Power kills; absolute power kills absolutely.*"[17] In countries with limited and accountable power, democides (as he terms mass murder by governments of their own citizens) are less likely to happen because of cross pressures and the associated political culture. This argument can be focused on a more narrow definition of democracies, in which no one group can become the driving force and there is a democratic culture which "involves debate, demonstration, and protests as well as negotiation, compromise, and tolerance."[18] Inversely, autocratic regimes have a free hand at dealing with

[14] Fein, Helen. 1990. "Genocide: A Sociological Perspective." *Current Sociology* Vol. 38, No. 1,39.

[15] Kuper, Leo. 1981. *Genocide. Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

[16] This is due to the fact that the number of truth table lines expands exponentially to the number of conditions included, so that it is unwise to include too many conditions in any one analysis. Thus, it would not be fruitful to include two conditions which are so similar.

[17] Rummel, *Death By Government*.

[18] Rummel, *Death By Government*, 23.

disagreeable groups with no other actors constraining their actions or contesting one-sided genocidal action, clearly demarcating this as an opportunity condition. This is reinforced by Colaresi and Carey's findings in their statistical analysis that genocide occurrence is conditional on "institutional executive constraints".[19] While Harff finds autocracies to be three-and-a-half times more likely to commit genocide than democracies, Krain finds no statistical relation.[20] However, one can expect that it will play a role particularly in cases in which an exclusionary ideology is perpetuated by the elites, who then have free hand to act on their ideology, or in cases of political upheaval, as the autocratic elites must fear losing power and thus attempt to consolidate their position by drastically changing the playing field, as was evidenced by Hutu radicals in the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

Exclusionary ideology

Chalk and Jonassohn posit that modern genocide is implemented as an ideology, selecting victims according to who they are, not what they have or where they are, as in premodern genocides.[21] Harff also emphasises the importance of exclusionary ideologies and finds that they significantly impact the probability of genocide occurrence. She defines an exclusionary ideology as "a belief system that identifies some overriding purpose or principle that justifies efforts to restrict, persecute, or eliminate certain categories of people."[22] Freeman posited that while neither a strong state nor a pluralistic society were strictly necessary for genocide occurrence a genocidal ideology is.[23] It does not seem apparent that such an ideology should be necessary for genocide occurrence, as there are several examples of cases in which genocide is a rational, political decision, rather than an ideological impulse. However, an elite that subscribes to an exclusionary ideology, and has the capacity to follow through, needs no other conditions for genocide to occur, making this a motivational condition. For instance, Mann demonstrates that the most important genocidal ideology in modernity has been that of the unified nation-state, from which the victim group is excluded.[24] Exclusion becomes possible because in the process of building a new nation, a new identity can be created which redefines the demos (citizens of the state) to include only one ethnos (ethnic sub-group in the country), thus expelling the victim group from the security of citizenship and opening up the possibility of their destruction. This condition should not be conflated with the salience of elite ethnicity, as an exclusionary ideology *can* but does not need to be congruent with ethnic categorisations. For instance, in the context of a politicide, the exclusionary ideology can be directed also at groups which are politically, economically or socially defined, such as the urban population or intellectuals under the Khmer Rouge regime.

Economic and Political Autarky

A further contextual, opportunity condition not commonly mentioned in the genocide literature, which nonetheless played an important part in Harff's analysis, is a country's degree of international involvement and interdependence, particularly regarding how strong political and economic ties and dependencies are.[25] Similarly to a democratic setting, this interdependence constrains elites' actions. The more interdependent a country is, the less likely it is to choose genocide as a course of action due to the possibility of facing hard repercussions from international reactions. On the other hand, there are two consequences for politically or economically relatively isolated (autarkic) states. Leaders of such states can, firstly, work on the assumption that they can act without having to fear too strong economic repercussions as their economies or political systems are for the most part dependent only on internal dynamics. For instance, countries with relatively independent

[19] Colaresi and Carey, "To Kill or to Protect".

[20] Harff, "No Lessons Learned". Krain, "State-Sponsored Mass Murder".

[21] Chalk and Jonassohn, *History and Sociology.*

[22] Harff, "No Lessons Learned ", 63.

[23] Freeman, Michael. 1991. "The Theory and Prevention of Genocide." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* Vol. 6, No. 2, 185-199.

[24] Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*.

[25] Harff, "No Lessons Learned ".

economies will have less to fear from economic boycotts. Secondly, these state leaders can also assume that the occurrences within their borders will be less interesting and important for more powerful states, as they have few interests to protect here, and thus will be less likely to intervene in any genocidal action. In Harff's analysis, political interdependence has no significant impact, while economic interdependence does; following Harff's findings this analysis will include only economic interdependence.

Case Selection and Conditions Operationalisation

The QCA model for this paper takes as its unit of analysis events of political instability identified in the Political Instability Task Force's (PITF) State Failure Problem Set between 1955 and 1998, as is common in most recent contributions to quantitative genocide studies.[26] The analysis focusses on occurrence of genocide as the dependent outcome (coded one for occurrence and zero for non-occurrence) and six key independent conditions. All values of independent conditions and dependent outcome must be coded dichotomously for all cases—is this condition present or absent in each case? Unless otherwise specified the values of these conditions are selected from the first year of the genocide or non-genocidal conflict (or as close as possible when data points are missing), in order to avoid reverse causality by which the genocide or non-genocide itself would impact these conditions which are supposed to be determining its outbreak. Table 1 shows the number of cases (genocidal and non-genocidal) per condition.

Genocide. As genocide definitions vary, the lists of included cases in different studies diverge also. Most of the recent quantitative literature builds on the Political Instability Task Force's (PITF) State Failure Problem Set, which in its updated form includes genocides and non-genocides from 1955 until 2006[27] and this is also the basis for Harff's list and analysis.[28] In order to ensure full comparability to the non-genocides regarding time frame, this paper focuses on genocides which began between 1955 and 1998, thus excluding only one of Harff's cases (Sudan since 2003), and resulting in altogether 40 cases of genocide in this study. Non-genocides are taken as any other case in the PITF consolidated list, encompassing 99 events coded as adverse regime changes, ethnic wars or revolutions, but which are not coded as genocide; the logic underlying this choice of non-genocides is that political instability or upheaval is posited widely to be a precursor for genocide. Therefore, as in Harff's study, the non-genocides included in this paper are interesting as they are cases of political upheaval which have not developed into genocide. This is possibly not the optimal operationalisation of the concept of non-genocides as potential genocides which did not happen, but in order to ensure the comparability of this study to Harff's seminal work and with the theoretical foundation of instability breeding genocide, it would seem a plausible strategy. Nonetheless, it will still be an important part of this paper to analyse the importance of political upheaval in determining genocide occurrence. However, rather than looking into the mere *presence* of political upheaval, it will look at the *magnitude* of political upheaval present in a country, thus avoiding any interaction between the condition of political upheaval and the outcome genocide or non-genocide.

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[26] Colaresi and Carey, "To Kill or to Protect". Esteban et al., "Strategic Mass Killings". Goldsmith et al. "Forecasting the onset of genocide and politicide". Harff, "No Lessons Learned". Krain, "State-Sponsored Mass Murder". Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, "Discrete Polarisation with an Application to the Determinants of Genocides". Rost, "Will it happen again?". Ulfelder and Valentino, "Assessing Risks of State-Sponsored Mass Killing".

[27] Operational guidelines applied by Harff, "No Lessons Learned", page 58 in compiling this list are: 1. Complicity of the state or contending authorities; 2. Evidence of intent; 3. Victims as members of an identifiable group; 4. Policies and practices that cause prolonged mass suffering; 5. Threat posed to survival of the group by these actions. These guidelines produce the following list of cases of genocide: Afghanistan 1978-92, Algeria 1962, Angola 1998-2002, Angola 1975-94, Argentina 1976-80, Bosnia 1992-95, Burundi 1993, Burundi 1988, Burundi 1965-73, Cambodia 1975-79, Chile 1973-76, China 1959, China 1966-75, DR Congo 1964-65, DR Congo 1977-79, El Salvador 1980-89, Equatorial Guinea 1969-79, Ethiopia 1976-79, Guatemala 1978-90, Indonesia 1965-66, Indonesia 1975-92, Iran 1981-92, Iraq 1988-91, Iraq 1963-75, Myanmar (Burma) 1978, Nigeria 1967-70, Pakistan 1973-77, Pakistan (now Bangladesh) 1971, Philippines 1972-76, Rwanda 1994, Rwanda 1963-64, Somalia 1988-91, Sri Lanka 1989-90, Sudan 2003-ongoing, Sudan 1983-2002, Sudan 1956-72, Syria 1981-82, Uganda 1971-79, Uganda 1980-86, Vietnam South 1965-75, Yugoslavia 1998-99.

[28] Harff, Barbara. "Annual Data on cases of Genocides and Politicides 1955-2006.xls." Available from http://www.gpanet.org/content/genocides-and-politicides-events-1955-2002. (accessed 12 November 2012).

Table 1: Overview of condition distribution.

		Genocides (40)	Non-genocides (99)	Total (139)
Autocracy (A)	Absence of democratic controls to constrain the government	38 (95%)	69 (69%)	107 (77%)
Political Upheaval (P)	Abrupt change to the power constellations in the political community	25 (62.5%)	31 (31%)	56 (40%)
War (W)	Use of armed force between two parties, including a country's government	26 (65%)	54 (54%)	80 (58%)
Exclusionary Ideology (I)	Belief system with an overriding principle that justifies efforts to restrict, persecute, or eliminate victim group	25 (62.5%)	22 (22%)	47 (34%)
Salience of Elite Ethnicity (S)	Importance of the elite's ethnicity for the country's politics	32 (80%)	45 (45%)	77 (55%)
Economic Autarky (E)	Absence of strong economic ties to other countries	18 (45%)	22 (22%)	41 (29%)

Autocratic regime (A). This indicator of whether a regime is autocratic (1) or non-autocratic (0) is taken from the Polity IV dataset variable POLITY[29] and reassessed using Freedom House's Freedom in the World index.[30] Altogether, there are 107 autocracies included in the study, along with 32 democracies; 95% of genocidal events occur in autocratic countries and 69% cases of non-genocides are also autocratic.

Political upheaval (P). Given the focus on political upheaval in the definition of the outcome, the condition of interest here is not the presence or absence of political upheaval itself, but—following Harff—a differentiation between high levels and low levels of political upheaval. A case is classified as being in political upheaval (P) if either the difference of the highest and lowest democracy / autocracy values over the whole conflict is 10 or higher (indicating a system

[29] Center for Systemic Peace, Polity IV Annual Time-Series 1800-2011, Polity IV Project, Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2011, 2011. Available from: http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm. (accessed 15 May 2013). For the precise coding procedure see Marshall, Monty G. Keith, Jaggers, and Ted Robert Gurr. 2011. "Dataset Users' Manual. Polity IV Project." Vienna, VA: Center for Systemic Peace. Available from: http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4manualv2010.pdf. (accessed 01 March 2013), 15ff.

[30] Freedom House. 2013. "Country ratings and status, FIW 1973-2013." Washington, DC: Freedom House. Available from: http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world. (accessed 15 May 2013).

change from either autocracy to democracy or vice versa), or if the maximum value of the political upheaval variable in Harff's dataset during the conflict is 30 or higher.[31] Harff operationalises political upheaval using the "the sum of the maximum magnitude of events in the prior 15 years, including revolutionary wars, ethnic wars, and regime crises" from the State Failure Problem Set.[32] Thus, the value 0 indicates that there were no such politically upheaving events in the 15 years prior to the genocide or non-genocide, while the value 60 indicates that each of the previous years had the highest upheaval magnitude of 4. Any cases with a value of lower than 15 were classified as not having political upheaval while all intermediate cases (between 15 and 30) were classified after a qualitative assessment of the individual cases by the author; this qualitative assessment of intermediate cases ensures that the thresholds are not arbitrary. Altogether, there are 56 cases in which high political upheaval is present, which constitutes 40% of the dataset. As with autocracy, a significant difference is notable between genocides and non-genocides, with 62.5% of genocides having some degree of prior political upheaval, while this is only the case in 31% of non-genocides.

War (W). Data on whether a country is at war was taken from the UCDP—Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) armed conflict dataset,[33] classifying any case as at war (1) if it was labelled as such in the armed conflict dataset during any year of the case (80 cases (58%), whereby 65% of genocidal events occur in the context of war, compared with 54% of non-genocidal events).

Exclusionary ideology (I). Harff codes exclusionary ideology herself as "belief systems that are articulated by governing elite, and that identify some kind of overriding purpose or principle that is used to restrict, persecute, or eliminate categories of people who are defined as antithetical to that purpose or principle."[34] In cases in which there is no coding available from Harff, cases were coded by the author according to in-depth accounts of the cases. Hereby, 1 signals the presence of such exclusionary ideologies among the elites (47 cases). 62.5% of genocides have an exclusionary ideology present, in contrast to only 22% of non-genocides.

Salience of elite ethnicity (S). Regarding the salience of elite ethnicity the dataset differentiates between elite ethnicity not being salient (0) (62 cases) and ethnicity being salient whereby the political leadership is representative of a majority or minority communal group or coalition (1) (77 cases). In Harff's analysis, she divides the latter category into two; however, this differentiation is not needed here as there is no theoretically plausible reason for there to be a difference between majority and minority communal groups.

Economic autarky (E). Data on the condition regarding economic interdependence and autarky was sourced from World Bank import and export data. These data were added together (as percentages of the country's gross domestic product in the relevant year) to indicate the trade openness of a country. Case were coded as economically autarkic (1) if their trade percentage was below the world average according to the World Bank data over the relevant time frame from 1960 until 1998, which was 33% (41 cases), and otherwise as economically interdependent (0) (98 cases).

QCA – an Intermediate Method for Multi-Causal Phenomena

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is first used here to study the subject of genocide occurrence. Popularised in the social sciences by Charles Ragin,[35] this method categorises cases by combinations of conditions leading to the occurrence or non-occurrence of the outcome, and reduces these combinations to the lowest common denominator using Boolean algebra. By executing this reduction one can show which conditions are necessary and which are sufficient for

[31] Harff, Barbara. "Genocide and Politicide Model Data (Phase III: 1955-1999)." Available from: http://www.gpanet.org/webfm_send/51. (accessed 11 January 2013).

[32] Harff, "No Lessons Learned".

[33] Uppsala Conflict Data Program-Peace Research Institute Oslo. 2012. "UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset v.4-2012, 1946 – 2011." Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo. Available from: http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_prio_armed_conflict_dataset. (accessed 15 May 2013).

[34] Harff, "Genocide and Politicide." Model Data. Harff, "No lessons learned", 63.

[35] Ragin, Charles. 2008. *Redesigning Social Inquiry. Fuzzy Sets and Beyond.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ragin, Charles. 1987. *The Comparative Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

causing the outcome. The dependent outcome can be caused not by the same condition in all cases, but by different combinations of multiple conditions, each coming to a fore in different cases.

QCA is thus an intermediate method between quantitative and qualitative methodologies, as it traditionally relies on a strong qualitative judgement by the researcher when categorising the cases, but uses a mathematical technique to categorise and reduce complexity. Its key advantage is its ability to cope with multiple pathways to an outcome, each consisting of different combinations of conditions. QCA allows several conditions to act together in unison, following a conjunctural logic, and also allows for conditions to act differently in different cases depending on their interaction with other conditions. Another key strength, the importance of the qualitative input of the research when coding the conditions, is also its main weakness. As a set-theoretical method, it can only cope with dichotomous conditions, thus losing much information about the countries being studied and not sufficiently allowing for ambiguous cases to be coded appropriately, as they must fit the box. However, there are methodological developments towards fuzzy set QCA (fsQCA) which allows for a more continuous categorisation. However, fsQCA cannot work with a dichotomous outcome such as genocide occurrence, so this paper will remain with classic so-called crisp set QCA (csQCA), pointing out contentious categorisations. Thus, with this method, this paper hopes to go beyond Harff's original statistical analysis,[36] pinpointing several key combinations that can lead to the occurrence of genocide. While QCA is classically used for medium-n datasets, its application to larger numbers of cases is not unprecedented and allows for a different perspective on the data than a statistical analysis would allow, better allowing for equifinality and complex, configurative causation.[37]

Why do Genocides Occur? Empirical Results from the QCA

To approach this data with QCA, each condition must first be specified for each of the cases. Purely by looking at this unsorted table, as well as Table 2 below, it is plain to see that autocratic regimes (A) are present in nearly all genocide cases (38 out of 40, that is 95% of cases), approximating a perfect score as a necessary cause for the outcome of genocide occurrence. This goes against the argument that liberal democracies also perpetrate genocide, but for post-1945, physical genocides this result of most occurring in autocratic settings remains interesting.[38] However, some cases of non-genocide also occur in autocracies – thus an autocracy is a necessary condition for genocide occurrence, but not sufficient. The truth table also provides further central conditions which are sufficient for genocide occurrence, i.e. that the presence of this combination will always lead to the outcome, although not all instances of the outcome will be caused by this combination.

This analysis of sufficient conditions is the cornerstone of QCA and requires the re-categorisation of this information into a so-called truth table in which each logical combination of independent conditions constitutes one row. This study has six conditions (A, P, W, I, S, E)[39] leading to the outcome genocide, meaning that there will be 64 (2^6) rows of possible combinations in the truth table. A row could read A*P*W*I*S*E (as in the case of Rwanda 1994), and A*P*W*~I*S*E (as in the case of Bosnia 1992-95).[40] The truth table then assigns to these combinations the presence or absence of the outcome; in these two cases, it is present. By combining the two terms, one can say that I is irrelevant for the outcome genocide in the presence of all other five conditions, as I is present in one

[36] Harff, "No Lessons Learned".

[37] Bara, Corinne. 2014. "Incentives and Opportunities: A Complexity-Oriented Explanation of Violent Ethnic Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 51, No. 6, 696-710.

[38] It should be noted that there is a broad literature which also discusses the occurrence of genocide in liberal democracies, particularly in a settler colonial context, however given the nature of the dataset as a post-1945 timeframe and its focus on physical violence, genocide appears to happen nearly exclusively in autocratic countries. See for a discussion of liberal democratic genocides Moses, A. Dirk. 2002. "Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the 'Racial Century': Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust." *Patterns of Prejudice* Vol. 36, No. 4, 7-36. Powell, Christopher. 2007. "What Do Genocides Kill? A Relational Conception of Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 9, No. 4, 527-547.

[39] Generally, capital letters signal the presence of a condition, while the symbol ~ before the letter denotes the condition's absence.

[40] The asterisk * is to be read as a 'logical and', meaning that all these conditions must happen together for the effect to occur.

