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Geographic aspects of genocide: a comparison of Bosnia and Rwanda

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The study of genocide requires a geographic approach that looks at how genocidal actions are purposefully planned to target specific groups and areas, methodically implemented through expulsions and murder, and politically intertwined with popular aspirations of territorial nationalism. A geographic focus is used here to discuss the concept of genocide, its recurrence in the twentieth century, its formulation under international law, and its eruption in Bosnia and Rwanda. In this comparative approach, geography-linked concepts such as *Lebensraum*, territorial nationalism, forced migration, and ethnic cleansing are used to explain the production of genocide and its consequences.

key words   genocide territorial nationalism   *Lebensraum*   forced migration international relations

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Genocide is the organized attempt to destroy systematically a politically or ethnically defined group. A geographic perspective is used here to provide insight into genocidal intentions, processes, and consequences in Bosnia (1992–1995) and Rwanda (1994). Genocidal intentions are signalled through rhetoric and actions of political leaders that express an exclusionary and highly territorial form of nationalism. The mechanics of genocide are revealed through patterns of mass murder, destruction, and forced expulsion. The legacy of genocide is most apparent in the accounts of survivors, but is also seen in devastated landscapes and inadequate responses by the international community.

Geography offers a particularly useful vantage point from which to analyse genocide and its consequences. Political geographers, for the past century, have been taken with the issues of ethnic distribution, cultural homelands, conflicts over natural resources, international and subnational political boundaries, and geopolitical struggles among competing state 'organisms' – all of which are critical for understanding the contexts in which

civil wars occur (Bowman 1922). No two genocides are the same, underscoring the requirement for careful analysis of local and regional conditions and an appreciation for how economic and cultural tensions are manipulated to achieve political goals. Genocide also creates patterns that can be mapped across the affected area: particular villages and neighborhoods targeted for destruction, massacre sites, destruction or defilement of specific cultural landmarks, and forced displacement from defined areas. Even the popular term for genocidal practices in the Balkans, 'ethnic cleansing', would have resonance among geographers who would see in it the brutal rending of the deep ties between a targeted community and its environment.

This comparison of genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda introduces several geographic themes: idealized territorial aspirations lie behind the genocidal goal of an ethnically pure nation-state; genocidal actions, apart from altering population composition through mass murder, also aim to radically redistribute populations within and between States through mass expulsions; and the diffusion of genocidal behaviour occurs at local

and regional scales, with significant spillover consequences. This review serves as an introduction to the broad issue of genocide as well as a geographic perspective on the growing volume of reports that document the countless atrocities that occurred in both Rwanda and Bosnia. With more recent genocidal actions in Kosovo and eastern Congo, the spillover implications of the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides are apparent. Less clear is the 'international community's' commitment to prevent future genocides. Geographers can play an important role in genocide 'early warning' by revealing the multidimensional aspects of systematic violence, highlighting the potential for future atrocities in areas where ethnic and political spaces conflict, and leading field investigations to those places where simmering communal tensions could erupt into genocide.

The emotion-laden word 'genocide' represents but the most horrific aspect of a much larger phenomenon, ethnic violence. In contrast to 'traditional' inter-State wars in which 'warriors' went off to do battle against each other on distant front lines, modern intra-State ethnic warfare is characterized by systematic mass killings of non-combatants as a primary goal (Ignatieff 1997). In this paper, a comparative approach emphasizes how such mass killings can occur under completely different socioeconomic, cultural, and political contexts. Studies of other genocides – particularly the Holocaust – describe specific actors, events, and contexts that focus on the 'uniqueness' of each. A comparative study, in contrast, explores similar patterns in the production of genocide and raises questions about the reinvention of genocidal preconditions (Gurr and Harff 1994a).

Twentieth century genocide

Debate over what constitutes a 'real genocide' versus a 'political mass murder' detracts from a more important focus on causes, consequences, and international responses to systematic atrocities (Kuper 1985). Just as in less extreme examples of 'political violence', perpetrators of genocide seek to legitimize mass brutality by convincing themselves that it is a necessary means to create a better world for themselves (Apter 1997). While each ethnic conflict has its own unique history, a recent survey suggests that they share a variable 'incubation' period for 'predisposing factors', followed at some point by a set of 'triggering factors' that results in mass violence (Stavenhagen 1996).

This century's first well-documented genocide is arguably the 1915–18 slaughter of over 1 million Armenians in Ottoman Turkey (Dadrian 1997). Another chapter belongs to Stalin, with his forced population transfers aimed at national consolidation of ethnic groups and rapid industrialization, as well as his key role in the Ukrainian 1932–33 'terror-famine' – all of which killed millions of peasants (Bilinsky 1999). But the genocide that looms over all others is the Holocaust. Amidst a large and growing volume of current research on Nazi-led atrocities, perhaps the most provocative has been Goldhagen's (1996) thesis about the complicity of 'ordinary' Germans in the extermination of well-established Jewish communities. In other genocides as well there has been tacit local acceptance of ethnic warfare and a numbing 'ordinariness' about reports of horrific suffering (Totten *et al* 1997).

The Nuremberg trials were the first international legal effort to test the genocide concept by focusing on the top organizers of the Nazi campaign. While establishing an important precedent in international law, in retrospect the Nuremberg trials have failed to serve as a post Second World War judicial deterrent (Neier 1998). Cambodia's genocide (1975–79) is a stark example of an imploding campaign against 'intellectuals', 'capitalists' and ultimately all 'impure' Khmer, which left over 1.5 million dead (Kiernan 1996). Apart from Rwanda, genocidal wars in Africa include Burundi, Liberia, Nigeria (Biafra), the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and, most recently, Sierra Leone, which have had combinations of forced relocations, massacres, and famine involving 'nations, regions, ethnic groups, clans and lineages' (Markakis 1993, 227; Burr 1993). Post Cold War ethnic-based mass atrocities in and outside of Africa – Afghanistan, Kosovo, Iraq, and Chechnya – continue to challenge, at the end of a violent century, the 'international community's' willingness and ability to deter forcefully genocidal perpetrators (Scheffer 1998; Urquhart 2000).

The genocide convention
Although drafted in the aftermath of the Holocaust, the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

explicitly ignores the magnitude of killings committed in its criteria for genocidal acts while affirming genocide as a punishable crime under international law. The Convention's Article II defines genocide as 'any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, 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; and e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group'. Under Article III, the perpetrators of such acts do not have to succeed or even be directly involved in specific genocidal acts; 'public incitement' and 'complicity' in committing genocide and targeting only part of a group are also punishable offences. Unlike the Four 1949 Geneva Conventions, which address atrocities associated primarily with international armed conflicts, the United Nations 'Genocide Convention' is applicable 'in time of peace or in time of war' (Article I).

The term 'genocide' was coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944 to describe the Nazi-led extermination of Jews; he argued that genocide is not only a war crime, but rather a more threatening 'crime against humanity itself' (quoted in Destexhe 1994/95, 3). In Destexhe's essay on Rwanda, he gives several criteria for genocide: its consequences extend beyond the target group; it is characterized by savage cruelty against the targeted group; it must be a collective act, with instigators working together to varying degrees, which serves to diminish individual feelings of guilt and increases the sense of power that comes from killing; and the targeted group must be clearly identified, which can be difficult when ethnic identity is blurred (1994/95, 33–5).

The tribunals

The Rwandan and Bosnian genocides were to lead the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to mandate unprecedented legal mechanisms to prosecute war criminals. Beneath legal arguments about jurisdiction, precedent, and punishment for war crimes lies recognition by UN members that mass atrocities are a geopolitical threat to the UN's fundamental mission to preserve inter-

national peace and stability. In February 1993, the UNSC passed a resolution calling for the creation of an international tribunal to prosecute those responsible for 'serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991' (Resolution 808, paragraph 1). This act followed other resolutions in 1992 which condemned the widespread violations of humanitarian law, including mass killings, rapes, forced expulsions, destruction of property, arbitrary arrests, and the practice of 'ethnic cleansing' – the systematic terrorizing of an ethnic group to force their mass flight from an area. The UNSC established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) by means of a Chapter VII decision, which allows the UN to intrude on sovereignty rights to protect regional peace and security. In November 1994, the UNSC passed resolution 955, establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Over the next 5 years, both the ICTY and ICTR established important legal precedents in the prosecution of those responsible for genocide and other violations of international humanitarian law (see their web sites at www.un.org/icty and www.ictr.org).