Table 2: Autocracy as quasi-necessary for genocide.

	Autocracy absent	Autocracy present
Genocide	2 cases (5%)	38 cases (95%)
No genocide	30 cases (30%)	69 cases (69%)

case and absent in another. By continually combining truth table rows in this manner, it is possible to reduce the whole table to a selection of solution sets.[41]

As the amount of combinations rises exponentially by the number of conditions included, the six conditions included here produce a relatively intricate solution. When the data is reduced according to the principles of Boolean algebra, there are several possible ways for the condition combinations to be reduced, complex, intermediate and parsimonious solutions.[42] Here an intermediate solution has been chosen, but the complex and parsimonious solutions are reported in the appendix. It is normally standard practice to select an intermediate solution, so that as many genocides as possible are covered by the solution, without including too many non-genocides as well; also, in this case the complex and parsimonious solutions lose out strongly regarding coverage and consistency values,[43] respectively, *vis-à-vis* the intermediate solution; further, with five configurations the intermediate reduction allows for a more meaningful interpretation of the solution. Using this intermediate solution one receives the following formula:

Solution:
A*S*I + A*S*P + A*I*E*P*~W + A*I*E*~P*W + S*~I*E*P*W

These five terms altogether can explain a significant amount of variance between genocide and non-genocide. First, technical features of this solution will be discussed and then what it means substantively for the research question of why genocides occur.

Table 3 lists coverage and consistency scores for this solution. The coverage score of 0.750 indicates that altogether this solution can explain 75% of genocide cases, that is 30 out of 40 genocide occurrences, leaving only one quarter of the cases of genocide unexplained. Nonetheless, the consistency is not perfect and with these combinatory solutions, some non-genocides are also predicted to be genocides: 76.9% of the cases with these condition combinations are actually genocides, whereas only 23.1% are non-genocide, so-called false positives. Altogether 39 cases were predicted as genocide, of which 30 were actually genocides, and 9 were non-genocides,

[41] In most rows it is clear whether to code the outcome as genocide or not when there are multiple cases, but in some rows there are cases with diverging outcomes meaning that the researcher must decide whether to include the rows as present, absent or ambiguous. Ambiguous cases (or 'Don't care' in QCA terms and represented by a dash (-) mean that this particular combination of conditions is permitted to be both genocide and non-genocide during the Boolean reduction. Here rows with no more than two contradictory cases were coded as either genocides or non-genocides, while rows with more contradictory cases and rows without any empirical data were coded as 'don't cares'.

[42] Complex solutions focus on maximising consistency, and produce few but detailed combinations which are relatively specific to the presence of the outcome, but reduce the reach regarding coverage. Minimal solutions are the opposite extreme, producing many configurations in order to then have as many of the cases with the present outcome covered as possible, but in the process also covering many non-outcomes and thus reducing the consistency. Most commonly, an intermediate solution is thus used, which balances this and tries to find a solution which covers as many cases as possible, but still does not reduce the consistency too much.

[43] Consistency scores indicate how good a fit a particular combination is, that is how many non-occurrences of the outcome (here non-genocides) are also described by this term, thus falsely predicting an outcome where there is none. Coverage scores show how many of the outcome cases can be explained by this solution – raw scores detail how many cases are covered by this combination, while unique coverage means the cases which are explained only by this combination. To a certain degree, there is a trade-off between the consistency and coverage scores, as a solution with a higher consistency (thus explaining only the phenomenon itself and less 'other cases' too) will possibly not be able to explain the same amount of breadth as a very inclusive solution which explains all cases but also includes some non-genocides too. A consistency score of 1, for instance, would indicate that there are no cases in which the outcome does not occur with these combinations of conditions, thus making these combinations truly sufficient for causing the outcome.

a good result regarding consistency. Following from this, it means that 90 non-genocides were successfully predicted as such as they were not included in the configurations.

While this result does not provide absolute sufficiency, given the complexity of this topic, this is an extremely high score for consistency and is better than in many comparable studies. It also performs considerably better than Harff's model.[44] While the amount of genocides correctly classified is comparable with Harff's value of 74%, Harff's model incorrectly predicts 27% of non-genocides as false positives, while this model only predicts 9% of the non-genocides to be genocide. Altogether, this means that this QCA-produced model can discriminate better between genocides and non-genocides than Harff's model based on logistical regression

The configurations in this solution have certain elements in common, so that one can re-write them in the following way, which substantively is the same, but tells us more about how the terms are connected:

A*S* (I + P) + A*I*E* (P*~W + ~P*W) + S*~I*E*P*W

Substantively this means that genocide will occur, firstly, in autocracies (A)[45] in which the ethnicity of the government members is salient (S) when an exclusionary ideology is present (I) or the country is in a state of major political upheaval (P). The second set of configurations suggests that autocracies (A) with exclusionary ideologies (I) experience genocide when their economies are autarkic (E) and the county is either in a state of political upheaval (P) but not at war (~W), or reversely at war (W) but not in a state of political upheaval (~P). Lastly, a remainder of genocides can be predicted in countries in which the ethnicity of the elites is salient (S), but in which there is no exclusionary ideology (~I) when the country's economy is autarkic (E), the state is in political upheaval (P) and at war (W).

Discussion of the underlying mechanisms

The two primary configurations which are most interesting due to their large coverage are A*S*I and A*S*P. This can be interpreted that the autocratic nature of the state provides a context which is primed for genocide, that is an opportunity structure allowing genocide to occur, while the salience of elite ethnicity can serve as a more proximate trigger, providing a motivation for elites, or at least as a categorisation along which lines of demarcation between the victim group and the rest of the population can be drawn. Finally, the ideology and the political upheaval serve as an additional motivation or opportunity structure, respectively. While Aand S are not sufficient alone, the addition of either this additional motivation I (within a slightly more constrained opportunity framework—just A, not A*P) or with less motivation (I not included) but within a stronger opportunity framework (A*P) allows genocide to occur. In the presence of an exclusionary ideology, the elites can want to enforce this through rigorous exclusionary policies, which can culminate in genocidal practices of elimination. On the other hand, in a context of high political upheaval, elites can feel threatened by challenging groups and then decide to target for elimination the group which is challenging them. They are able to do this as the political upheaval provides a framework in which a scapegoat can be identified and then use its elimination to consolidate their power and support in the population in the face of an imaginary threat. This is particularly interesting as it undermines the central importance of political upheaval as it has been posited not only in Harff's study, but also in much of the (comparative) case study literature. Political upheaval is one way to expand the political opportunity structure for elites in order that they *can* commit genocide if they have a sufficient motivation; however, it is not the only factor and it pales in significance with autocracy, for example, which is necessary in nearly all combinations leading to genocide occurrence. With enough motivation present in the form of an exclusionary ideology, the opportunity structure provided by political upheaval becomes irrelevant.

[44] Harff, "No Lessons Learned".

[45] Given that this is a necessary condition, it is clear that it should appear in every sufficient configuration, only being left out in some remainder configurations which try to include the two cases in which genocides did not occur in an autocratic context.

Table 3: Solution case coverage and consistency by combinations.

	Raw Coverage	Unique Coverage	Consistency
A*S*I	0.475	0.125	0.826
A*S*P	0.500	0.125	0.741
A*I*E*P*~W	0.075	0.025	1.000
A*I*E*~P*W	0.075	0.050	1.000
S*~I*E*P*W	0.075	0.025	1.000

Solution coverage: 0.750.
Solution consistency: 0.769.

The underlying mechanisms of these configurations can be best understood by highlighting the dynamics in individual cases.[46] The mechanisms of the configuration A*S*I are well exemplified in the case of the genocide in Cambodia in the late 1970s: Pol Pot's clique of French-educated Khmer Rouge brothers took over power after a protracted armed struggle in 1975 and subsequently ruled through one of the most totalitarian regimes of the 20th century (A). This all-encompassing power of Ângkar, the Organisation, provided fertile turf for the regime to implement their extreme Communist ideology, which also fed on radical anti-Vietnamese rhetoric, underlining the importance of the leadership's Khmer identity (S); the vision that the Khmer Rouge had for Cambodia encompassed an extreme ideology which was geared at returning the country to an agrarian economy and glorifying the role of the peasant. In this context, the ideology was exclusionary (I) towards the urban population and intellectuals particularly, forcing all to evacuate the cities and become second-class citizens who had no rights at all; also they enforced racist (and thus exclusionary and eliminationist) policies towards the country's Vietnamese and Muslim Cham minority populations, as well as towards foreign nationals in the country.

Another example of this configuration, a case which is explained uniquely by A*S*I, is provided by the Serbian genocide of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo between February 1998 and June 1999, which ended through NATO bombing and a ceasefire allowing NATO administration of Kosovo. Again, this occurred in the context of a more autocratic than democratic government under Slobodan Milosevic (A), whose Serbian identity was extremely important in politics (S), having cemented itself during the previous wars in the early 1990s with Slovenia, Croatia and in Bosnia, including the genocide which occurred there. This Serbian ethnic identity, as propagated by Milosevic and his nationalists, also incorporated a strong exclusionary ideology, as it is was purported that Serbia was for Serbians only and that the other nationalities within its borders should leave or be eliminated (I). Furthermore, Milosevic attempted to use this conflict, as he had the previous genocide in Bosnia, to frame security concerns along ethnic lines, and thus cement his hold on power and rally the population behind him.

Turning to the next configuration, Rwanda presents itself as an excellent example of A*S*P. The country under Juvénal Habyarimana did have multi-party parliament, but the system was nonetheless highly autocratic and dominated in all aspects of political life by Habyarimana's *Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement* (MRND) party (A), which instigated and led the Hutu Power movement, proclaiming Hutu leadership as the only legitimate leadership for Rwanda (S) and branding the Tutsi minority as aliens in the country with increasingly few rights; the situation worsened after Habyarimana's airplane was shot down and he died, as

[46] Cases of genocide covered by A*S*I are: Afghanistan 1978-92, Algeria 1962, Angola 1975-94, Cambodia 1975-79, Ethiopia 1976-79, Guatemala 1978-90, Indonesia 1965-66, Iraq 1963-75, Iraq 1988-91, Myanmar (Burma) 1978, Rwanda 1963-64, Rwanda 1994, Somalia 1988-91, Sudan 1983-xx; as well as uniquely covered by this configuration: Burundi 1965-73, Equatorial Guinea 1969-79, Indonesia 1975-92, Syria 81-82, Yugoslavia 1998-xx. Cases of genocide covered by A*S*P are: Afghanistan 1978-92, Algeria 1962, Angola 1975-94, Cambodia 1975-79, Ethiopia 1976-79, Guatemala 1978-90, Indonesia 1965-66, Iraq 1963-75, Iraq 1988-91, Myanmar (Burma) 1978, Rwanda 1963-64, Rwanda 1994, Sudan 1983-xx, as well as uniquely covered by this configuration Angola 1998-xx, Bosnia 1992-95, Burundi 1993, DR Congo 1964-65, Nigeria 1967-70, Sudan 1956-72, Uganda 1980-86. [xx symbolises that the genocide ended after 1998 or is ongoing]

hardliners took power and systematically assassinated all moderate political leaders (P), thus paving the way for the genocide against the Tutsi minority.

A case explained uniquely by the combination A*S*P is that of the genocide against Muslim Bosniaks by ethnic Serbs in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995. In the context of the break-up of the Yugoslav Federation in the early 1990s (P), war broke out between several of the republics, first between the central state which was dominated by Serbia and Slovenia, followed soon by Croatia, a conflict into which eventually Bosnia was also caught up. Both Croatia and Serbia had increasingly nationalistic leaderships (S) who mobilised along these ethnic lines of Serbian and Croatian in order to mobilise support and consolidate their grip on power (A). The political upheaval experienced in these countries gave the political leaders the opportunity to consolidate their power vis-à-vis their political opponents and to attempt to retain their positions in the course of these violent transitions. Particularly the ethnic Serbian military and paramilitary groups in Bosnia aimed at ethnically cleansing their territory and in this context engaged in genocidal action against the Bosniaks, expelling them from their homes and often killing the population.

As indicated in Table 3 the configurations A*S*I + A*S*P cover by far the most cases within the dataset, explaining most of the cases of genocide and non-genocide, and were thus the focus of the further discussion here. However, the other three configurations all have perfect consistency, explaining an additional four unique cases not explained by the main two configurations, while not adding any extra non-genocides as false positives.

The configuration S*~I*E*P*W uniquely explains only the genocide in Pakistan from 1973 until 1977. In Pakistan there was a war against Balushi separatists (W) which was prompted by a rebellion backed by the National Awami Party against the economically autarkic (E) Pakistani central state – a form of political upheaval (P) – which was motivated by the ethnic composition of the government (S), but *not* by any exclusionary ideologies propagated by them (~I). Primarily the specificity of this case is due to it being one of only two cases which occurred in countries which were not classed as autocracies.

The other two configurations which are less interesting by coverage, but have perfect consistency, thus being truly sufficient for genocide occurrence are A*I*E*P*~W and A*I*E*~P*W, which can be summarised as A*I*E* (P*~W + ~P*W). Given that they both lack the condition ethnic salience of the elite, it is plausible that these could be better at explaining politicides than the other discussed configurations, while at the same time still providing a distinct pathway into this form of mass violence; this cannot be conclusively resolved here as Harff's dataset does not differentiate between the two, but could be an interesting avenue for further research.

Both configurations include the necessary condition autocracy combined with an exclusionary ideology and the context of economic autarky. Here ideology presumably plays the part of the motivation for genocide as a strategy for dealing with a minority, while the autarkic economic system provides a facilitative condition under which this can occur, as the state does not have to fear that sanctions will damage its economy; one could frame this as the opportunity. However, the economic autarky is not sufficient in providing the opportunity for genocide (even in the absence of democratic controls in an autocratic country, but must be supplemented by either political upheaval in the context of peace (or at least the absence of war), or in the context of war without political upheaval. This suggests that political upheaval and war are not complimentary but interchangeable in the absence of the other. This can best be highlighted by two of the uniquely explained cases for the configurations A*I*E*~P*W and A*I*E*P*~W, China in 1959 and China from 1966 to 1975 respectively.[47] Both settings are relatively similar, given that it is the same country, with an autocratic regime, with an exclusionary ideology and in a context of economic autarky; here already the exclusionary ideology suffices as a motivation to commit genocide, and the autocratic regime and the autarkic nature of the economy provide an opportunity, but are not sufficient in and of themselves for genocide to occur, necessitating the inclusion of either political upheaval

[47] The other unique case explained by A*I*E*~P*W is the Khomeini regime's actions in Iran from 1981 to 1992, in which the autocratic and autarkic regime waged war against the Kurds and in this context enforced its exclusionary ideology of Islamic hegemony propagated as part of the Islamic revolution, violently targeting not only dissidents and rebel Kurds, but also Bahá'ís.

or war as a further facilitating opportunity factor. In the genocide of 1959, in which people who were deemed as counterrevolutionary were targeted for elimination, including Tibetan Buddhists, landowners, and supporters of the former Chiang Kaishek regime; this occurred in the context of war against Tibet, providing an opportunity structure for the Communist leadership to define people they wanted to eliminate as state enemies. On the other hand, from 1966 to 1975, the genocide was truly a politicide targeting many groups within society for arrest, torture and execution, in order to further the aims of the Cultural Revolution. This, however, did not occur in the context of war, but instead was directly connected to the political upheaval of the Cultural Revolution, which provided not only the opportunity structure for committing such atrocities, but also the motivation to cleanse society in order to establish the new order envisaged by Mao Tse-tung.

False Negatives and False Positives

While the results of the QCA analysis identify several convincing pathways to genocide occurrence, these cannot explain all cases of genocide included in this study and the pathways sometimes falsely predict genocide, where actually a non-genocide occurs. False negatives are cases which experienced genocide, but their specific combination of conditions was not included in any of the solution configurations and thus genocide was not expected. For the false positives, the configurations predicted that genocide would occur, but the case is actually among the countries that did not experience genocide. Compared with Harff's statistical analysis,48 the model classified a similar proportion of genocides correctly with around one quarter of cases being false negatives, but this model reduces the proportion of false positives, that is non-genocides predicted to be genocide, radically to 9% compared with Harff's 27%.

False negatives misclassify genocides, with the solution configurations not expecting them to be genocides and thus reducing the coverage of the overall solution.[49] Half of these were also genocides which Harff could not explain in her study, and Harff identifies weaknesses in the dataset as the key reason for this, something which is likely to also impact this study as it builds on the same data.[50] The main problem is the political upheaval condition which takes the maximum value of political upheaval during the event; however, due to the cumulative nature of the condition, this is biased against short episodes. Argentina (1976-80) was coded as not in political upheaval due to the very low scores in the political instability data, however, given the dynamics of Peronist vs. military power struggles during this time, a qualitative assessment of the case would probably have coded this as political upheaval. The overthrow of the Allende administration by General Pinochet in Chile (1973-76), separatist aspirations of the Katanga province in Democratic Republic of Congo (1977-79), the violent separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan (1971), the turmoil surrounding Idi Amin's ascent to power in the Ugandan case (1971-79) could be equivalently argued. Similarly, Burundi (1988) was also coded as not in political upheaval, unlike the genocide in 1993; however, the power struggles between the Tutsi-dominated military and democratic reformers predated the 1993 genocide and could have allowed a qualitative assessment of Burundi being in political upheaval at this time. Furthermore, the Philippines (1972-76) was coded 0 on the category of salience of elite ethnicity, which captures the diversity of clans and ethnicity coalescing for power in Manila, but does not do justice to the fact that all of these were Christians, whereas the genocide victims were Muslim Moros from Mindanao, thus making the classification the probable reason for this misprediction as non-genocide. By using Harff's dataset an immediate comparability to her results is possible, but this also comes at the cost of some misclassifications in the data which she had already been forced to contend with.

Besides these genocides not covered by the solution, the two main configurations are also not strictly sufficient, as there also exist non-genocides in which these conditions are

[48] Harff, "No Lessons Learned".

[49] The genocides not accurately predicted by the model are: Argentina 1976-80, Burundi 1988, Chile 1973-76, DR Congo 1977-79, El Salvador 1980-89, Pakistan (now Bangladesh) 1971, Philippines 1972-76, Sri Lanka 1989-90, Uganda 1971-79, Vietnam (South) 1965-75.

[50] Chile 1973-76, El Salvador 1980-89, Philippines 1972-76, Sri Lanka 1989-90, Uganda 1971-79. See Harff, "No Lessons Learned ", 69.

present, so-called false positives.[51] One possible explanation for some of these cases is the fact that they are very similar to other cases which were actually genocide, as they are temporally proximate and occur in the same country, thus sharing some of the same structural conditions. This is the case for nearly half of the false positives: Algeria (1991-xx), Cambodia (1997), DR Congo (1992-xx) and Pakistan (1983-xx). In future research, a more differentiated focus would be possible if one can overcome the dichotomy of conditions, meaning that more structural conditions would be able to vary more subtly over time. Furthermore, some cases' false prediction of being a genocide could also, as with the false negatives, be due to coding problems: Both Turkey (1971) and Romania (1989) were coded as having an exclusionary ideology in Harff's dataset, a categorisation which could be contested.

Conclusion and Outlook

The aim of this paper was to look into the research question of why genocides occur and what combinations of conditions play together to determine its occurrence, and further this research agenda by applying a different methodology to previous studies: the set-theoretic QCA. The key advantage provided by QCA is that it allows for complexity and explicitly models into its analysis the complexity of the world, while also showing up generalisable patterns. The analysis of genocide using QCA provides *multiple combinations* of conditions which are sufficient for causing genocide to occur, thus allowing for several pathways to be described and each of these to present a relatively complex picture; thus, it does not present results as parsimonious as statistical analyses, but radically reduces the complexity of why genocide occurs in each individual instance to observable patterns. Using the conjunctural and combinatorial logic of QCA, this paper examined 139 cases of genocide and non-genocide from the Political Instability Task Force's (PITF) State Failure Problem Set in direct comparison to Barbara Harff's seminal statistical study on genocide occurrence. This paper presented more systematic results than past research regarding sufficient and necessary conditions. The analysis revealed that the presence of an authoritarian regime is necessary for genocide to occur. Furthermore, autocratic regimes with governments whose elites' ethnicity is salient will experience genocide in the presence of either an exclusionary ideology or high political upheaval; also, the same outcome will occur if an economically autarkic autocracy propagates an exclusionary ideology in the context of either high political upheaval, not in war, or in war without high political upheaval.

Furthermore, this analysis brings more depth into the discussion of the different conditions which coalesce to make genocide occur, demonstrating not just the impact of individual conditions as most statistical work does, but instead showing how the conditions combine to certain configurations which are sufficient for genocide. By pursuing this methodology, it is possible to take previous findings of what are important determinants of genocide and structure them into meaningful combinations.

The fact that the presence of autocratic regimes is necessary for genocide to occur is perhaps not surprising due to the dichotomous nature of this condition, but is certainly an interesting finding of this paper. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that while political upheaval *can* play a part in causing genocide, its role is much more understated than is suggested in previous literature, including in Harff's analysis. Political upheaval is necessary in the provision of an augmented opportunity structure in the context of autocratic regimes with ethnically salient governments, with the former providing a baseline of opportunity and the latter a fundamental genocidal motivation; however, political upheaval became irrelevant when an exclusionary ideology was present, as this provided an overarching motivation which can be realised even within the context of a minimal autocratic opportunity structure. Also, in other configurations political upheaval is not as central as previously asserted, as the solution demonstrated that it is functionally equivalent to the occurrence of war, both providing an opportunity structure in addition to the autocratic regime.

This paper presents a new perspective on why genocides occur and opens up new avenues for future research: First, this paper has had to work with crisp set QCA using only dichotomous

[51] The non-genocides which are also covered by these configurations are Cambodia 1997, Chad 1965-94, Congo-Kinshasa 1992-xx, Liberia 1985-xx, Sierra Leone 1991-xx, Turkey 1971, Romania 1989, Algeria 1991-xx, Pakistan 1983-xx.

conditions. If it were possible to find an ordinal scale for genocide or a way of identifying cases as partly genocidal, then one could run more rigorous fuzzy set QCA tests, allowing for continuous coding of all conditions without reducing the complexity of the available data to a simple 0/1 dichotomy. Second, the country-level is probably not the most appropriate for the study of genocide, as some genocides occur within specific regions of a country, while others are perpetrated by one government but across borders into other countries. It would be a worthwhile endeavour to conduct a study which took these different spatial issues into account. Finally, as suggested in the discussion section, it could be interesting in a future study to differentiate between different types of genocide to gauge different pathways—the differentiation between politicide and genocide could be one avenue, but further work on typologising genocide could also bring to light helpful nuances. This could possibly strengthen the results and allow for a clearer set of conditions to crystallise for each distinct phenomenon.

Given that genocides vary greatly in their implementation and thus reality is extremely complex, the reduction of the dynamics across 139 cases to these combinations is certainly a success, demonstrating some more generalisable dynamics across cases. While this paper was not able to provide such clear-cut and parsimonious results as previous statistical analyses, it is able to provide new insights into genocide occurrence due to QCA's unique combinatorial and conjunctural approach. With these results and with further developments of the dataset and its analysis, policy makers and civil society actors should be better armed to take the identified configurations and flag situations which are particularly at risk of genocide occurring. The complex nature of the several pathways and each of their configurations allows these actors to better understand which dynamics occur under which circumstances and how the same condition can have varying effects in different contexts. Altogether, this complex-orientated approach will allow more tailored responses to at-risk situations to be developed and possibly play a contribution to ridding the world of the scourge of genocide.

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"Don't Think But Look:" Using Wittgenstein's Notion of Family Resemblances to Look at Genocide

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***Abstract**: This article contributes to the ongoing and growing scholarly conversation concerning how best to define the term "genocide" following Raphael Lemkin's coining of the term in 1944. The article first shows that the Convention definition ratified in Paris in 1948 was intended solely for juridical purposes and does not reflect Lemkin's deeper understanding of genocide. It then surveys a range of scholarship after Lemkin that argues for alternative definitions of term or even calls for jettisoning the term altogether. While it is acknowledged that a clear definition is imperative in a juridical context, it is argued that there are problems and even dangers in demanding definitional precision. For purposes of coming to terms with the multi-dimensionality and complexities of genocidal events or the genocidal process, Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance provides an alternative way of seeing genocide that avoids the dangers of definition.*

***Keywords**: genocide, Lemkin, definition, Wittgenstein*

Introduction

A great deal of scholarly attention is devoted to the issue of how best to define the term genocide. The term was coined and defined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, and the definition finally adopted at the U.N. Convention on 9 December 1948 reads as follows:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.[1]

As we will see in the next section, this definition was intended solely for purposes of international law. And there are numerous critics of this definition; critics of the Convention definition fall into one of four camps. Some claim there are problems with the term as a juridical concept; it is notoriously difficult to establish intent, and the Convention definition specifies only five groups. Juridical problems notwithstanding, other argue that for purposes of prevention, we need to see genocide as a process rather than as an event and revise the definition accordingly. Still others claim the term, or more precisely the Convention definition of the term, does not facilitate a deeper understanding of the complexities or even chaos that characterize genocides. Still others advocate jettisoning the term altogether; scholars in this camp have offered any number of alternative terms and phrases meant to capture the depth and magnitude of genocidal violence.

This paper begins with a brief overview of how Lemkin himself intended and understood the term genocide as it appears in the Convention definition in contrast to his historical understanding of genocide and shows that his definition adopted in 1948 as a legal concept should not be conflated with his historical understanding of genocide. We will then evaluate the arguments of critics who wish to amend, correct, or even replace Lemkin's term. We will see that criticisms of the Convention definition along with calls for an improved or alternative definition share an all-too-familiar received understanding of definition itself. This received conception of definition goes as far back as Plato. Rather than having recourse to alternative definitions of genocide or inventing a

[1] "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2078/volume-78-I-1021-English.pdf (accessed 31 January 2016).

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new term, the argument presented here shows that Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances provides an alternative and effective way of looking at genocide.

Defining Genocide

Lemkin's Term

Genocide scholars do recognize an immeasurable debt to Raphael Lemkin for coining the term genocide—the word derives from the Greek word *genos*, or people, and the Latin *cide*, to kill—as well as his tireless efforts to make genocide a crime under international law. Passages throughout the published and unpublished writings make it clear that he considered it his vocation or métier to criminalize genocide. In an article published in the *American Journal of International Law* Lemkin makes this clear when he writes, "The realities of European life in the years 1933-45 call for the creation of such a term and for the formulation of a *legal* concept of destruction of human groups."[2] He writes in his never completed autobiography *Totally Unofficial*:

> Thus my basic mission in life was formulated: to create a law among nations to protect national, racial, and religious groups from destruction. The need for the innocent to be protected set off a chain reaction in my mind. It followed me all my life. Once I conceived of the destruction of groups as a crime, I could not rest quietly. Neither could I stop thinking about it. When I later coined the word "genocide," I found too an expression for my own use, but at the same time I was prepared to work more for the actual transformation of this word into the subject of an international treaty.[3]

A few pages later he continues:

> Now was the time to outlaw the destruction of national, racial, and religious groups. I thought that the crime was so big that nothing less than declaring it an international offense would be adequate, and that it should be done by international treaty or convention.[4]

Not always fully recognized or appreciated in the scholarship is the fact that as an intellectual and scholar, Lemkin had a far richer understanding of genocide and the history of genocide than is suggested by the 1948 Convention definition. It is clear when looking at his other writings including unpublished material that he recognized the idea of genocide, even before being named and defined, was far more complex and multidimensional than the Convention definition might suggest. He recognized that genocide is as old as human history and a ubiquitous feature of human history, and not essentially tied to the logic of modernity, although he clearly saw the Holocaust as ushering in new aspects of genocide. He recognized that it involves far more than the mass murder of human beings. He recognized that genocides look different at different times depending on the contingencies of history.

Here is not the place to provide a detailed account of the development of Lemkin's understanding of genocidal violence.[5] Still, we must recognize, if however briefly, that there are passages in his

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[2] Lemkin, Raphael. 1947. "Genocide as a Crime under International Law." *The American Journal of International Law* Vol. 41, No. 1, 146.

[3] Lemkin, Raphael. 2013. *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin.* Translated by Donna-Lee Frieze. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2.

[4] Ibid, 22.

[5] There is a growing and promising body of scholarship devoted to Lemkin and his understanding of genocide. See: Moses, A. Dirk. 2010. "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide. In *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies.* Edited by Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, pages 19- 41. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Butcher, Thomas A. 2013. "A 'Synchronized Attack': On Raphael Lemkin's Holistic Conception of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 15, No. 3, 25-271; Irvin-Erickson, Douglas. 2013. "A Genocide, the Family of Mind, and the Romantic Signature of Raphael Lemkin," *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol.15, No. 3, 273-296; Siegelberg, Mira L. 2013. "Unofficial Men, Efficient Civil Servants: Raphael Lemkin in the History of International Law," *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 15, No. 3, 297-316; Earl, Hilary. 2013. "Prosecuting Genocide before the Genocide Convention: Raphael Lemkin and the Nuremberg Trials, 1945-1949." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 15, No. 3, 317-337.

published and unpublished writings that document a much subtler and nuanced understanding of genocidal violence than is evident in the Convention definition. His richly historical understanding of genocide is evident in an article published in the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1948:

> The destruction of Carthage, the destruction of the Albigenses and Waldenses, the Crusades, the march of the Teutonic Knights, the destruction of the Christians under the Ottoman Empire, the massacres of the Herero in Africa, the extermination of the Armenians, the slaughter of the Christian Assyrians in Iraq in 1933, the destruction of the Maronites, the pogroms of Jews in Tsarist Russia and Romania—all these are classical cases.[6]

And in an undated and unpublished manuscript he refers to genocide as being "as old as history," although it is "repeating itself with an increasing intensity in our time."[7]

Moreover, Lemkin's more inclusive historical understanding of genocide also meant that he distinguished different types of genocide based on the perpetrators' intentions and purposes: he recognized that some genocides were intended to totally destroy a group; others were intended to destroy a culture through assimilation and other measures; third, some genocides seek to annihilate both members of the group and destroy the culture as well.[8] An example of the second type would be the genocidal rape camps in Bosnia where women were forced to bear children who bore the ethnicity of perpetrators. An example of the third type would be the destruction of Armenian architecture by the Turks well after the killing and diaspora.

Clearly, the enduring legacy of Raphael Lemkin is that of Lemkin the jurist who framed the Convention definition, not Lemkin the scholar. This is likely best explained by the urgency he felt about proscribing genocide at the level of international law. Although he was enough of a realist to recognize that an international law proscribing genocide would not end genocide, he felt a real resolve to make it law while the memories of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust were vivid in our memory. In a memorandum he writes about the need for ratification without delay: "It is easier to ratify a treaty of this kind while the memory of recent cases of genocide is still In [sic] our minds."[9]

Do We Need a New Definition? Do We Need a Definition at All?

That we need a definition is taken almost as a given and the importance of a clear definition is often stressed in the literature. Totten and Parsons in their introduction to the fourth edition of *Centuries of Genocide,* stress the importance of clear definitions, albeit within the context of teaching about genocide. In a section entitled "More specifics vis-à-vis teaching and learning about genocide," they claim this: "First, it is absolutely essential to help students understand the difference between crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. A key way to do that is to provide them with a solid definition of each..."[10] Totten and Parsons, and a host of others see a solid definition as central to our understanding of genocide. George Andreopoulos, in his introduction to *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions,* makes perhaps the strongest claim for the importance of a sound definition. According to Andreopoulos:

> The quest for a comprehensive definition would enable us first to map out the area within which the concept is to operate; an analytically rigorous definition could then be developed which would avoid conceptual overstretch. Because the concept refers to a social process, a

[6] Lemkin, Raphael. 1947. "War against Genocide." *Christian Science Monitor,* 20.

[7] Lemkin, Raphael. Undated. "Memorandum on the necessity for the urgent ratification of the Genocide Convention." Raphael Lemkin Collection; P-154, box 6, folder 2. American Jewish Historical Society, New York and Boston.

[8] Feierstein, Daniel. 2014. *Genocide as Social Practice: Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and Argentina's Military Juntas.* Translated by Douglas Andrew Town. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 40.

[9] Lemkin, Raphael. Undated. "Memorandum on the necessity for the urgent ratification of the Genocide Convention," undated, Raphael Lemkin Collection; P-154; box 6; folder 2; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

[10] Totten, Samuel and William S. Parsons, editors. 2013. *Centuries of Genocide: Essays and Eyewitness Accounts* Fourth Edition. New York: Routledge, 11.

> good definition has a critical functional value: to assist in the detection of early signs of an impending crisis and, provided the appropriate mechanisms are in place, devise preventive measures. Thus a good definition can be instrumental in the creation of an early warning system for the detection of genocide-prone situations. Finally, a proper conceptual framework should be able to explain nonevents: It should provide insights into why genocide-prone situations did not develop into full-scale genocides, and why societies that had that had witnessed large-scale genocidal massacres in the past managed to achieve relative stability without any structural changes in the perpetrator regime.[11]

Andreopoulos devotes nearly half of his book to articles that focus on what he calls "the conceptual dimensions of genocide."

Irving Louis Horowitz similarly devotes the first chapter of *Taking Lives* to the importance of a definition while delineating the problems surrounding a definition of the term.[12] According to Horowitz, "formal definitions are either too broad to invite action or too narrow to require any [and] political definitions invariably mean what *other* nations do to subject populations, never what one's own does to its subjects or citizens."[13] The myriad of problems with defining genocide that Horowitz discusses notwithstanding, he still stresses the importance of a "multidimensional definition of genocide."[14]

Proposed New Definitions

That we need not only a definition but a new definition is suggested by the fact that there is so much scholarship devoted to either redefining Lemkin's term, replacing it with a better term, or jettisoning the term altogether.

Working within the juridical framework, Larry May has recently addressed deficiencies in the Convention definition and the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute of 1998, and made specific proposed changes.[15] May focuses in particular on how best to conceive of groups and group identification given that both the Convention definition and the Rome Statute define genocide as a crime perpetrated against groups. May characterizes groups as follows: "Metaphysically the identity conditions of a group are: (1) individual human persons, (2) related to each other by organizational structure, solidarity, or common interests, and (3) identifiable, to the members, and to those who observe the members, by characteristic features."[16] It is the third condition, what he calls the "publicity condition" that is important in the context of defining genocide.

One of the major strengths of May's conceptualization of groups he mentions specifically: "the number of groups that would be officially recognized as the potential objects of genocide would increase from the current four: racial, religious, ethnic, and national groups."[17] A related strength, and one not specifically discussed by May, but still important, is this: it is easy to imagine an event in the future that might well qualify as a case of genocide but not involve one of the four identified groups, or a group we can at this historical moment not easily imagine as a victim group. May's analysis enables us to recognize genocidal violence against a group or groups for which there is no historical precedent.[18]

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[11] Andreopoulos, George J. 1997. "Introduction: The Calculus of Genocide." In *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions.* Edited by George Andreopoulos. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 3-4.

[12] Irving Louis Horowitz is right, in my view, to point out that understanding and defining genocide is made especially difficult owing to the fact that it belies Western conceptions of law and morals which emphasize the culpability of individual agents and not groups: Horowitz, Irving Louis. 2002. *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power* Fifth edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

[13] Horowitz, Irving Louis. 2002. *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power* Fifth edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 14.

[14] Ibid, 27.

[15] May, Larry. 2011. *Genocide: A Normative Account*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[16] Ibid, 50.

[17] Ibid, 50.

[18] A number of scholars have focused attention on how we should understand the notion of groups in the Convention definition, which provides insight as to why Lemkin himself saw groups as substantial entities. See: May, *Genocide: A*

Still, May is working within the juridical framework. His focus is "in solving the definitional problem that has so vexed tribunals, convention drafters, courts, and international commission members for many years."[19] But we need also to confront the definitional issues outside of the juridical context in our attempts to understand genocide.