Bosnia's genocide

The outbreak of large scale violence in Bosnia is usually dated to the shooting of pro-unified Bosnia demonstrators in Sarajevo by Bosnian Serb nationalists on 6 April 1992, following the EU's recognition of Bosnia as an independent country (Gjelten 1995). The backdrop to this episode, though, goes back to the Croatian-Serbian-Slovene conflict in June 1991 over the break-up of Yugoslavia and the escalating belligerence of nationalist politicians (Zimmermann 1996; Glenny 1996; Pavkovic 1997).

While cleverly manipulated by political leaders, Yugoslavia's swift collapse and the subsequent genocide in Bosnia must also be viewed against both old and recent histories of mutual suspicion between Catholic Croats and Eastern Orthodox Serbs (Sells 1996). Bosnia's largely secular 'Muslims', a product of Ottoman occupation (converted more for political, economic, and military expedience than for any Islamic fervour), were the least cohesive of Bosnia's three major 'ethnic' groups. 'Muslims' were thus most inclined to continue the multi-ethnic balance that former

Yugoslavian president Tito had secured before his death in 1980. Increasing political decentralization during the 1980s, and the rise to power of nationalist leaders Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and Franjo Tudjman in Croatia set the stage for a violent dissolution of Yugoslavia's uneasy power-sharing system (Owen 1995; Woodward 1995). Political leaders, militia commanders, and criminals were able to channel repressed anger and fear among ethnic Croats and Serbs into vicious attacks between former neighbors, leaving by the end of 1991 a swath of destroyed towns and villages in Croatia's Eastern Slavonia region.

In March 1992, Bosnia declared its independence in an election boycotted by many Bosnian Serbs. Serbian forces immediately began a military campaign, labeled evocatively by the media as 'ethnic cleansing', which gave them effective control over about 60 per cent of Bosnian territory (Cekic 1995). The extent of atrocities in Bosnia became widely publicized by July 1992, with media coverage of emaciated and traumatized inmates of Bosnian Serb-run concentration camps. Bosnia's genocide culminated in the sudden slaughter of over 7000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys in July 1995, following the takeover of the UN protected 'safe area' of Srebrenica by troops under the direction of Bosnian Serb General Mladic (Honig and Both 1998). Genocidal actions in Bosnia were often well documented by the international media as they were taking place (Cushman and Mestrovic 1996).

Population redistribution was reinforced by successive partition plans, which were viewed as a means to legitimize occupation by force (Sudetic 1998; Campbell 1999). The Dayton Peace Accords in November 1995 set out an ambitious agenda for, *inter alia*, segregation and demobilization of forces, establishment of an inter-entity boundary line, democratic elections and creation of 'joint' government structures, freedom of movement and repatriation, and economic reconstruction (Holbrooke 1998; Corson and Minghi 1996). While implementation of the military aspects of the Dayton Accords was relatively swift, civilian implementation – particularly related to the 'right of return' by those displaced – has been much slower and more problematic, with continued obstruction and determined efforts, particularly by ethnic Serbs and Croats, to reinforce the country's de facto partition (International Crisis Group October, 1999).