Outside the juridical context, there is a spectrum of approaches to defining genocide. There are those such as Yehuda Bauer,[20] Steven T. Katz,[21] and even Irving Horowitz[22] who want to privilege the Holocaust as a unique historical event, fundamentally different than other cases of mass brutality, and define genocide accordingly.[23] At the other end of the spectrum are those such as Israel Charny who opt for a much broader definition: Charny argues for what he calls a "generic definition of genocide." In his view:

> What is needed...is a generic definition of genocide that does not exclude or commit to indifference any case of mass murder of any human beings, of whatever racial, national, ethnic, biological, cultural, religious, and political definitions, or of totally mixed groupings of any and all of the above. I propose that whenever large numbers of unarmed human beings are put to death at the hands of their fellow human beings, we are talking about *genocide*.[24]

Others frame a definition explicitly in terms of necessary conditions, i.e. in terms of what must be the case for an event to qualify as a case of genocide. Inga Clendinnen, for example, has claimed that "to take murder out of genocide is to render it vacuous" a claim contested by Raimond Gaita.[25] Even an expansive definition matrix such as the one proposed by Charny, focuses on killing as a necessary condition. Much of the scholarship that focuses on a traditional definition will cast intent as a necessary condition for an event to be considered genocide. The Convention definition uses the language of intent to destroy. Michael Ignatieff, in a lecture in honour of Lemkin, refers to the Holocaust as "an ideological desire to wipe a people from the face of the earth, and to grind salt into the earth, so that they would never arise and grow again." Genocide, he continues, "has no clear meaning whatsoever unless the word can be connected to a clear intention to exterminate a human group in whole or in part."[26]

Claudia Card offers an alternative conceptualization of genocide by focusing on what she terms social death. She claims, "the intentional production of social death in a people or community is the central evil of genocide."[27] Mohammed Abed similarly claims "social death is the harm that distinguishes genocide from other forms of political violence."[28] For Card and Abed, what

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Normative Account; Boghossian, Paul. 2010a. "The Concept of Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 12, No. 1-2, 69-80; Irvin-Erickson, "A Genocide, the Family of Mind and the Romantic Signature of Raphael Lemkin"; Moses, "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide".

[19] May, *Genocide,* 58.

[20] Bauer, Yehuda. 1984. "The Place of the Holocaust in Contemporary History." *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* Vol. 1, No. 3, 201-224.

[21] Katz, Steven T. 1981. "The 'Unique' Intentionality of the Holocaust." *Modern Judaism* Vol. 1, No. 2, 161-183; Katz, Steven T. 1994. *The Holocaust in Historical Context: Volume I: The Holocaust and Mass Death Before the Modern Age.* New York: Oxford University Press.

[22] Horowitz, *Taking Lives.*

[23] There is a growing trend in the scholarship to attempt integrating Holocaust Studies with Genocide Studies. Universiteit van Amsterdam offered a summer seminar titled "Hidden Genocides: Overshadowed by the Holocaust in the summer of 2015; see also, Blatman, Daniel. 2015.

[24] Charny, Israel. 1994. "Toward a Generic Definition of Genocide." In *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimension.* Edited by George Andreopoulos. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 74.

[25] Clendinnen, Inga. 2003. *The Australian's Review of Books.* Quoted in Gaita, Raimond. 2005. "Refocusing Genocide." In *Genocide and Human Rights: A Philosophical Guide.* Edited by John K. Roth. New York: Palgrave, 156.

[26] Ignatieff, Michael. 2000. "The Legacy of Raphael Lemkin." Speech delivered at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/speakers-and-events/all-speakers-and-events/the-legacy-of-raphael-lemkin (accessed 16 December 2015).

[27] Card, Claudia. 2010. *Confronting Evils: Terrorism, Torture, Genocide* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 237.

[28] Abed, Mohammed. 2006. "Clarifying the Concept of Genocide." *Metaphilosophy* Vol. 37, No. 3-4, 308-330.

gives meaning to our lives are relationships, relationships that can be personal or institutionally mediated, contemporary or intergenerational; and while a life deprived of social vitality is not necessarily meaningless (here Card cites spiritual vitality), still she claims "loss of social vitality is a profound loss."[29] Moreover, she claims, "putting social death at the center of genocide takes the focus off body counts, individual careers cut short, and mourners. It puts the focus instead on relationships, connections, and foundational institutions that create community and set the context that gives meaning to careers and goals, lives and deaths."[30] Card's conceptualization represents a shift in focus, and it seems that she does not offer a definition per se; she does, however, state that while "social death is not necessarily genocide...genocide is social death." And it is "social death that distinguishes the evil of genocide, morally, from the evils of other mass murders."[31]

Card's focus on social death certainly complements many of the testimonies of survivors as well as literature and film about life in the camps. Jean Améry's intellectual alienation in the camp, his reduction to the purely physical, and his exile from his homeland is a clear example of social death.[32] Imre Kertész's narrator in *Kaddish for an Unborn Child* who refuses to bring a child into the post-Auschwitz world is another clear illustration of the lived experience of social death. [33]

Daniel Feierstein, following a relatively thorough review and criticisms of the more canonical definitions of genocide, argues in the case of modern genocides (he bases his analysis on the Holocaust and Argentina's military juntas) defines genocide as a social practice, a technology of power that is "*the execution of a large-scale and systematic plan with the intention of destroying a human group as such in whole or in part,"* as a way of reorganizing society.[34]

Those writing with a focus on preventing genocide have begun focusing on reconceptualizing genocide as a process. Gregory Stanton has focused our attention on genocide as a process by identifying 10 distinct stages.[35] The central argument of the 2000 African Union Report, *The Preventable Genocide,* is that the Rwandan genocide can be traced back 150 years to Belgian colonialism and the role of the Catholic Church.[36] Sheri Rosenberg, like Stanton, focuses on prevention which, in her view, is greatly facilitated by seeing genocide as a process and not an event. She argues for what she calls genocide by attrition, a type of process-based view. As she explains, we should be mindful "of the fact that genocide is a fluid and complex social phenomenon, not a static term."[37] This represents a promising new direction in the field of genocide studies and one that complements the approach I will argue for later in this paper.

Still others argue there are fundamental problems with the very concept of genocide. Rather than focusing on the shortcomings of particular definitions, David Moshman directs our attention to problems inherent in the very notion of conceptualization as it relates to the concept of genocide. He demonstrates the dangers inherent in what he calls, proto-type" concepts—the Shoah is his example—where all other possible instances are judged against the proto-typical case; he argues instead for what he calls formal concepts which appeal to a set of necessary and sufficient conditions. While he vastly prefers the formal over the proto-typical, he sees dangers there as well. For Moshman, "we cannot escape the constraints inherent in conceptual thought," yet we can, he argues, "always transcend the limitations of our current concepts."[38] Christian Gerlach casts a

[29] Card. *Confronting Evils,* 237.

[30] Ibid, 238.

[31] Ibid, 237.

[32] Améry, Jean. 1980. *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor and its Realities.* Translated by Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

[33] Kertész, Imre. 2004. *Kaddish for an Unborn Child.* Translated by Tim Wilkinson. New York: Random House.

[34] Feierstein. *Genocide as Social Practice,* 36.

[35] Stanton, Gregory. undated. Genocide Watch. http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/tenstagesofgenocide.html (accessed December 15, 2015).

[36] African Union. 2000. *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide.* Available from: http://www.refworld.org African / docid/4d1da8752.html (accessed 16 May 2015)

[37] Rosenberg, Sheri P. 2012. "Genocide is a Process, Not an Event." *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal.* Vol. 7, No. 1, 17.

[38] Moshman, David. 2001. "Conceptual Constraints on Thinking about Genocide, *Journal of Genocide Research.* Vol. 3, 431.

much wider net, seeing problems with how genocide scholarship often limits our understanding of mass violence. The main problem with the traditional framework, according to Gerlach, "is that genocide is a normative, action-oriented concept that has historically and essentially been created for political struggle not for scholarly analysis."[39] He calls it a *politischer Kampfbergriff* and instead argues of an alternative concept, namely, "extremely violent societies," which he claims overcomes specific problems with the concept of genocide, namely: it excludes many forms of violence which have important links to genocide; traditional genocide scholarship is overly focused on the state; and it fails to sufficiently recognize the "multi-causal explanations of violence."[40]

Given the fact that the term genocide has only been part of our vocabulary for just over 65 years, it is alarming that there are some who want to jettison the term altogether. Stuart Stein proposes that we jettison the term claiming that "the concept *genocide* cannot be rescued for use as a viable category type describing a delimited cluster of behaviours, and that assimilating yet more instances to this category achieves little more than name-calling."[41] Paul Boghossian is perhaps the most polemical in this regard. He claims unequivocally, "(a) that the concept defined by the UN Convention is deeply flawed; and (b) that there are no good remedies to these flaws."[42] More recently, Antonio Ferrara has suggested a new way of understanding mass violence and proposes using the term demographic surgery for the purpose of historical understanding.[43]

The Danger of Definitions

This review of proposed alternative definitions, a review that is admittedly not exhaustive but rather representative, shows recourse to a received and uncontested conception of definition that goes back at least to Socrates and Plato, and remained unchallenged until the twentieth century by Ludwig Wittgenstein. I want to briefly discuss Socrates' conception of definition followed by Wittgenstein's critique of the Socratic understanding. This will in turn allow us to see clearly dangers in attempting to define genocide in the traditional way and why Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances is a more effective way of thinking about genocidal violence.

Socrates' Demand for a Standard

Within a juridical context a clear definition is imperative. Outside of this context, however, it is a different matter. Rather than addressing individual arguments that propose alternative definitions I wish to contest the claim that we need a definition at all. In fact, and especially in the case of genocide, there lurk dangers in demanding definitional clarity. We need to look at our received notion of definition itself for therein lies a crucial set of problems. All of the proposed definitions of genocide reviewed in the previous section share a common conception or understanding of

[39] Gerlach, Christian. 2006. "Extremely Violent Societies: An Alternative to the Concept of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research.* Vol. 8, 463-464.

[40] Ibid, 464-465.

[41] Stein, Stuart D. 2005. "Conceptions and Terms: Templates for Analysis of Holocausts and Genocides." *Journal of Genocide Research,* Vol. 7, 171-203.

[42] Boghossian, Paul. 2010b. "Response to my Critics." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 12, No. 1-2, 109. This follows criticisms of his earlier paper. See Boghossian, "The Concept of Genocide". There are two concerns about these claims. First, it is notoriously difficult to prove a negative, e.g. that "there are no good remedies," unless the term is conceptually incoherent or self-contradictory. If this is what Boghossian is claiming, then he has failed to make the case. Alternatively, if he means to be making an *a posteriori* claim to the effect that to date the flaws have not been remedied, he would need to provide a survey of all attempts to redefine or re-conceptualize and this he has not done. A second worry concerns his earlier claim that "genocide is a coined technical term [which] implies that anyone using it must either use it to mean this technical concept or must explicitly supply an alternative definition. One cannot use the word 'genocide' without supplying some definition or other, because one cannot rely, as one might with a word in ordinary language, on some common understanding that we all have of that word, whether or not we are able to define it" (Boghossian, "The Concept of Genocide", 70). Yet he begins the same essay by claiming "the word 'genocide' gets a lot of use these days" (68). This suggests that the term is part of natural language. In the next section I will develop my argument to the effect that this is precisely where we should begin, with a careful mapping and analysis of how the term is used.

[43] Ferrara, Antonio. 2015. "Beyond Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing: A New Way to Understand Mass Violence." *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 17, 1-20.

definition. In this section I will analyse our received understanding of a definition and show the dangers in applying that received understanding to the concept of genocide.

When Socrates and Euthyphro by chance meet at the King Archon's court, Socrates seems on the face of it astonished to learn that the young Euthyphro is there at the court to charge someone with murder. Socrates says to Euthyphro: "Heracles! Surely, Euthyphro, most people do not know where the right lies; for I fancy it is not everyone who can rightly do what you are doing, but only one who is already very far advanced in wisdom."[44] Socrates is even more alarmed to learn that Euthyphro is prosecuting his own father. Socrates then says, "But, in the name of Zeus, Euthyphro, do you think your knowledge about divine laws and holiness and unholiness is so exact that, when the facts are as you say, you are not afraid of doing something unholy yourself in prosecuting your father for murder?"[45] With no trace of either irony or humility, Euthyphro assures Socrates that he does possess sufficient knowledge of the pious and the impious so as to be able prosecute his father. He therefore asks Euthyphro for a definition of holiness and unholiness: "What do you say is the nature of piety and impiety, both in relation to murder and to other things? Is not holiness always the same with itself in every action and, on the other hand, is not unholiness the opposite of all holiness, always the same with itself and whatever is to be unholy possessing some one characteristic quality?"[46]

It is clear in the dialogue that Socrates is asking Euthyphro not just for a definition (Euthyphro offers any number of definitions), but a certain kind of definition. We know early on in the dialogue what definitions will not suffice. Euthyphro's initial answer to the question of what is holiness—"well then, I say that holiness is doing what I am doing now, prosecuting the wrongdoer who commits murder or steals from the temples or does any such thing, whether he be your father, or your mother or anyone else, and not prosecuting him is unholy"[47]—is rejected by Socrates as less than adequate. "Now call to mind," says Socrates, "that this is not what I asked you, to tell me one or two of the many holy acts, but to tell the essential aspect, by which all holy acts are holy."[48] Here Socrates is asking for an explanation of "the general idea." And a moment later, Socrates asks for a standard: "Tell me then what this aspect is, that I may keep my eye fixed upon it and employ it as a model and, if anything you or anyone else does agrees with it, may say that the act is holy, and if not, that it is unholy."[49]

This way of characterizing a definition of a concept is later embraced by Aristotle as well.[50] "Aristotle," claims Forster, "basically took over this theory from Plato, and due to the combined influence of these two great philosophers it went on to exercise a profound and lasting impact on Western thought—so that, for example, even today many philosophers and non-philosophers alike still labour under the impression that in order to have a clear understanding of a general term a person must be able to provide a definition of it."[51] This is borne out when we review the scholarship on genocide.

A Wittgensteinian Critique

With Socrates' conception of an adequate definition illustrated we can now turn to Wittgenstein to see just how problematic this conception is, drawing primarily from the *Philosophical Investigations*, but secondarily the *Cambridge Lectures: 1932-35*. The *Investigations* is where Wittgenstein, following a discussion of language games, introduces the provocative notion of family resemblances, or

[44] Plato. 1966. *Plato in Twelve Volumes, Volume 1.* Translated by Harold North Fowler. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 4a-b.

[45] Ibid, 4e.

[46] Ibid, 5c-d.

[47] Ibid, 5d-e.

[48] Ibid, 6d.

[49] Ibid, 6e.

[50] Aristotle. 1999. *The Metaphysics*. Penguin Classics edition. New York: Penguin Classics.

[51] Forster, Michael. 2010. "Wittgenstein on Family Resemblance Concepts." In *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: A Critical Guide.* Edited by Arif Amhed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 77.

Familienähnlichkeiten. This notion of family resemblances starkly contrasts with what Socrates demands of his interlocutors.

In a famous passage, Wittgenstein introduces a list, not meant to be exhaustive, of examples of language-games for us to consider. Here is Wittgenstein's list:

> "Giving orders, and acting on them—
> Describing an object by its appearance, or by its measurements—
> Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)—
> Reporting an event—
> Speculating about the event—
> Forming and testing a hypothesis—
> Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams—
> Making up a story; and reading one—
> Acting in a play—
> Singing rounds—
> Guessing riddles—
> Cracking a joke; telling one—
> Solving a problem in applied arithmetic—
> Translating from one language into another—
> Requesting, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying."[52]

Not only is the list not exhaustive, it is likewise not fixed: "This diversity is not something fixed, given once and for all; but new types of language, new language games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten."[53]

How are we to make sense of language-games? This question is complicated by the fact, as indicated above, that language games are multifarious and not fixed; they come into existence and pass out of existence. Plato and the tradition that follows would insist on a definition of language, a common feature shared by all language games, a definition of language that transcends all examples of games, or alternatively, the uses of language. Wittgenstein anticipates this worry and casts it in the form of an objection: "For someone might object against me: 'You make things easy for yourself! You talk about all sorts of language games, but have nowhere said what is *essential* [*Wesentliche*] to a language-game, and so to language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you the most headache, the part about the *general form of the proposition* and of language'."[54]

In response to this anticipated objection he replies: "I'm saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for all—but there are many different kinds of *affinity* [*Verwandschaft*] between them."[55] Then at PI §66 he uses the concept of a game to illustrate further the relationship among uses. After mentioning any number of games, e.g. board games, card games, etc. he claims that there is nothing common to all games by virtue of which we call them games. He then says to one who would insist that they must have something in common: "*look and see* whether there is anything common to all."[56] The look and see test, Wittgenstein suggests, will reveal that there is nothing common to all but instead "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: similarities in the large and in the small."[57] The expression he uses to capture this network of similarities is family resemblance.[58] John Wisdom reminds us in his recollection of lectures he attended and conversations he had with Wittgenstein

[52] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 2009. *Philosophische Untersuchungen (Philosophical Investigations).* Translated by G.E.M Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte. Revised fourth edition. Chickchester: Wiley-Blackwell, §23.

[53] Ibid, §23.

[54] Ibid, §64.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid, §66.

[58] Ibid, §67.

between 1934 and 1937, "He said that in applying the same word to several instances we mark a *family resemblance*—not the possession of something in common (as all ticket holders possess something in common—a ticket which matches a ticket I may hold in hand...). And this connects to his saying: 'Don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use.'"[59] Even without a general definition we can still explain to someone what a game is. The author thinks that replacing a Platonic conception of essentialism with a conception of family resemblances can address a number of philosophical problems and conundrums.

First, Wittgenstein helps us to see that there are intractable problems with the essentialist model of definitions. One problem with the essentialist model of definitions is the untenable philosophical commitments it involves. When Socrates presses Euthyphro for a proper definition he is asking for the Form of holiness, anticipating Plato's theory of Forms or Ideas. In other words, he is asking for something that transcends any particular instantiation of the general concept. In fact, it presupposes an abstract general form that is not immanent but transcendent. This entails a commitment to presuppositions both metaphysical and epistemological. Metaphysically it involves a commitment to an ontological realm of Ideas or Forms that are not part of the immanent domain. Epistemologically, it makes knowledge of the transcendent realm difficult if not impossible to achieve. It is worth noting that Socrates in collaboration with his interlocutors is never able to define a concept in a way that would meet his own demands. Historically Plato sets in motion the 2500 year long philosophical project of attempting to find access to, and knowledge of, a realm that is more real and lies behind the world of mere appearance. This represents a philosophical prejudice that Wittgenstein wants to dispel as a fool's errand.