Rwanda's genocide

Rwanda's genocide, like Bosnia's, has deep roots in politically fueled inter-ethnic distrust and fear (Prunier 1995). The suspicious deaths of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi in April 1994 triggered a sudden and massive bloodletting, primarily by Hutus against Tutsis. Pastoral Tutsis, though a minority in both Rwanda and Burundi (roughly less than 20 per cent of the population), had been the traditional rulers over Hutu peasants, a dominance reinforced through much of the colonial era (Newbury 1989). Many Rwandan Tutsis became refugees in 1959–63 when Hutus gained control of a newly independent Rwanda. The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Tutsi refugees based in Uganda, had been waging an increasingly successful war since its 1990 offensive against the Hutu-dominated government of President Habyarimana. His government had managed to control ethnic violence in the 1980s and had been pursuing power-sharing talks with the RPF that culminated in the August 1993 Arusha Accords. At the same time, though, he had also cracked down on political opponents, including moderate Hutus, and had begun to incite violence against Tutsis. An October 1993 Tutsi military coup against the predominantly Hutu government of neighbouring Burundi heightened paranoia among Rwandan Hutus. Up to and during the April–July 1994 genocide, the RPF continued to take territory away from government troops and finally ousted the government. Hutu officials, along with over 1.7 million followers, fled into neighbouring countries (US Committee for Refugees 1996, 60–1). Thus, shortly after the massacre of roughly 800 000 Rwandans, those responsible – the *genocidaires* – had become refugees under UN auspices (United Nations 1996).

UN peacekeepers were in Rwanda when the massacres began and ten Belgian peacekeepers were among the first victims as government and Hutu militia (known as the *Interahamwe* – originally a government-sponsored youth movement that became an armed anti-Tutsi force in the early 1990s) hunted down Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The UNSC's reaction was not to send in more peacekeepers, but to reduce their presence – in effect standing aside as numerous massacres took place (Feil 1998). Unlike Bosnia, where ethnic cleansing dragged on for several years, the 'genocidal frenzy' in Rwanda lasted about 3 months. Exhorted by government-sponsored

'hate broadcasts' and leaflets, and often led by officials, many Hutus turned on their Tutsi neighbours with a vengeance (Kirschke 1996; Des Forges 1999). For the most part, Hutu mobs had free rein to shoot, hack, and beat to death men, women, and children hiding in their homes, churches, hospitals, and even orphanages (Keane 1995; Gourevitch 1998; Berry and Berry 1999). Many Tutsi women were raped before being killed, and many children, particularly boys, were targeted early on as a means of degrading and terrorizing Tutsi communities. *Interahamwe* leaders carefully planned the genocide, provided weapons, compiled lists of important Tutsis, and went to each commune to ensure that killings were thoroughly carried out (African Rights 1994). The communal and extensive nature of the 1994 genocide resulted over the next 5 years in the detention of over 125 000 Hutus, who remain in overcrowded Rwandan jails awaiting slow processing from a totally reconstructed judicial system (International Crisis Group April 1999).

'Ordinary' genocide and geography

This brief overview of genocidal processes in Bosnia and Rwanda underscores how very different they were in terms of historical, political, economic, and cultural contexts. And yet, what outsiders would consider in each case to be extremely violent overreactions to pre-existing ethnic tensions were often described by those involved in both to be fatalistically 'ordinary'. A geographical comparison of Bosnia and Rwanda can shed only partial light on this disturbing undercurrent of social behaviour through empirical observations of genocide-related spatial patterns: forced migrations, selective property destruction, and, of course, massacres. Each mass killing, expulsion, or other atrocity can be 'placed' spatially and temporally in conjunction with similar events, thereby helping to demonstrate that genocidal acts are well-planned. Empirical data can help document chronological sequences, causality, and diffusion of routinized genocidal behaviour (Wood and Smith 1997). More problematic than mapping the patterns of genocidal action, though, is reading the geography of nationalistic paranoia and genocidal intent.

Territorial nationalism and *Lebensraum*

A recent book of essays on nationalism, *Mapping the Nation* (Balakrishnan 1996), has nothing to do with maps and much to do with an on-going multidisciplinary debate over ethnicity and nationalism (Montville 1990; Brown *et al* 1997). Gellner's essay in this book reflects on the relationship between genocide and nationalism as he recounts how nationalists attempt to create a 'nationally-defined culture' within 'neat political units' called nation-states (1996, 98). In an earlier essay, Gellner argued that a mismatch between national and political units gives rise to modern nationalist movements, noting that 'a territorial political unit can only become ethnically homogeneous, in such cases, if it either kills, or expels, or assimilates all non-nationals'. (1983, 2).

Kellas defines three categories of nationalism: ethnic (based on common descent), social (common cultural bond), and official (citizenship based); nationalism arises when political, economic, and cultural conditions undergo rapid change (1991, 65). His argument that each nationalist movement is unique (132) applies to genocide, which also erupts out of a cauldron of ethnic tensions, social inequities, and official manipulations. The 'uniqueness' of each nationalist movement and genocide suggests caution in hastily concluding that the former necessarily leads to the latter, but it has raised concerns that common ideological elements have a violence-inspiring influence over the plans of ethnic nationalists (Gurr and Harff 1994b).

Kedourie also argues that nationalism is a cause of disorder and destruction and that the ideal of self-determination often leads to oppression. He notes that a striking aspect of nationalism is the 'fanaticism of the will' (1994, 138). Following this logic, genocide is the fanatical extension of a violence-demanding nationalism. Anderson's nationalism, in contrast, is a more consensual 'imagined political community' that defines itself by 'moving all the policy levers of official nationalism' through state-controlled education, propaganda, and militarism (1983, 95). While Gellner accuses nationalist leaders of cynically 'inventing' their nations, Anderson believes nations are products of collective imaginings that are deliberately limited in their extent, based on accepted sovereignty concepts, and built on communal fraternity. These bonds make it possible 'for so many people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings in 'colossal sacrifices' (16). A review of recent genocide, though, yields a different conclusion: genocide-advocating nationalists have shown a much greater

willingness to sacrifice those pointedly excluded from their imagined community.

Gellner describes two different types of modern nationalism that have relevance for Rwanda and Bosnia. One type is the 'agro-literate' society with its need for some type of common 'church' despite 'horizontal cultural cleavages' that further the control of its elite; in poverty-stricken but 'agro-literate' Rwanda about 70 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women over 15 could read and write. The other type is the 'industrial' society, with its more complicated social structures and emerging need for a national state (rather than a church). Writing a decade before Bosnia's massacres, Gellner cites the example of some Bosnians being able to finally describe themselves on official documents as 'Muslim' (as opposed to Croat, Serb, or 'Yugoslav') even though their language was Serbo-Croatian, their country (at that time) Yugoslavia, and their 'Muslim' faith largely lapsed (1983, 71–2). Their collective identity was not so much dependent on current religious beliefs, but on their common quest to rediscover a lost faith that would anchor them in a tumultuous post-Tito world. Gellner observes that failed and potential nationalisms are much greater in number than those that have succeeded (1983, 43–5), suggesting that future genocides are likely to erupt from failed nationalisms that have grown vengeful and paranoid. After the public revelations of Bosnian atrocities, Gellner revisited this issue: 'mass murder and forcible-deportation (accompanied by a certain amount of incidental murder) tidied up the ethnic map of large portions of Eastern Europe ... minorities, in this new Europe, were cultures in wrong places' (1996, 118).

Smith's critique of Gellner's linking of nationalism with modernization is that it is overly deterministic and Euro-centric and underestimates the influence of 'geo-cultural' factors (1983, xviii). Smith is concerned with the endemic nature of ethnic conflict, 'ethnonationalism', and what he calls 'the modern ethnic revival' occurring in a more interdependent and globalized world (1995). Links among democratic principles, nationalist movements, and ethnic based conflicts raise many questions over inclusion and exclusion within 'social and territorial boundaries' in democratizing societies, which, if mismanaged, can spur inter-ethnic violence. Similarly, Horowitz observes that such conflict may be the product of a 'modernization gap' between groups and the rate at which that gap is widening (1985, 103). Thus, the absolute levels of socioeconomic development of a Bosnia or a Rwanda may be less important than the perception by one group that it is being deliberately left behind. A 'modernization gap' between rich and poor within and among countries suggests that violent ethnic nationalism can erupt simultaneously in different regions under quite different contexts.