Additionally, Wittgenstein wants us to focus on the immanent domain and look carefully at how words and concepts are used by language users. If we are to take careful account—employing what I am calling the look and see test—we will begin to see that, in the words of Ambrose and McDonald, "there is nothing identifiably in common for the state of affairs for which we use a word. There are only a number of overlapping resemblances. Our concepts are enormous families with various resemblances."[60]

This should not, on reflection, at all surprise us. Language users inevitably use language in ways that reflect perspectives or outlooks. Within the academic community historians focus more on the particular and tell stories about unique events. Stories told about perpetrators look much different than stories told from the perspective of victims or survivors. Social scientists focus more on general trends and patterns and less on the uniqueness of genocidal events. Charny recognizes the same problem when he claims "even in a society where the scientific method is the valued and prevailing mode, definitions are subject to enormous ideological and political pressures from the societal establishments within which thinkers do the work."[61] In the same article Charny outlines distinct ways in which defining the term "genocide" is politicized and rife with difficulties. Jacques Sémelin also speaks to the tangle of uses of the term including issues of memory, the urging of humanitarian action, and legal purposes.[62]

But our inability to arrive at a clear definition of genocide may not be cause for concern for four distinct reasons. First, and as already shown, the demand for a clear definition rests on untenable philosophical assumptions. Second, given both the perspectivism of different paradigms and the politically charged nature of the debate over defining genocide it would follow that any essentialist definition that became widely used would likely represent, not truth, but instead the hegemony of a dominant discourse; the hegemony of a dominant discourse in turn marginalizes or worse silences other voices that deserve attention and recognition. Third, if we adhere to the demand for

[59] Wisdom, John. 1952. "Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1934-1937." *Mind* Vol. 61, 259.

[60] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 2001. *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge, 1932-1935.* Edited by Alice Ambrose and Margaret McDonald. Amherst: Prometheus, 96.

[61] Charny, "Towards a Generic Definition," 66.

[62] Sémelin, Jacques. 2012. "Around the 'G' Word: From Raphael Lemkin's Definition to Current Memorial and Academic Controversies," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* Vol. 7, No. 1, 24-29. I find nothing of a specific nature, at least at the theoretical level, in Wittgenstein's writings that helps us to combat the political uses of the term genocide, or language more generally. I will address this problem more fully in the conclusion.

definitional precision of the type demanded by Socrates and Plato, we risk narrowing our vision in such a way that we may not enrich but rather impoverish our understanding of genocide. We risk seeing history filtered through the lens of a definition. Better to bring into our purview the many uses of the term in order to refine and deepen our understanding, in order to make us wiser. These dangers need to be explicated specifically within the context of genocide.

Specific Dangers in Precisely Defining Genocide

Any essentialist definition will serve both to include and exclude from consideration any number of events; recall that Socrates tells Euthyphro that he is looking for a precise standard by which to determine what is holy and what is not. Many scholars, as shown earlier, opt for a narrow definition of genocide, going in some cases to the extreme of saying the Holocaust or Shoah is the only case of genocide in human history. Somewhat less extreme but nevertheless worrisome is the claim made by many that the Holocaust is the prototype or paradigm case of genocide, in effect claiming that while there are genocides other than the Holocaust, in comparative scholarship, the Holocaust *is* the standard by which all other genocides should be compared and understood. This direction in genocide scholarship can be traced to two reasons: first are the issues of memory and the understandable desire of a people to have their suffering and the suffering of their ancestors recognised as the most egregious agony ever heaped on members of the human community; second is the need to cling to the Enlightenment desire to see progress toward a future cosmopolitan world bereft of war and genocidal violence.[63] The Enlightenment narrative of progress will admit eruptions of violence but only if their occurrence is against a backdrop of progress toward peace or in Kant, perpetual peace; sustaining that narrative then requires our seeing eruptions of violence as aberrational, and much of the genocide scholarship sees individual genocides in just this way. Mark Levene, for example, uses the language of an "acute malfunction of not just particular societies but of our global community writ large."[64] Horowitz is seemingly more acutely aware of the problems surrounding a definition of genocide claiming in a chapter titled, "Defining Genocide" that "a multidimensional definition of genocide, rather than a unilinear, moralistic definition painted in black and white, is the surest safeguard against impoverished analysis;"[65] but he then claims at the beginning of the next chapter that "genocide must be clearly distinguished from other forms of the destruction of human beings, such as natural disasters, random killings, warfare, and symbolic or cultural assaults."[66] Moshman, as discussed above, has given us good reason to avoid the prototypical approach.

There are, however, a number of additional risks in definitionally or methodologically limiting our vision, even if we adopt Moshman's formal approach of necessary and sufficient conditions. The first risk lies in hiding from view that which might well enrich and deepen our understanding of genocidal violence. We need to *see* and consider that which lies hidden in the immanent domain, that which lies hidden in plain sight.

A second danger in seeking and then being guided in our research by essentialist definitions of genocide is that essentialist definitions risk reification and stasis. We must seriously take into account that genocidal violence is dynamic and evolving. We may well need to describe events in the future as instances of genocidal violence that only bear a family resemblance to genocidal violence of the past and present. I would argue as of this writing the current situation in Burundi bears a striking family resemblance to the genocide in Rwanda. It would be a grave mistake, as was the case of the Rwandan genocide, to debate whether the current violence in Burundi satisfies a particular definition of genocide. It might be better to look and see the family resemblance to earlier instances of genocidal violence.

The recent scholarship on war is instructive in this regard. Following the attacks on the World Trade Center towers on 9/11, then Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, published a piece in

[63] This desire is reflected in Steven Pinker's book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence has Declined.* 2012. New York: Penguin. It might also explain why the book was so well received.

[64] Levene, Mark. 2005. *The Meaning of Genocide.* London: I.B. Tauris, 37.

[65] Horowitz, *Taking Lives*, 27.

[66] Ibid, 29.

The New York Times with the title, "A New Kind of War."[67] The new kind of war we are told, "will be a war like none other our nation has faced." Rumsfeld then frames his discussion in terms of disassociations between past wars and this new kind of war, and speculating as to what might be the case. "This war will not necessarily be one in which we pore over military targets and mass forces to seize those targets. Instead, military force will likely be one of many tools we use to stop individuals, groups and countries that engage in terrorism." Rumsfeld says of the coming war: "it is easier to describe what lies ahead by talking about what it is not rather than what it is." In Rumsfeld's text, dissimilarities far outnumber similarities and additional similarities and dissimilarities could be adumbrated. But rather than dismiss the war on terror as it later came to be called as no war at all, or not an instance of war because it fails the definitional test of what war is in essence, would, I think, be a mistake.

A third danger, one closely related to the second danger discussed above is clearly illustrated in the case of the Rwandan genocide, a genocide that according to the International Panel appointed by the Organization of African Unity was, as the title of their report indicates, a preventable genocide.[68] That report is unequivocal in its central claim that the genocide was preventable.

> An unforgivable tragedy for the Tutsi of Rwanda was that the international community failed to take a single step to halt the genocide once it began, even though everyone knew it was in progress. The first tragedy, however, was the one documented in this chapter. The interpretation of the countless individual incidents recorded is surely inescapable: There were a thousand early warnings that something appalling was about to occur in Rwanda. If not a genocide, it was at least a catastrophe of so great a magnitude that it should command international intervention. As we shall see, that intervention was utterly inadequate, largely owing to the political interests of the Americans and the French.[69]

Moreover, and as the report also establishes, the outside world including Belgian colonialism and the Catholic Church provided the very building blocks of the Rwandan genocide.

This is a danger raised by an infantry officer of the Canadian Armed Forces who worked as a personal staff officer to Major-General Romé Dallaire in Rwanda in 1993-1994. In a reflection published by the officer in 2006, he writes:

> On too many occasions, especially during the genocide in Rwanda and the [then] current genocide in Darfur, the organs of the international community have been far more focused on conducting some form of academic or legal debate over the use of the word "genocide" to describe these catastrophes than on focusing our attention and efforts toward actually doing something to stop the killing.[70]

As a witness to the events, Major Beardsley had no doubt that he was looking at and seeing genocide.

Finally, an essentialist definition of genocide risks becoming a Procrustean bed insofar as the definition does not allow us to see events as genocidal that do not conform to our preconceived definition of what constitutes genocide. Or, to extend the Procrustean metaphor a bit further, being guided by a clear and rigid definition of genocide raises the possibility that we (mis)shape our understanding of genocidal events to coalesce with the Platonic Form.

The various attempts to redefine genocide are not likely to be successful because the ways in which language users employ the term is multifarious and does not, and in fact cannot, I argued, be defined in terms of a common essence. "There is nothing identifiably in common for the state

[67] Rumsfeld, Donald H. 2001. "A New Kind of War." *New York Times,* 27 September.

[68] African Union, *Rwanda.*

[69] Ibid, *9, 16.*

[70] Beardsley, Brent. 2006. "The Endless Debate over the G Word." *Genocide Studies and Prevention* Vol. 1, 79.

of affairs for which we use a word," as we are reminded in the *Cambridge Lectures*.[71] Following Wittgenstein, using the prism of family resemblances to look at genocide means realizing that our use of the term is not fixed, and "there are many kinds of affinity" among our uses of the term; moreover it requires that we tolerate a degree of vagueness in our use of the term.

A Wittgensteinian Alternative: Genocide and Family Resemblances

I have laid stress on Wittgenstein's anti-Platonism to show problems with defining genocide, but I have yet to explore exactly how we might approach the concept of genocide through the Wittgensteinian prism of family resemblances.

First, and as part of the linguistic turn, we would do well to begin by substituting questions, as it were. Instead of asking: "What is genocide?" we might instead ask: "How is the term 'genocide' used?"[72] After we have asked the right question, the next task is to examine the various examples—and lots of them—of how the term is used—don't think but look!

We should spare no effort in cataloguing the various ways in which the word genocide is used and the all-too-numerous examples of the events and processes we label as genocides. But if we are to follow Wittgenstein and catalogue the uses of the term genocide—a formidable task indeed, and a task perhaps best left to lexicographers—we would not have accomplished enough. Surely we need to do more than collect and catalogue examples of language-use, which after all would be merely empirical and therefore of limited value if our endeavour is to understand. What, then, are we to do with our collection of examples?

The problem, and it is a considerable one, is that a description, however thorough, remains a description, although this is precisely where we begin to discover the criss-cross of patterns, the family resemblances. What is missing, or perhaps lost, is any normative dimension, any way of distinguishing between the correct and incorrect use of words. Surely in our catalogue of the uses of the term genocide we will want to claim that on many occasions the word is used correctly while at the same time and on many occasions the word is used incorrectly. But how do we distinguish the occasions of correct or incorrect uses of the word? Michael Luntley captures the heart of the problem succinctly: "If what you see is what you get, all you are going to get from an account of language use for which there is no essence is an account of how things seem. And that does not sound as if it is a philosophically interesting account of language use."[73] Can there be, in Wittgenstein's view, a way of distinguishing correct and incorrect use? The short answer is "yes."

What Wittgenstein is denying, among other things, is the existence of a standard that lies *outside* of how a word is used. That is the heart of his rejection of Platonism. As he says elsewhere: "I can characterize my standpoint no better than by saying that it is the antithetical standpoint to the one occupied by Socrates in the Platonic dialogues."[74] But this does not preclude the possibility that standards for the correct use of a term cannot be found *in the uses of the term*. Rather than despair over the denial of an external or transcendent standard for correct use, we should instead, claims Wittgenstein, look for the standard within our keen observations of how the term is used. The rule(s) are immanent, not transcendent. The problem then becomes one of making sense of rules that are immanent.

Luntley suggests that there might be two kinds of *hidden* in this regard.[75] While Wittgenstein denies a metaphysical realm behind the world of appearance, he nevertheless suggests a realm of the hidden within the world of appearance. In a provocative passage at *PI* §129 he writes:

> The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity (my emphasis). (One is unable to notice something—because it is always

[71] Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Lectures,* 96.

[72] Here my reading of Wittgenstein follows that of Glock: Glock, Hans-Johann. 2010. "Wittgenstein on Concepts." In *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: A Critical Guide.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 88-108.

[73] Luntley, Michael. 2003. *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Judgement.* Malden: Blackwell, 50.

[74] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 2003. *The Voices of Wittgenstein: the Vienna Circle.* Edited by Gordon Baker. Translated by Gordon Baker, Michael Markert, John Connolly, and Vasilis Politis. London: Routledge, 32/33.

[75] Luntley, *Wittgenstein,* 50.

> before one's eyes). The real foundations of their inquiry do not strike people at all. Unless that fact has at some time struck them. –And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful.

This passage reveals Wittgenstein's emphasis on *seeing*. Luntley is again helpful: "The aim, in removing obstacles to this hidden, is not, however, to achieve a statement of the hidden. The aim is to achieve a clear sight of this hidden—to see things aright....There is no theoretical explanation, there is only a coming to see things aright."[76]

A number of passages in *Philosophical Investigations* and elsewhere reflect Wittgenstein's emphasis on seeing, and seeing things aright. For example, at *PI* §130 he writes: "language-games stand there *as objects of comparison,* which through similarities and dissimilarities, are meant to throw light on features of our language." It is in this very activity of seeing things aright that I come to see the hidden patterns of correct and incorrect use of words. There are also passages in Wittgenstein that suggest the impossibility of giving a theoretical account of correct or incorrect use of terms: "If I have learned to carry out a particular activity in a particular room (putting the room in order, say) and I am master of this technique, it does not follow that I must be ready to describe the arrangement of the room; even if I should at once notice, and could also describe, any alteration in it."[77] Similarly: "It could very well be imagined that someone knows his way around a city perfectly, i.e. would confidently find the shortest way from anyplace in it to any other, and yet would be incompetent to draw a map of the city. That as soon as he tries, he produces nothing that is not completely wrong."[78]

If Wittgenstein is suggesting or claiming that one can know in the sense of seeing, but is nonetheless unable to explain, how does one communicate that which she knows without being able to explain what she knows?

To answer this question we need to recall Socrates' claim that in lieu of a definition, Euthyphro is only offering examples. For Wittgenstein, and consonant with his anti-Platonism, examples are precisely where one does begin. In trying to teach one what something is, rather than offer a definition in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, one instead shows.

From the criss-cross of family resemblances, the similarities and differences, we begin to see the normative patterns that enable us to possess a concept; the normative patterns that show us the correct and incorrect use of a word begin with the examples. In Luntley's language, the examples are the starting point, or the primitive. "To say that seeing the similarities between things is primitive is to say that the normative patterns of correct use of words emerge from the activity of seeing similarities....The patterns of correct use are not transcendent of actual use. They are immanent."[79] Then in order to show" someone what the concept of genocide is, instead of an explanation, we show by examples. Wittgenstein, in discussing games at *PI* §69, says this: "How would we explain to someone what a game is? I think we'd describe *games* to him, and we might add to the description: 'This *and similar things* are called games.'"[80] Analogously, we might say of a word like genocide, "Here are descriptions of genocides; these and similar things are called genocides."

Does the introduction of this *and similar things* makes this too vague, too inexact? Wittgenstein clearly thinks not. In the same paragraph he says, "and do we know anymore about ourselves? Is it just that we can't tell others exactly what a game is?—But this is not ignorance. We don't know the boundaries because none have been drawn. To repeat, we can draw a boundary—for a special purpose. Does it take this to make the concept usable? Not at all!"[81] Two points need to be made: one is explicit; the other is more implicit, but equally important. The first point is simply

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[76] Luntley, *Wittgenstein,* 51.

[77] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1981. *Zettel.* Edited by G.E.M Anscombe and G.H. von Wright. Translated by G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, §119.

[78] Ibid, §121.

[79] Luntley, *Wittgenstein,* 70.

[80] Wittgenstein, *Investigations,* §68.

[81] Drawing boundaries for prosecutorial purposes might be just such a case.

that Wittgenstein implores us to tolerate or even embrace a lack of boundaries, a vagueness in our use of concepts. Doing so does not make a concept unusable. Second is the suggestion that as language users we are who establish boundaries; we make the rules, not arbitrarily, but in our use of language.

To begin looking at genocide using the notion of family resemblances requires that we look and see how language users use the term "genocide." This requires casting a wide net. Lemkin and others use the term to characterize events as far back as the beginnings of human history. Others such as Colin Tatz use the term when discussing the treatment of Aborigines by the Australian government throughout most of the twentieth century, a genocide of assimilation involving relatively little direct killing. We might need to examine the transfer of millions of Germans the years immediately following World War II. As R.M. Douglas observes:

> The Genocide Convention...being drafted by the UN's Economic and Social Committee, assisted by a legal team, was watered down in response to U.S. pressure. Its first draft had defined "forced and systematic exile of individuals representing the culture of a group" as a form of genocide. The U.S. delegate strongly opposed this clause, pointing out that it "might be interpreted as embracing forced transfers of minority groups such as have already been carried out by members of the United Nations." The prohibition on expulsions was accordingly deleted from the draft Genocide Convention by a vote of 25 to 16, with four abstentions.[82]

Charny cites the bombing of Dresden: between 1942 and 1945, 131 German cities and villages were bombed by British and American forces resulting in somewhere between 500,000 and 600,000 deaths, the majority of whom were women, and another one-fifth of whom were children. As Mary Nolan notes, "No one disputes these facts. At issue are British intentions and German memories, and properly contextualized memories. Was the air war a legitimate military strategy, pursued perhaps to excess, but effective, legal, and moral nonetheless? Or did Britain deliberately target civilians to avenge London and Coventry and break civilian morale even when it was questionable whether the German war effort was negatively affected."[83] The deliberate targeting of hundreds of thousands of unarmed civilians might indeed count as genocidal. From a Wittgensteinian perspective we would also need to explore the links and resemblances among more conventional cases of genocide and the genocides associated with colonial expansion.[84] We would need to look at cases of iconoclasm such as the Taliban's attacks on the Buddhas of Bamiyan.[85] By the same token, attention would also need to be focused on the destruction of sacred sites of Islam perpetrated by Salafi extremists.

As a next step, and one based on our examination of those events or processes language users name genocides, we would, following Wittgenstein, begin to see patterns, a criss-cross of similarities, or family resemblances in our uses of the term.[86] At the same time we would—as historians do—recognize the uniqueness and individuality of each genocide. Normatively we would also begin to see the misuses of the term as determined by the rules established within the immanent domain of language users. The uses, and misuses, of language fall under that which is seen, and does not lend itself to theoretical explanation.[87] It is in *seeing* patterns of use that we at the same time see the normative dimension of use and decipher the patterns of correct and incorrect use.

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[82] Douglas, Ray M. 2012. *Orderly and humane: the Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 335.

[83] Nolan, Mary. 2005. "Air Wars, Memory War" *Central European History* Vol. 38, 8.

[84] Moses, A. Dirk and Daniel Stone, editors. 2013. *Colonialism and Genocide.* New York: Routledge.

[85] Steven Miller claims that the attacks on the two Buddhas "constitute nothing less than an instance of genocide—which turns upon political will as the will to completion", Miller, Steven. 2014. *War after Death: On Violence and its Limits.* New York: Fordham University Press, 31.

[86] This parallels Gerlach's claim, "Where many genocide scholars devote much energy to neatly distinguishing between different forms of violence, I am interested in the links between them." Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 464.

[87] This is a notoriously difficult and enigmatic part of the *Philosophical Investigations* and shows among other things how radical Wittgenstein's view is. A full exegesis of his text would take us beyond the scope of this paper.