In Woodward's analysis of the war in the former Yugoslavia, she defines 'four conflicting concepts of the nation as a right to territory': 'historicist', with national claims linked to an ancestral state; 'democratic', under which current residents (regardless of nationality) have a right to choose their government; 'Helsinki', with its international principle of the 'inviolability' of existing boundaries; and 'realist', with its acceptance of military occupation (1995, 212). She goes on to describe the dissolution of Yugoslavia as 'a competition to create wholly new nation-states ... defined by the perceived right of self-determination within the territory of a former state' (222). The ensuing nationalist war involved 'multiple and incompatible claims on territory' that violently rejected prior accommodations made through constitutional rights (236). Atrocity-reinforced 'hardening' of ethnic identities in Bosnia and Rwanda have confounded international peace-keeping efforts, raising doubts about whether genocidal violence can be defused without physical segregation of the warring ethnic groups into 'defensible homelands' (Kaufmann 1996).

Territorial dimension of ethnic conflict

Even a cursory review of nationalism reveals a number of implicit geographic themes beyond the notion of misplaced cultures: the territorial dimension of intertwined nationalist movements and ethnic identity-building (the nexus of political and cultural geographies); the symbolic role of international boundaries and efforts to carve out culturally homogenous political units; and the dichotomy between a nation-bound past and a trans-national 'globalized' future. Without a spatial framework that incorporates place and scale, though, a plethora of essays on national identity and nationalism have tended to ignore implications for local communities (Williams and Kofman 1989; Herb and Kaplan 1999).

Nationalism in effect attempts to squeeze an idealized grouping of otherwise disparate peoples into a territorially defined state (Agnew and Corbridge 1995). Ethnic segregation through the division of artificially bounded political units becomes a requirement for the preservation of a group's threatened identity and thus a matter of life and death. Geographers have undertaken numerous empirical studies of how self-defined ethnic groups have anchored their collective identity to an idealized and even fictionalized sense of territory (Gottman 1973; Knight 1982; Williams 1982; Hooson 1994; Sack 1986; Agnew 1989; Mikesell and Murphy 1991; Johnston *et al* 1988; Herb and Kaplan 1999). Their studies address the varied ways political actors manipulate cultural concepts such as ethnicity and nationality toward the ultimate goal of transforming an ambiguous political 'space' into a cohesive nation-state. The dichotomy between international efforts toward a state-based 'global civil society' and the continuing pull of place-based identities leaves in its wake post-modern 'geographies of dissent'. The result can be a volatile 'disconnectedness' between the dynamic heterogeneity of inter-national interactions and the enduring appeal of an intra-national homeland (Marden 1997).

Aggressive and territorial nation building – along with its increased risk of mutation into genocide – is one response to a collective sense of uprootedness (Harvey 1993). While exclusionary tendencies affect all regions, territorial nationalism has been most notable recently in the former Soviet Union (Kaiser 1994) and Europe (Harris 1993), where it has created many new states, both peacefully and violently, and new sets of tensions over minority rights and ethnic-based autonomy. Underlying the early stages of genocide is a deliberate stoking of tensions among ethnic groups within and even among sovereign states. As these groups try to create and justify politically autonomous entities, they become mired in violently competitive struggles with regional irredentist spillovers. To achieve their goal of legitimized territorial division, nationalists are willing to redraw international boundaries based on tenuous historical claims (Mellor 1989, 54). Their ethno-nationalistic ambitions, though, have not focused on just redrawing the world political map, but also on altering the less visible record of divided communities, repressed subordinate cultures (such as laws against the use of a language or the practice of a religion), and *de facto* partitioned homelands (Williams and Kofman 1989).

Extreme nationalists ultimately must resort to violence to set the stage for an ethno-national pageant that trumpets both a mythical past and a promised future. Unlike ideology-based wars that aim to win 'hearts and minds' and are thus somewhat open to negotiated power-sharing, ethnic-based wars polarize individual ethnic identities at the expense of all other social groupings (occupation, income, age, etc.). Once initiated, ethnic war engenders a rigid ethnic determinism along with an obsession for complete territorial control, conditions that make lasting inter-ethnic reconciliation extremely difficult (Kaufmann 1996).