This approach might well enhance our understanding by helping us—recalling an earlier cited passage from the *Philosophical Investigations*—to see "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: similarities in the large and in the small."[88] Rather than marginalizing some discourses of genocidal violence, a Wittgenstein-inspired approach would have us look at a diverse array of events that language users describe as genocides to see that criss-cross of similarities. This is, I think, what is beginning to happen in the field of comparative genocide studies. Feierstein's previously discussed book, *Genocide as Social Practice,* could be read as uncovering that pattern of similarities between the Nazi annihilation of European Jews and Argentina's military juntas. Feierstein's study could then be read, not as claiming to have somehow revealed the essence of genocide, but instead as showing us a criss-cross of similarities that we might see elsewhere, perhaps in the genocidal violence of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Similarly, instead of adopting the methodological isolation of genocide as an isolated and isolatable form of human destruction, one could instead, and contra Horowitz, look to war or cultural destruction to see patterns and similarities that might well enrich our understanding.

Recalling our earlier discussion of Donald Rumsfeld, we might look at the war on terror through a Wittgensteinian lens and look at the criss-crossing of patterns with other things or events we call war looking for the family resemblances between this war and other wars. And in that very examination of family resemblances we come to see more clearly the depth and complexity of this new kind of war.

So too in the case of genocide: we need to look and see how language-users use the term genocide and look closely at those violent events language users call genocide in order to see the criss-cross and patterns of those events and processes we call genocide. How perpetrators construct and frame targeted groups will vary considerably: in the case of the Armenian genocide political elites of the Ottoman Empire such as Mehmet Talât Pasha (mis)framed Armenians as armed combatants who committed treason; in Guatemala in the early 1980s genocidal violence was a way of countering *la subversión* of the indigenous Mayan population. By contrast, targeted groups in the case of the Cambodian genocide vary, although the various groups presented a challenge to Pol Pot's nationalist revival; as Ben Kieren has shown, these groups included Buddhist monks, ethnic minorities including the Vietnamese, Chinese, and Muslim Cham. But and at the same time Khmers themselves—the majority population—were also targeted.[89] Whereas the targeted group is often a minority population as was the case with the Tutsis in Rwanda, members of majority populations are not immune to genocidal violence. Similarly, while the focus of the Holocaust was on Jew and gypsies, the targeted group also included the handicapped; also included among the targeted groups were somewhere between 3 and 4 million Germans held at Dachau and other camps; Dachau was the first German camp and was intended—along with its satellite work camps—as a camp for Germans.

We might likewise be mindful of the great diversity of the weaponry or machinery of genocidal violence. In the case of the Shoah, great emphasis has been laid on the industrial scale of the killing with the use of Zyklon B at Auschwitz, and the use of gas vans at Chelmno. This contrasts with use of machetes and other farm implements in the case of Rwanda. Also in Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Rwanda rape became a prominent genocidal weapon .[90] I have elsewhere made the case that continuing and even escalating denial of the Armenian genocide by Turkish political elites and scholars, along with the destruction of Armenian public architecture, is a genocidal weapon.

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[88] Wittgenstein, *Investigations,* §66.

[89] Kiernan, Ben. 2008. *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979.* Third edition. New Haven: Yale University Press; Kiernan, Ben. 2008. *Genocide and Resistance in Southeast Asia: Documentation, Denial, and Justice in Cambodia and East Timor.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

[90] Stiglmayer, Alexandra, editor. 1993. *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina.* Translated by Marion Faber. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; Nowrojee, Binaifer. 1996. *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath.* Human Rights Watch/Africa, Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Project, Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme, Human Rights Watch. Available from http:/www.hrw.org/reports/1996/Rwanda.htm (accessed December 16, 2015).

Since intent and intent to destroy figure so centrally in our understanding of genocidal violence, the notion of family resemblances would allow us to move beyond the legalistic concerns of establishing or failing to establish intent and ask us to look carefully at the criss-cross of patterns of intention; in other words we would look at the similarities and dissimilarities of reasons perpetrators want to destroy a targeted group. The need to recognize a variety of genocidal purposes is recognized by Chalk and Jonassohn although their list of genocidal purposes could well be expanded with the lens of family resemblances.[91]

This brief discussion is by no means intended as any sort of comparative analysis of the genocides discussed herein; my purpose is to instead highlight certain key differences to serve as a reminder of a sometimes high degree of difference among individual genocides which in turn suggest that in looking forward we need to be open to the possibility of new horizons of genocidal violence.

Conclusion

A number of concerns and objections might we be brought against both my reading of the later Wittgenstein, as well as my argument that using Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances can help enrich our understanding of genocide. The former objection in part rests at least in part on the fact that the later writings are enigmatic and therefore subject to a range of interpretations; the latter objection is by no means ill-founded insofar as it raises new problems for genocide scholarship. To the first concern I would argue that my reading of Wittgenstein, more so than much of the commentary, focuses on the visual, the demand that we look and see; my emphasis on the visual is, I would argue, grounded in the text, and as I have argued, precisely what is illuminative about a Wittgenstian approach to genocide. A second and reasonable objection to the approach I have argued for is that we would risk an all-too-vague conception of genocide that would fail to sustain strong moral condemnation and effective political action. In response to the claim that it would undercut or weaken the grounds for moral condemnation, I would argue that moral condemnation does in no way require a strict and exclusionary definition of a concept. On the contrary, if we exclude by definition events or processes from our purview and subscribe to the view that genocide is, among other things, the worst of all crimes, we risk discounting the degree of moral condemnation that many events and processes demand. As I argued earlier, in a juridical context a reasonably precise definition is indicated if not required; such is not required for moral condemnation. Moreover, for purposes of understanding and attempting to lessen genocidal violence, we have only to benefit from casting a wider net. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, I would also argue that a notion of genocide understood in terms of family resemblances could likely expedite intervention, if not by nation-states bound by international law, certainly by NGOs and a host of organizations such as Genocide Watch that are committed to anticipating genocides in the future. Finally, it might be objected that a Wittgensteinian approach to genocide would do little if anything to counter the political uses and misuses of the term. On the one hand, as we learn from Foucault's lectures at the in Collège de France 1975-1976, he argues that "in the course of the eighteenth century...historical discourse eventually became a sort of discursive weapon that could be used by all the adversaries present within the political field.[92] Yet on the other hand, taking Foucault's claim to heart, we might well be able to *see* in the immanent domain the very rules that would help us to identify political misuses of the term.

We have good reasons not to want to see genocide. Reading the opening pages of Charlotte Delbo's *Days and Memory*, or Primo Levi's reflections on useless violence almost inevitably elicits a *frisson* of horror, as does the testimony of perpetrators, be they the words of Franz Stangl in his interviews with Gitta Sereny, or Jean Hatzfeld's interviews with perpetrators in Rwanda. So too with the reports by Fergal Keane or the photographs of James Nachtwey or Gilles Peress. Truly *seeing* genocide might be more than we can bear; it might amount to a horrifying look

[91] Chalk, Frank and Kurt Jonassohn. 1990. *History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

[92] Foucault, Michel. 1997. "Society Must be Defended." *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976.* Translated by David Macey. New York: Picador.

in the mirror. One way of not seeing genocidal violence is to hide it, to define it or frame it in such a way that some genocides are definitionally or methodologically dismissed and hidden. But look we must. Following Wittgenstein I have argued that we might well look for the family resemblances among those events and processes in order to discover the affinities [*Verwandschaften*] between and among them rather than insisting that genocidal events or processes have an essence. As hinted at earlier in this paper, I see work going on in the relatively new field of Genocide Studies as moving in that direction, but only partially. I have argued that Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances might help us to see that which we have reason to hide.

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Book Review: *Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in the Age of Spectacle*

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Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in the Age of Spectacle
Brad Evans & Henry Giroux
San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 2015
304 pp., US$17.95 (pbk)

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In 2011, Brad Evans, a political theorist now based at the University of Bristol in the UK, launched a web project called *Histories of Violence*.[1] It was designed to commemorate the attacks of September 11th, 2001 and to assess the development and legacy of the decade-long so called War on Terror that ensued. In the years since its launch, Evans has collaborated with intellectuals and artists from all over the world to produce an excellent resource for interpreting violence in the contemporary age. Most recently, the contributors to the web project have focussed on the phenomenon of what they call *disposable lives*. In Evans' words: "Mass violence is poorly understood if it simply refers to casualties on battlefields or continues to be framed through conventional notions of warfare. We need to interrogate the multiple ways in which entire populations are rendered disposable on a daily basis if we are to take seriously the meaning of global citizenship in the 21st Century."[2] It is in this spirit of interrogation that *Disposable Futures* is situated. Evans is here joined by the American-Canadian cultural critic Henry Giroux, who is well-known for his critical writings on education. It is no surprise, then, that the book, drawing on the writings of the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paolo Freire, should be so focussed on the transformative powers of critical pedagogy.

The book is prefaced with a consideration of the concept of disposability and the seductive power of violence as they appear in the writings of Primo Levi. Levi's testimonies, however, concern the 20th century experience of mass violence. The authors argue that the character of violence in our young century differs from that of its precursor. What Levi would not have anticipated, they argue, is the extent to which disposability has been "recast by the very regimes that claimed to defeat ideological fascism" (xii). Subsequently, for Evans and Giroux "there is no greater task today than to develop a critique of violence adequate to our deeply unjust, inequitable, and violent times" (3). These provocative statements are interesting for genocide studies scholars because they explicitly set out to decentre the 20th century in the history of violence. This century, which many have called the "century of genocide,"[3] constitutes the large bulk of genocide studies' empirical object. The book thus provokes a consideration of whether genocide, as a specific form of violence, might have changed in character too, and what that might mean for the practice of prevention. Steps have been made in this direction already—as shown by the special issue of the *International Journal of Human Rights* edited by Jürgen Zimmerer, dedicated to thinking about the possibilities for genocide in the context of rapid climate change and rising "environmental violence"[4]—but Evans and Giroux point to a number of different paths in which these steps might be made.

The authors present something of a whirlwind tour of the contemporary analysis of violence, drawing on a wide array of thinkers from Gorgio Agamben to Howard Zinn, and suffused with

[1] www.historiesofviolence.com

[2] http://www.historiesofviolence.com/#!project-overview/c184d

[3] Mario Baccianini, "A Century of Genocide," *Telos* 70 (1986): 154-161; Samuel Totten, William Parsons and Israel Charny, eds., *Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004); Eric Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[4] See Jürgen Zimmerer, "Climate Change, Environmental Violence and Genocide," *International Journal of Human Rights* 18, no. 3 (2011): 265-280.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.9.3.1383

cultural references from the novels of Dostoyevsky to David Simon's TV drama *The Wire*. It is a book brimming with ideas which are navigated restlessly and rapidly, in a style evocative of writers like Gilles Deleuze and Slavoj Žižek, both of which are cited as influences. It does, however, lack substantive empirical content, which is generally sacrificed for polemic and rhetoric. It is in equal measure brilliant and frustrating. I will return to these critiques at a later stage in this review.

The book is not intended as a contribution to genocide studies and it would be unfair to read it as such. Indeed, it is quite obvious that the authors would reject the disciplinisation inherent in something like genocide studies, and the association of violence with its most extreme manifestation, thereby detaching it from more everyday incarnations. However, there are a number of points raised in the book that can be used for the study of genocide, two of which I will now briefly discuss. These include 1) the relationship between aesthetics, representation and ethics as they pertain to genocide and 2) how some lives come to be rendered "disposable," and specifically how "disposability" increasingly constitutes the mode of structural violence in neoliberal societies.

Evans and Giroux identify culture as a site of simultaneously the *seduction* of violence, and of the *resistance* of violence. Drawing on figures like Guy Debord, Judith Butler and Susan Sontag, they point to how violence has been commoditized in our "consumer societies." Far from acting as a spur to preventative action, images of suffering and violence may actually be fetishized and the authors argue that we have come to "desire" them, which ultimately serves as legitimation of that violence and suffering. In their discussions of horror films such as the *Saw* franchise and video games like *The Last of Us*, the authors come close to the kinds of moralizing "moral panics" about the desensitizing effects of the representations of graphic violence; there is an untenable assumption that citizens in neoliberal societies all "consume" violence in the same way. However, there are some extremely illuminating sections here too, particularly in chapter 6 ("Fascinating Fascism Revisited") and especially in the discussion of the media techniques employed by ISIS in the last chapter. For genocide studies scholars, I contend, it raises the question of how to nurture something of an "ethical gaze" (e.g. 40-41; 64) in response to images and reports of genocidal violence. How ought images of and information about distant violence and suffering, the subject matter of genocide studies, be approached when bearing in mind the authors' warnings about the objectifying, reifying and voyeuristic potentials inherent in global communications technologies? Such a question chimes with recent proposals for an increased epistemological reflexivity in writings on critical genocide studies.

But artistic representation can also be a site of resistance. Artistic work can, and frequently does, stray into the future in a way that scholarly work cannot, even when geared towards the practice of prevention. Hannah Arendt, whose attempts to understand the violence of the 20th century are among the most influential and incisive reflections on that period, raised a conundrum which applies to studies of genocide today. The Nazi concentration camps, she argued,[5] not only demanded a rethinking of social science concepts, but threatened them entirely. The appearance of a new and unexpected phenomenon could not be understood within existing categories. The question Arendt raised was: how are we to understand the unprecedented? If it is true, as is suggested by Evans and Giroux (13), that the atrocious crimes of the 20th century were prefigured most vividly in the dystopian novels of Kafka, Orwell, and Huxley, how might contemporary dystopias point to tendencies within the present, such as Michel Houellebecq's *The Possibility of an Island* or Cormac McCarthy's *The Road.* Literature and film, for instance, can pull out certain tendencies, potentially genocidal, in the present and reflect them back to us from an imagined future. I think that this element of the book can point to ways in which genocide studies would benefit from a consideration of cultural texts, an area that has seemingly been under explored hitherto.

The book can be read as an extended polemic against the vagaries of neoliberalism. As can often be the case with this kind of writing, the authors at times run the risk of anthropomorphising neoliberalism and using the concept too liberally and unspecifically. However, more specific and nuanced definitions do emerge as the book develops. For instance, in chapter 4 ("A Promise of

[5] Hannah Arendt, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," *Jewish Social Studies* 12, no.1 (1950): 49-64.

Violence"), they specify neoliberalism as: "much more than a system of economic organization and reasoning. It makes overt political, ethical, moral, and cultural claims to authenticate forms of individual subjectivity premised on the purity of profit maximization rationales, along with claims to rightful stewardship over the global domain and its resources as no less than a matter of security, peace, and prosperity. From this perspective, neoliberalism has always been about governance, not merely about the virtues of a self-regulating invisible hand" (84). This is the line more or less put forward by Michel Foucault in his lectures on biopolitics at the College de France.[6] From this position, the authors draw on Foucault's notion of biopolitics to elucidate the links between social death (here conceptualised as "disposability") and physical killing, how the former is constitutive of the latter, but also operates autonomously from killing (e.g. 92). These discussions will be of great interest to those interested in structural violence and its relationship to genocide. Again chiming with emergent works in critical genocide studies, and reminiscent of the work of Nancy Scheper-Hughes and the stage-models of "the genocidal process" developed by Raul Hillberg and Gregory Stanton, the book is notable for problematizing all-too-common assumptions about the "distance" of Western societies from processes and logics of violence. They draw on a number of examples of how certain groups of people are rendered disposable through the means of "slow forms of violence" (153), even raising the spectre of genocide when talking about the contemporary examples of state violence and repression in Ferguson, Missouri (129; 137-138). Though such statements are extremely provocative, the engagement with such contemporary events gives the book an urgency and up-to-datedness that is rarely seen in scholarly work.

The tone and style adopted throughout the work is unabashedly – at times, excessively – rhetorical. There are plenty of epochal declarations, demonstrated in statements like "sociality has been reduced to an economic battleground" (110), and there is throughout an insistence that we are living in a time of unregulated global flows when rootedness in time and space matters less and less (2). The book does not have much to say about violence that is not enacted in the centres of neoliberalism or through these global economic forces, such as the ongoing conflicts in the Central African Republic or South Sudan. The book is also marked by a profound pessimism, which is not offset by a slightly vague faith in social movements or in critical pedagogy. They argue that "one of the real casualties of the post-9-11 terror wars has been the idea that we can transform the world for the better" (75). Surely, those working towards the goal of genocide prevention, or those combatting racism in places like Ferguson, indeed even Evans and Giroux themselves in writing this book, are acting with the belief that the world can be transformed for the better? Moreover, anybody looking for empirical documentation of some of the processes described and critiqued by the authors are better off looking elsewhere, for instance in Saskia Sassen's excellent recent book *Expulsions*.[7]

As aforementioned, it would be unfair to judge this book on the basis of its contribution to genocide studies alone. However, the book will be both interesting and useful to many genocide studies scholars, particularly those intrigued by structural violence, those interested in how we might see genocide appear in new forms in the future and how cultural texts might be utilised in this endeavour, or those of the so-called critical genocide studies turn who have questioned the problematic assumptions of the comfortable distance of Western scholars from those processes that they claim to study objectively. This is the book's greatest strength; that it will be many things to many different people. What it lacks in empirical rigour, it makes up for in the heuristic value of the sheer breadth of ideas presented.

[6] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collége de France, 1978-1979* (New York, NY: Picador, 2010).

[7] Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

Book Review: *Final Solutions: Human Nature, Capitalism and Genocide*

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Final Solutions: Human Nature, Capitalism and Genocide
Sabby Sagall
London: Pluto Press, 2013
320 pp., US$35 (pbk), US$110 (hbk)

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Introduction

Because genocide studies came to prominence in the 1990s, it has been argued,[1] it developed within the particular theoretical confines of the time and missed earlier turns in the humanities and social sciences such as those associated with Marxism, feminism or post-structuralism. Sabby Sagall's *Final Solutions* is an ambitious attempt at rectifying the omission of the Marxist theoretical programme in the analysis of genocide. In particular, he seeks to demonstrate the significance and value of the marriage of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud associated with the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, better known as the Frankfurt School. This body of work, Sagall attempts to demonstrate, possesses a great deal of potential in terms of its capacity to shed light on the interrelationship between the objective-historical and subjective-psychological factors of collective violence. It is an ambitious book that, whilst possessing shortcomings, is a welcome addition to the literature on genocide.

Sagall's point of departure is that "only by organically linking elements from history, social theory, economics and psychology" (3) can we come to an understanding of genocide. The theoretical perspective most suitable for this task, the author argues, is Marxism, particularly its synthesis with psychoanalysis. To this end, he makes use of the valuable resources offered by Marx and Freud, as well as thinkers like Wilhelm Reich, and Frankfurt School intellectuals such as Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. This is a welcome development because, as far as representations in genocide studies go, Adorno and Horkheimer and their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* has tended to comprise the sole inclusion of Frankfurt School thinkers into central debates in the study of genocide, particularly those regarding the relationship between genocide and modernity. In the work of Reich and Fromm, as the author augurs, are found very useful tools which can be put to use in order to illuminate how socio-economic structures and processes, funnelled through the micro-social unit of the family, embed themselves in the psyche of individuals. Sagall also incorporates the analyses of a "second generation" of psychoanalytic Marxists such as Reuben Osborn, Joel Kovel and Eugene Wolfenstein (to name a few), as well as post-Freudian psychoanalysts like Melanie Klein.

The book is split into two parts of four chapters each. The first outlines the theoretical framework of the study over four chapters. Firstly, under the heading "Why do People Kill People?" Sagall reviews a number of interpretations of the macro features of genocide in different disciplines and identifies their strengths and weaknesses. He then goes on to discuss representatives of the micro-analysis of genocide under the title "Killers on the Couch." These first two chapters set up Sagall's own contribution, borne of a dissatisfaction with those who "affirm that destructiveness is an ineradicable part of human nature as against those who seek its roots in social conditions" (68).

In the third chapter, "What Makes Killers Tick?" the author lays out his own approach, introducing Erich Fromm's notion of "social character," predominantly reproduced in the family unit, which operates as a mediating link between the poles of social structure and individual agency. Collectivities are characterised as possessing a "social character" which can sometimes

[1] Martin Shaw, *Genocide and International Relations: Changing Patterns in the Transitions of the Late Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 26.

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contain a predisposition for genocidal aggression. However, this predisposition is activated only in certain precipitating circumstances, particularly in humiliating military defeats and social and economic crises. This is a laudable move, and Sagall draws on a considerable breadth of thinkers and concepts to good effect. However, bold claims like "to my knowledge, no work attempting to link the objective and the subjective reasons for genocide has been done since the 1970s" (7) seem over pronounced. One figure who is not mentioned in this equation is the sociologist Norbert Elias, whose systematic theory of civilizing and decivilizing processes (particularly in his writings on Germany), is evoked by Sagall's desire to link the historical and psychological levels of genocide but is not engaged.[2]

In the fourth chapter, the final in the expository section of the thesis, Sagall discusses the notion of "Killing Things." Under capitalism, human beings become reified and appear as objects "perceived and defined in terms of their exchange-value, their price or cost, not their usefulness or intrinsic value as individual persons or objects, that is, their use value" (95). Thus, genocide is a killing of dehumanised "things" rather than people. Of the opening chapters, although intriguing, this is the least developed in terms of how it is later explored in the case studies.

The second part of the book constitutes a comparative study of four cases of genocide against which to test the framework; the Native American genocide, the Armenian genocide, the Nazi Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide. These cases are well put together, if a little loosely organized. In the case of the Native American genocide, Sagall takes care to differentiate the experience of the native populations of the Americas in their contact with social groups from Europe, possessing distinct "social characters," rather than generalising them both under a singular European coloniser (124). On the Armenian Genocide, Sagall documents how political, social and military disintegration, bought forth by varying crises, fostered violent behaviour among Young Turks: "As their inner world became more and more threatening they dealt with it by developing a social character that combined two main features: a hoarding mode of assimilation as they struggled to hang on to the glories of the Ottoman past; and a mode of relatedness that became increasingly authoritarian and destructive, brimming over with narcissistic rage, the obverse of their grandiose sense of self" (182). In the chapter on the Nazi Genocide, the author situates his own argument in relation to the longstanding intentionalist-functionalist debate in Holocaust scholarship. Following Michael Mann's idea that genocide normally constitutes a sort of "plan C," Sagall demonstrates how the Nazi genocide moved through successive phases of "problem-solving." That is, genocidal intent emerged in the context of shifting material circumstances and contingencies, each aggravating a predisposing "authoritarian social character." He finally turns his attention to Rwanda, concluding that "the Hutus were, arguably, people with powerful and rigid super-egos, unstable ids, and weak egos. However, in the orgy of killing, the super-ego transmitted the order to kill Tutsis, prompting the id to jettison its 'normal' everyday life drive and morph into its destructive self" (246).

Though in many ways an effective exploration of the cases aided by the theoretical framework developed in the first section, this part of the book nevertheless possesses shortcomings. Firstly, like the first section, it contains sections that seem digressive (for instance, the descriptive tracts on the Quakers in the chapter on genocide in the Americas and on the Madagascar plan in the chapter on the Nazi genocide). The case study struggles at times to reconcile the tension between historical description and theoretical cogency that is characteristic of this sort of ambitious empirically-informed conceptual work. Sagall also affords too much coherence and corporeality to social groups, making large generalisations on the basis of their purported social character. This is an ethical and representational issue as much as an empirical one. For instance, as Lee Ann Fujii has demonstrated,[3] although tens of thousands of Rwandan Hutu participated in the 1994 genocide, many more did not kill. A further problem with this section is that it does not sufficiently take into account the transformations in global capitalism over the duration of his case studies, from its expansion into the New World from the 15th century to the imposition of IMF structural adjustment programmes in Rwanda towards the end of the 20th.

[2] Elias, Norbert Elias, *Studies on the Germans: Collected Works of Norbert Elias* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013).

[3] Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbours: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

In general, Sagall provides a persuasive argument that navigates the pitfalls of "sociological reductionism," that is affording an over-determining capacity to social structures and processes whilst downplaying how "external, material conditions become translated into the psyche of an individual" (5), as well as of "psychological reductionism," that is the "divorce of history from psychology … reducing historical phenomena to the psychology of the protagonists and, conversely, failing to locate their individual psychology within the wider society and its politics" (6). Psychoanalysis provides a way of exploring the "irrational" dimension of genocide, that which cannot be adequately addressed by recourse to economic or political explanations.

The distinction between rational and irrational motives for genocide is the most contentious area of the work. As Sagall defines it: "One can … distinguish between, on the one hand, economic and political genocides, which do have a 'rational' or utilitarian basis, and, on the other, those that have little or no instrumental explanation, and can therefore be deemed 'irrational,' explicable if not only, then largely, in psychological terms" (9). Though Sagall returns to this distinction at other points in the work, it is not sufficiently elucidated. Firstly, in addition to the moot question of whether "rationality" can be disentangled from its normative connotations (thus running the risk of rendering some genocides more understandable, even acceptable, than others), those so-called "rational" modern atrocities identified are those most uneasily situated historically in relation to communism, such as those in Cambodia and the Soviet Union.

There is also a sense in which the distinction of the terms "rational" and "irrational" would have been better developed in dialogue with works in genocide studies that explicitly address notions of rationality. Jacques Sémelin's notion of "delusional rationality" is unacknowledged,[4] and the idea of the dark potentiality of "instrumental rationality" which permeates Zygmunt Bauman's analysis in Modernity and the Holocaust is not satisfactorily broached. Given the significance Sagall attributes to rationality, it is surprising that the book omits a consideration of Max Weber's influence on the Frankfurt School, a figure who might be said to be comparable in influence to that of Marx and Freud, particularly his ideas on the irrationality of processes of modern rationalization. This is an idea that pervades Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment, a book that strangely does not get much of a hearing in a book so influenced by the Frankfurt School.

Nevertheless, overall the book is a welcome contribution to genocide studies. It will be particularly useful for those readers who are interested in recent debates in genocide studies concerning the relationship between structural violence and genocide. Even taking into account its flaws, Sagall's study should be applauded for its attempt to link the violence of economic systems to the brute physical violence of genocide in a non-reductionist way.

[4] Jacques Sémelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009).

Book Review: *The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Understanding Risk and Resilience*

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The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Understanding Risk and Resilience
Stephen McLoughlin
New York: Routledge, 2014
188pp., US$145 (hbk)

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The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities opens with a clear logic of inquiry: why do some situations that exhibit the "root causes" of mass atrocities fail to culminate in carnage? Refining the book's trajectory further, what are the local and national sources of resilience that mitigate the risk of genocide? The first two chapters review the "root causes" of mass atrocities, and traces the history of prevention in the post-Second World War epoch. Two major conceptual limitations of structural prevention as it is presently understood in the literature come to the fore. First, despite the "root causes" of violence being considered predominantly local in nature, research on atrocity prevention emphasizes the role of international actors. This is not to dismiss the importance of international actors; rather, it is to illustrate that concentrating on external actors largely dismisses the risk-management mechanisms already being taken, or *can be taken,* by domestic actors. According to McLoughlin, the conceptual jump from "local problems" to "international solutions" common in the literature "accentuates the culture of external diagnosis and troubleshooting, and gives preventive action a paternalistic character" (24).

Second, existing approaches to structural prevention champion isolating and ameliorating the "root causes" of violence: "the 'cure' for genocide lies in diagnosing its causes" (43). McLoughlin states that this wrongly suggests a linear causal inevitability between risk factors and the onset of mass systematic violence. After all, "the perpetration of mass atrocities is rare – the exception rather than the norm" (25). McLoughlin identifies that these "root causes" discussed in the literature do not *instigate* carnages, but that carnages rarely occur in their absence. Therefore, although "root causes" are found to "create the conditions that are *conducive* to atrocities, these preconditions are not sufficient in and of themselves to directly cause such episodes of violence" (emphasis added, 25). Eschewing mere "external diagnosis and prognosis" (48), McLoughlin advocates that structural prevention should also encompass domestic policies and factors that promote stability and foster resilience. He thus turns to psychology, ecology, systems theory, and disaster management to chart risk factors, sources of resilience, and the "highly complex and deeply contextual" (48) dynamic of the two, as shown in Table 3.1 (51). This framework is then applied to Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, and Zanzibar, all of which have remained immune to atrocities, notwithstanding factors that heighten the likelihood of genocide.

The context of McLoughlin's book is a scholarly reflection of existing approaches to genocide and mass atrocity prevention. 2015 marks the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) at Ten: a decade on from the unanimous adoption of RtoP (with refinement) by member states of the United Nations at the 2005 World Summit. The first and foremost clause of RtoP stresses each individual state as bearing the *primary* responsibility to protect populations against mass atrocities. However, much of the ongoing debates in the literature have been preoccupied with the *residual* responsibility to discharge this duty: that is, with the responsibility of the international community to intervene if a government is manifestly failing to protect their citizens. Existing scholarly discourses regarding RtoP have thus been qualified by asking: who is to discharge this residual responsibility vis-à-vis the ambiguously defined "international community"? How is this duty to be discharged? Is RtoP a *moral* imperative that must be discharged by the "international community," failing a legal UN Security Council resolution? These questions are fundamental to the furtherance of RtoP. Yet,

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Table 3.1 Framework for understanding the prevention of mass atrocities

Risk factors of mass atrocities	*Factors that mitigate the risk of mass atrocities*
Social divisions	*Social cohesion*
1 Religious, ethnic division	1 Religious, ethnic cohesion
2 Social, economic or political	2 Social, economic and political inclusion
3 History of genocide and/or mass atrocities	*Good governance*
4 Human rights violations	3 Strong rule of law
Weak or abusive regime	4 A transparent and functioning democratic system
5 Limited rule of law	5 Constraints on the power of the chief executive
6 Limited democracy	*Economic strength*
Economic weakness	6 Trade openness
7 Poverty and economic stagnation	7 Equality of economic opportunity
8 Inequality of wealth and opportunities	8 Sustained economic growth
9 Low economic interdependence	

Figure 1.

comparatively little attention has been given to how the primary bearers of responsibility – *local and national political entities of individual states* – are to fulfill this duty. McLoughlin's book is motivated by this prevailing tendency in the literature. His contribution constitutes an instrumental shift in existing scholarly trends by reorienting the focus of prevention back toward the practices and policies of local and national actors. In other words, this book departs from the current climate of scholarly debate that concentrates on the "international community," and focuses attention to what processes individual states, as the foremost bearers of responsibility, can implement to avert mass atrocities. Such an academic departure is well timed to the current revisionary lens being applied to structural prevention and RtoP at Ten.

McLoughlin presents a genuine review of the proposed framework in light of each case study. In doing so, the reader is provided with a more sophisticated analysis, wherein McLoughlin admits there were processes "not explicitly identified in the framework [originally] deployed" (118) that assisted local and national actors in achieving greater prosperity, diversity and inclusion. Following this review, McLoughlin realizes the importance of charismatic, inaugural leaders espousing inclusive ideologies, and – more peripherally – smooth transitions toward independence coupled with cordial relations with British colonizers as factors that mitigate risk and foster resilience. This scrutiny, in turn, points to McLoughlin's transparency regarding method and argument, reaffirming that the framework is, far from being a final product, an avenue for continuous development. Merit is thus found in the soundness of his methodological approach, meticulous synthesis and commentary of existing notions of structural prevention, and exhaustive research into states that, due to "the lack of interest in the causes of peace in academic research" (165), have received fairly little coverage. *The Structural Prevention* is clear and coherent, guiding the reader through McLoughlin's train of logic and argument.

Unfortunately, there are a number of limitations that slightly weaken the overall conviction of *The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities.* Firstly, McLoughlin leaves readers wanting further clarification regarding the complex dynamic between risk and resilience: how many processes that stimulate resilience and stability are needed to offset risk? Are some resilience factors more salient than others; are some risk factors more perilous than others? What conditions need to be present for populations to be receptive to leaders with inclusionary ideologies? Greater confidence could have been afforded to the framework had such questions been acknowledged and interrogated. Secondly, McLoughlin's framework would have benefited from an analysis of case studies outside of new-born, post-colonial African states. The cases investigated have commonalities that unveiled additional factors for prevention, as discussed previously. However, these factors were specific to

backdrop of African struggles for independence, to states where "the process of decolonization [were] characterized by amicable relations with British colonial administrators" (158), and to states with *inaugural* leaders in a post-colonial era. An analysis of dissimilar, non-African cases would have strengthened the framework's universal applicability, and perhaps yielded different, auxiliary processes that encourage resilience. Thirdly, McLoughlin identifies that the conditions that foster stability were often the same as, or were little distinct from, those that *heightened* risk or created negative consequences. That is, "the relationship between risk and resilience is not always a matter of distinct risk factors and mitigating factors" (93). Speaking of Botswana, "the incorporation of eight major chieftaincies into the House of Chiefs fostered national unity, but also marginalized the non-Tswana tribal groups. This exclusion further entrenched ethnic division in the country" (93). Similarly, Kaunda's reordering of key positions in the Zambian government and public sector prevented ethnic division, however it also increased "presidential powers, to the extent that [Kaunda] banned opposition parties and rendered parliament impotent... As a result, the public services…became severely hampered in the 1980s, provoking protests and riots by the decade's end" (118). While this observation illuminates the conceptual complexity inherent in the relationship between risk and resilience, it also points to practical dilemmas for political actors in terms of designing and implementing preventative policies. How are policy makers to know which resilience factors to augment, if each can also return intensified risk? McLoughlin falls short of acknowledging the *practical* difficulties that arise from this observation, leading the reader to conclude that each resilience factor is a deeply contextual, double-edged sword to be installed with caution and assiduous supervision.

This book is intended for students, scholars, and policy makers working toward effective genocide prevention strategies. Indeed, knowledge and diagnosis of early warning signs is paramount to the prevention of mass carnage. However, as McLoughlin points out, prevention literature that stresses only early warning and the role of international actors ultimately neglects the local and national processes that mitigate risk and foster stability. Current approaches to prevention therefore fall short of realising valuable policies of resilience that have successfully circumvented genocide in the past. McLoughlin's volume is envisioned for scholars and political actors, with the aim of extending the "prevention paradox" to include not just what goes *wrong* (identifying and responding to root causes/risk factors/early warnings of mass atrocities), but also what goes *right* (factors that mitigate risk, canvasses avenues of resilience, and encourages stability). In short, McLoughlin's *The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities* inaugurates a fresh, albeit nascent, approach to genocide prevention—one that is an important timely read for all those engaged, practically or theoretically, in peace and conflict studies.

Book Review: *Genocide as Social Practice: Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and Argentina's Military Juntas*

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Genocide as Social Practice: Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and Argentina's Military Juntas
(Translated by Douglas Andrew Town)
Daniel Feierstein
Rutgers University Press, 2014
260 pp., US$ 29.95 (pbk)

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In this important new book, Daniel Feierstein presents a sociological reinterpretation of genocide based on the Argentine experience under the military junta. The argument reopens three key issues in the understanding of the phenomenon, which I evaluate in turn below: the general definition of genocide; the idea of reorganizing genocide; and the understanding of the Argentine case.

The Definition of Genocide

Feierstein shares with me a dissatisfaction with the international legal definition, not least on the grounds of its notorious exclusion of political groups from the scope of the crime. He frames this, cogently, in terms of discrimination, as a failure to apply the prohibition of group destruction equally to political as to other types of group: "defining genocide in terms of the characteristics of the victims has no precedent in modern criminal law and clearly damages the principle of equality before the law" (25).

Also for Feierstein, the legal definition is excessively broad, so that it encompasses "the annihilation of population masses by the Ancient Greeks, Romans or Mongols" and misses the specific character of modern genocide. For him this has two key features. First, genocide is "the implementation of a massive and systematic plan intended to destroy all or part of a human group as such" (13). A "genocidal social practice" is a specific "mechanism" or "distinctive form of social engineering" used by modern regimes:

> a technology of power—a way of managing people as a group—that aims (i) to destroy social relationships based on autonomy and cooperation by annihilating a significant part of the population (significant in terms of either numbers or practices), and (ii) to use the terror of annihilation to establish new models of identity and social relationships among the survivors (14).

Second, genocide is not simply a moment of implementation, but a longer-term process that "starts long before and ends long after the actual physical annihilation of the victims" (12): "[i]t is organization, training, practice, legitimation and consensus that distinguish genocide as a social practice from other more spontaneous or less intentional acts of killing and mass destruction" (14).

Moreover, "modern genocides have been a deliberate attempt to change the identity of the survivors by modifying relationships within a given society" (12). We can understand what Feierstein means by considering his critique of Holocaust historiography:

> In focusing on the death camps in which Jewish and Roma communities were exterminated between 1942 and 1945, historians have tended to downplay the importance of the concentration camp system. And yet the first camps were opened almost as soon as the Nazis came to power in 1933 and remained a part of everyday life in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe until the collapse of the regime in 1945. There has been no adequate account so far

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> of the role played by concentration camps as stepping stones to genocide or the range of victims imprisoned or murdered in them during the "reorganization" of German society and the Reich's military expansion eastward (6).

This approach has some attractive features. It moves the definition of genocide away from a narrow emphasis on mass killing, which is only one of many means through which groups are destroyed but which for many writers has become the only means that counts. It recognises that genocide involves not only the 'perpetrators'' attacks on the 'victims' but is also embedded in, and has implications for, wider power relations. And its emphasis on longer-term processes, exemplified in the reference back to the earlier stages of Nazi rule, is an important pointer to the need to connect moments of annihilation with preceding phases of discrimination and violence.

Yet the approach also has its problems. In specifying genocide itself as "systematic planning," "social engineering" and a "technology of power" aimed at establishing new modes of power over the survivors, Feierstein comes too close to identifying genocide in general with the specific historical variant which he calls "reorganising genocide." Genocide was proposed by Raphael Lemkin to describe a general class of actions, defined by their destructive aims towards population groups, and rightly criminalized in this vein. Although Lemkin characterized the Nazi genocide as a multi-method, coordinated attack on a variety of populations, the core of his concept is deliberate destruction. In other circumstances this can take different forms from the systematic social engineering of the Nazis. Lemkin recognised this variety in his manuscripts on colonial genocides. Leo Kuper more radically emphasised the wide range of genocide with his seminal idea of the genocidal massacre which is so valuable in analysing the messier, spasmodic but still organised destruction of populations widespread in twenty-first century world politics.

Reorganising Genocide and Nazism

Feierstein's "reorganizing" concept reminds us that the destruction of specific groups within a society is often part of a project to reorganise the society as a whole. He presents this idea as a specific type of genocide, but underlying it is a point of theoretical interest for all genocide: whether part of a reorganising project or not, the destruction of part of a society generally changes social relations in a profound way. It is difficult to believe that perpetrators are ever unaware of this dimension, so that we can always ask, what kind of society are they trying to achieve? Yet clearly there is much variation in the degree of formalisation into a defined project and in the way it is conceptualised. Colonial settlers who wished to create racially pure, or at least hierarchical, societies had different kinds of project from the ambitious social engineering which fascist and Stalinist regimes envisaged. The projects of loose coalitions of violent actors in today's post-colonial world may be relatively inchoate compared to the cases that Feierstein considers "reorganising genocides." The "reorganizing" concept makes sense if it designates a variant in which explicit and formalised social reorganisation is the driver of genocide.

Nazi Germany is Feierstein's template for this type. I agree with his proposal to trace Nazi genocide back to 1933, not just because Hitler already had a project to reorganise society, but because his destruction of the labour movement and left parties, his early attacks on the Jews and the establishment of the camp system prefigured the more openly genocidal policies adopted from 1938-9 onwards (not only after 1941-2). The comparison of Argentina with Germany is suggestive, but the differences of context are much more substantial than Feierstein acknowledges. The Nazis were establishing a continental empire and enslaving tens of millions in the midst of a brutal and eventually desperate total war, while the Argentinian military were "reorganizing" a single nation-state in the relatively stable international context of the Cold War.

Moreover Feierstein's view of the Nazi genocide as a "reorganizing" process that began with the concentration camps ascribes too much coherence to Nazi policies which mutated from national reorganisation into aggressive war. It was in the latter context that Nazi genocide escalated: from the mass murder of the German disabled, the deportations of Western Poles and the ghettoisation of Polish Jews in late 1939, through the mass shootings of Communists as well as Jews during the 1941 invasion of the USSR and the starving and freezing to death of Soviet prisoners of war in 1941-2, to the extermination of the Jews and Roma of a whole continent in the camps in the last years of the

war. To view all of this as "systematic planning" and "social engineering" defies today's historical consensus, according to which Nazi policy escalated situationally in response to the opportunities and challenges that the war created. Hitler and the Nazi elite had grandiose schemes for their new racial empire, like the Generalplan Ost, but Nazi genocide was not the implementation of a preconceived plan.

The Argentine Case

Feierstein acknowledges that his choice of cases to compare is personally driven: "the connection between these events is neither direct nor obvious," but "to some extent 'contrived' in order to see what we can learn about the way genocide constructs, destroys and reconstructs the social fabric" (85). It seems likely too that there is a political dimension to the choice, since the Holocaust is the virtually uncontested standard of modern genocide, and the desire to see the Argentinian violence fully recognised in the genocide frame is an understandable background to this book. Connecting the Argentine case to the Holocaust is a politically obvious way of making the genocide argument. As Feierstein says of Vahakn Dadrian, who "has argued in several works that it is both possible and desirable to compare the genocide of the Armenian and Jewish peoples. Even though he does not say so explicitly, his goals are as much political as academic" (3).

Yet this strategy is less coherent theoretically than politically. I find the chapter in which Feierstein matches the Argentine events to the conflicting definitions that have been proposed for genocide less illuminating than his review of the Argentinian literature. As he says,

> That the Argentine military were clear about their goals from the outset can be seen in the name they gave to their new regime: the "Process of National Reorganisation." So it was that in the Republic of Argentina, an already existing nation-state that had been built – like most nation-states – on genocide, the de facto government of the military dictatorship proposed to "re-found" the state on a new social, political and cultural basis. The tool chosen to carry out this reorganization of society was the concentration camp (50).

A key issue is whether the military's campaign was a dirty war, or whether the language of war masked a genocidal practice. Feierstein traces the origins of the project to 1974, and a work by Brigadier General Acdel Vilas, the head of Operativo Independencia (Operation Independence):

> This was a military campaign to destroy the People's Revolutionary Army (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo or ERP), a Trotskyist guerrilla group which, by the end of 1974, had seized just over a third of the mountainous northwestern province of Tucumán in an attempt to copy the Cuban revolution. Operativo Independencia … became a testing ground for the repressive methods implemented during the military dictatorship a year later (132).

In Vilas' mind, this reflection justified the need for clandestine operations in Dirty War that required – in his own words – a very different army from the traditional one – and thus, different values, different morality, another way to carrying out social practices. It meant replacing a predominantly military social practice – war – with an eminently political one – the destruction of social relations in the civilian population or … genocide.

However, the military origins of the crisis have given rise, in Feierstein's view, to two erroneous perspectives: the "theory of the two demons," according to which the extreme left militants are equally responsible with the military, and the distinction between innocent civilian victims and armed militants who implicitly merited the army's repression. The latter leads to:

> the unjustified assumption that the guerrillas died fighting while the victims – that is, those people who were taken to detention centers – were all non-combatants, irrespective of their political affiliation or relationship with the armed struggle. In fact, the guerrillas were just as much victims as those people who had no relationship whatsoever to armed or political organizations (141).

Feierstein cites various reasons given in the literature for rejecting the 'war' perspective, for example that there was no revolutionary army, that the revolutionaries controlled no territory, and that the society as a whole was not at war. However, the origins of the conflict in the ERP's control of parts of Tucuman suggests that we cannot dismiss the 'war' perspective. War and genocide are hardly mutually exclusive, and a context of war often helps explain why political conflict radicalizes to genocidal solutions. A failed attempt to ignite a civil war can be as politically consequential as a successful one. The Process of National Reorganization did not simply spring from the generals' minds with no context.

Likewise, Feierstein is concerned to reject the legitimation of the killing of armed militants. To the limited extent to which there was an armed struggle, and that militants were killed as a result of combat, clearly these deaths cannot be accounted genocide. However, I take Feierstein's point to be that most militants as well as non-militants were killed and abused outside the military context. Since the original armed conflict had given way to a genocidal process, we should see their killing as part of this. This argument is valid, but he does not deal with the obvious issue that in a sense armed opposition can be said to have helped, albeit in this case unknowingly, to provoke the military genocide. This argument, which has been raised (especially by Alan Kuperman) in relation to Rwanda and Kosovo, is surely relevant here, yet does not mean that one regards the perpetrators and victims symmetrically.

Which Group is Being Destroyed in the Argentine Genocide?

The most striking and also most problematic feature of Feierstein's account is the way he ultimately argues for the genocidal character of the Argentine events. In my view, his account risks confusing the object of genocide with its policy context, because of an unusual conceptual move that seems to derive from the political motive of squaring the case with the international legal criteria for genocide.

Feierstein's reconceptualisation of genocide, and specifically concepts of "genocidal practice" and "reorganising genocide," seem to rest on his adoption of a particular legal argument made in the 1999 indictment by the Spanish prosecuting magistrate, Baltasar Garzón, of 98 Argentine military for crimes of "terrorism and genocide" under the dictatorship. For Feierstein, Garzón's key argument is that the term 'national group' is appropriate to classify the victims in Argentina. This, Feierstein writes, "is based on the fact that the perpetrators sought to destroy structures of social relationships within the state, in order to substantially alter the life of the whole. This is in line with Article 2 of the 1948 Convention …, which defines genocide as 'intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national (…) group.' The Argentine national group has been annihilated 'in part,' substantially altering social relationships across the nation" (19).

Garzón's was an understandable legal tactic to catch the military perpetrators within an inadequate legal framework which recognizes national, but not political, groups as targets of genocide. Clearly all members of Argentine society can be considered members of the Argentine national 'group', in the rather arcane language of genocide law, but this does not make this a case of genocide in a coherent legal, let alone a sociological, sense. For clearly assorted leftists, their friends, families and alleged sympathizers were targeted by the Argentine military not because they regarded them as members of the Argentine national group, but for the opposite reason, that they did not regard them as legitimate members of the Argentine nation as they defined it. The military targeted a section of society, not the whole, with extreme violence, and this is what makes this a case of genocide.

Feierstein would have it differently: "the purpose of a genocidal social process is to destroy the broader fabric of social relations" (144). But this seems misleading in both empirical and theoretical terms. The Argentine dictatorship sought to destroy certain parts of the Argentine social fabric, in order to reorganise the whole. It was the destruction, not the reorganisation, that made the process genocidal. If the military had not targeted certain sectors of society, producing some 30,000 deaths, their "reorganization" would not have been genocidal; there would have been a non-genocidal restructuring.

We can see the importance of this distinction if we put the Argentine case in comparative perspective. A 2013 discussion on the list-serve of the International Association of Genocide

Scholars, in which Feierstein took part, compared this case with the Cambodian genocide. Yet there is a key difference: the Khmer Rouge attacked most if not all sections of the Cambodian population —the educated, urban dwellers, Buddhists, traditional peasant communities, ethnic and national minorities – because they regarded all existing institutions as part of the corrupt 'old' society to be replaced by the 'new' Kampuchea. Here the reorganisation was truly genocidal on a national scale, since no section of the population or existing institution escaped destruction, and the death toll of millions reflected the broader scope of the violence.

The concentration camps are, for Feierstein, the prime institutions of "reorganizing" genocide. In Argentina camps contained only one relatively small section of the population; in Cambodia, society as a whole was reorganised as a camp system. It does not diminish the genocidal character of the Argentinian military campaign to recognise the much narrower scope of its directly destructive policies, even if the broader reorganizing thrust affected society as a whole. For unlike the Khmer Rouge, the Argentine military aimed to rebuild society on a more conservative basis, strengthening some institutions while weakening others. "Reorganising" genocide, like genocide in general, obviously constitutes a wide spectrum.

Book Review: *Mothering the Fatherland: A Protestant Sisterhood Repents for the Holocaust*

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Mothering the Fatherland: A Protestant Sisterhood Repents for the Holocaust
George Faithful
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304 pp., US$78.00 (hbk)

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The sins of the German people against God and the Jews -- these eleven words haunted and ultimately dominated the lives of a handful of radical women who, in 1947, banded together in order to repent for the actions of an entire country against a portion of its population and the targeted people throughout Holocaust-era Europe. The women were Lutheran nuns, and they were seeking redemption, not only for themselves but for Germany in all its forms: as a political system, a military complex, as individual people, a religious structure, a culture, even within the very self-concept of its citizens.

Under the leadership of Mother Basilea Schlink, the Sisters sought to bring the idea of national guilt into the awareness of their own Protestant community and ultimately the world. George Faithful, in a rigorous and enlightening foray into their minds and hearts, tells the story of how this happened in *Mothering the Fatherland*, a new book that embraces and explicates personal theology, Holocaust history, the larger issues of genocide, and even paradigms of self-sacrifice in roughly equal measure.

The immediate impetus for the formation of the Ecumenical Sisters of Mary, as the group was called, was the bombing by the Allies in 1944 of the city of Darmstadt, Germany, in which the Sisters lived. The destruction was viewed as a sign of God's anger; the Sisters were struck with the stark and sudden perception that they personally were being punished for the death of the six million Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust.

Mother Schlink sprang into action, motivated by her belief that she was destined to lead a handful of true Christians in repentance, and that it was up to this small, independent group of women to bring the entire German populace to their knees. She saw the Sisterhood she founded as a group of priests acting on behalf of all the Germans, making spiritual sacrifices so that the larger population would be saved from the imminent destruction she saw looming in the near distance.

Convinced that God was set on destroying Germany for its sins, the Ecumenical Sisters of Mary transcended gender norms by grasping spiritual authority away from the male leaders around them, priests who were imbued by the Church with a power denied to females. Yet the Sisters elevated themselves above them, denying the rules designed to keep them in their place in order to pursue redemption.

The book, called a monograph by the publisher, creates and then ties together several divergent paths at once, engaging the reader in this highly unusual tale. By repenting for the actions of the Nazis, the Sisters make manifest Basilea Schlink's well-defined vision, and while doing so they explain much of the dynamics of 20th century theopolitical history in Germany and ultimately Israel. It is an absorbing journey, and the thoughtful analysis of the Sisterhood's founder is only one aspect of its success, albeit a major one. In another perhaps more significant way, the volume presents a new theory that expands the field of Christian-Zionism studies.

Faithful is a gifted writer, one who documents his work with care and finds language that flows easily around his subject matter. While this is primarily a work of historical theology, its academic yet accessible style will appeal to a wider audience than those embedded in this somewhat narrow discipline. Genocide scholars will find his ideas illuminating, and Holocaust historians will be

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intrigued by his grasp of this small but significant movement among the German populace. Those who are concerned with the development of German Christianity, from its roots to the roiling changes taking place even today, will see patterns and themes here that help them project these concepts into the future.

Overall, anyone engaged in the study of the Holocaust or, by extension, the actions, perorations and motivations of the perpetrators of genocide, will find this book worthwhile. Further, the monograph will appeal to students in each of these academic areas, as it sheds a new light on an area that usually receives scant attention: the mix of German theology and Jewish-Christian relations.

As a case in point, Faithful explains that Mother Schlink's ideas were a direct outgrowth of her deep study of the Hebrew Bible, a fascinating bit of information that brightly illuminates her thinking processes. Her contemplations, combined with her intense interest in German nationalism, resulted in her creation of the basic tenets of the Sisterhood and the penitential practices that held sway over the daily life of the community she directed.

The author's careful explanation of how well Mother Schlink developed her ideas and acted on them, convincing a number of other young women to devote their lives to them, is one of the strong points of the book. Ironically, it seems she worked in miniature to mimic the powerful methods the Nazis used to create a following for their beliefs. This model is applicable not only to understanding the thoughts and actions of religious orders, special interest groups and even nations, but also those of past and future perpetrators of genocide, who use their often remarkable leadership skills to convince their followers to go with them on their sometimes twisted paths.

Faithful's deep understanding of both Jewish and Christian theology and how they interact adds another very positive dimension to the story. He has succeeded in creating a clear picture of German national theology and faith and bringing it together with the historical journey of the Jews, and in this way he arguably makes the largest contribution of this fine volume: illuminating a series of critical developments in post-war Germany through a lens no has looked through in quite the same way before.

Through his close study of this unconventional group of women, he provides the first extensive research about Mother Schlink and the Sisterhood of Mary, beginning in war-torn German in 1947, when they take their vows of poverty, obedience and chastity and make their plans to atone for German guilt for committing the Holocaust. He continues to study them through the years in which they do penance for Christian anti-Semitism.

Most books that try to explain the aftermath of the actions of Germany during the Holocaust focus on the country's inability to repent, often to even admit their guilt for the Holocaust, no less to mourn for all that they have destroyed. But this volume provides a significant counterpoint to this kind of narrative, and because of this it is particularly refreshing and welcome.

Additionally, the author creates his arguments carefully, presenting facts and figures and building up his theses one careful step at a time. This is particularly satisfying when he is attempting to explain the finer points of theopolitical history, for instance, since not all his readers will be well-versed in both Church doctrine and the intricacies of German politics.

For example, when he describes how the Sisters were so deeply distressed by the Holocaust that they were willing to devote their lives to repenting for the sins of the German nation during the Third Reich, he goes into careful detail about not only their religious beliefs but also the national political culture, deftly interweaving the two so that we begin to understand the basis for their sacrifice and lose the disbelief with which most of us will have begun the journey through the book.

Faithful is uniquely well qualified to have written *Mothering the Fatherland.* He has a doctorate in historical theology from St. Louis University, having earned his B.A. in German and religion from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. He also studied at the Universite de Nantes, and the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin.

His careful attention to detail in the book inspires confidence in his theories, and the evidence of his painstaking research significantly enhances the narrative. For example, the book contains extensive notes documenting the facts and figures upon which the story rests, a well-appointed index, and three appendices that explain not only the underlying beliefs and overall concepts but also the finer workings of the German Protestant Church. He even includes a translation list of

frequently used German words, so that readers unfamiliar with the language will not become lost in the narrative.

His list of references is a treasure trove to researchers who hope to expand on this topic or delve more deeply into related issues, as it details the archival unpublished primary sources he relied upon, plus both the more typical yet still quite extensive primary and secondary sources. Figures and photographs enhance the book and help drive home his theories and concepts.

It is difficult to try to place Faithful's work in the context of other theological or historical treatises that deal with repentance, since he recognizes that most Protestants held views that fit with many of the basic ideologies of the Nazis, and thus supported their actions relative to the Jews. A comparative study among the few groups that have been discussed would make a fascinating follow-up to this case study.

Overall, *Mothering the Fatherland* offers a very satisfying experience. The author sets the Sisters' theological beliefs and practices within the context of the history and intellectual currents of the time, so that we gain a deeper understanding of them than we would get from mere exposition. For example, one chapter deals extensively with Mother Schlink's theological views on the differences between Jews and Germans, categories she saw as mutually exclusive, which was exactly how most German nationalists saw the divide. Yet viewing the Jews through her eyes goes a long way toward explaining much of her motivation in forming the Sisters of Mary. Still, Faithful emphasizes that Mother Schlink perceived the Jews as inhabiting the place of greater value between the two, demonstrating that she was not only an anti-Nazi theologian but actually an admirer of the people her nation had tried to destroy.