Siren song of Lebensraum

Friedrich Ratzel in 1896 first used *Lebensraum* to explain how a state was like a living organism that competed with others and needed room to grow. Several decades later, Nazi military geographers used his geopolitical paradigm to justify violent territorial expansion at the expense of lesser nationalities that got in the way of an expanded Germanic homeland (Tuathail 1996). In the world-view of genocidists, *Lebensraum* is the great reward of a vigorous and pure living space; for their victims, it is the denial of any space at all. The Holocaust – as a unique event ('exception'), a limited case ('extremity'), and an attempt to 'terminate the interminable' ('serial erasure') – illustrates the spatial dimensions of genocide rather than exploring genocide as a recurring crisis (Clarke *et al* 1996). The Nazi version of territorial nationalism involved both deterritorialization (turning a landscape that once contained thriving Jewish communities into a 'blank page') and reterritorialization (the 'Germanification' of landscapes) as a means of redefining conquered spaces for the production of *Lebensraum* (Clark *et al* 1996, 476). For Nazis, a viable *Lebensraum* was only possible through eradication of European Jews, making genocide the vehicle of landscape transformation.

The much-touted 'Greater Serbia' – an irredentist scheme first proposed in 1844 (Cohen 1996) – similarly offered a vision that justified the forcible imposition of a single super-state. Following the break-up of Yugoslavia, Serb militias conducted a blitzkrieg ethnic cleansing campaign in Bosnia and Croatia to carve out a contiguous Serb-populated territory under their complete control. Although

much of the Bosnian portion of 'Greater Serbia' was never purely Serbian, Bosnian Serbs still used this idealized territorial entity to justify ethnic cleansing (Pavkovic 1997). Because Bosnia's heterogeneous settlement pattern prevented a 'clean' delineation of an expanded Serbian state, the logical next step was to instigate the mass expulsion of non-Serbs. Once fighting began, Bosnian Muslims – more urbanized than the Croats and Serbs and having no 'core nation' to fall back on for support – were left to defend small enclaves, a sickly state organism by design.

The Bosnian Croat version of *Lebensraum* fed their irredentist desires to merge the southwestern region called Herzegovina with a newly nationalized Croatia. The war's three-sided conflict caused several fleeting alliances between Muslims and Croats, but only after much outside prodding was a Croat-Muslim 'federation' grudgingly forged. In western Bosnia, efforts to create federal Muslim-Croat institutions were undermined by those trying to impose a Muslim-free 'Herceg-Bosna' entity. In other areas, Muslims retaliated by expelling Croats. Despite oft-stated desires for a 'unitary but multi-ethnic' state by various eminent interlocutors, successive partition plans from 1992 through 1995 tended to reinforce the use of ethnographic maps to determine a 'realistic' territorial division; such maps were manipulated by the parallel diplomatic peace-making and military war-making processes in and around Bosnia (Campbell 1999). While the Dayton Accords in November 1995 formally recognized the 'territorial integrity' of Bosnia behind the new 'inter-entity boundary line' (IEBL) that separated the Republika Srpska from the Federation, territorial segregation was being solidified by continued expulsions, blocked refugee returns, and constraints on freedom of movement (Figure 1).

Lebensraum was also at work in Rwanda. The *Interahamwe* ideology behind the government-supported genocide painted Tutsis – despite their living next to and intermarrying with Hutus for generations – as an 'invading force' from the north. This inaccurate caricature was reinforced by colonial rulers who favoured the Tutsis as 'natural-born leaders', racially superior to Hutus, and imposed ethnic identity cards, thereby aggravating a tightly controlled political system and an economically interdependent society (Prunier 1995). Indeed, 'Hutu' was redefined during the colonial era from simply being a peasant to someone denied political power. Belated colonial support shifted toward Hutus in the 1950s and, by Rwanda's independence from Belgium in 1962, a new generation of Hutu leaders were able to turn against the Tutsis, expelling several hundred thousand to neighbouring Burundi and Uganda. The history of Tutsi-Hutu relations over the past century is one in which traditional ethnic roles were continually manipulated, fuelling antagonisms and making recurring mass violence all but inevitable (Newbury 1989).

Exiled Tutsis by the early 1990s were steadily reclaiming their old homeland as the corrupt Hutu government began to collapse. Genocide-fomenting elements, beginning well before April 1994, attacked on military grounds the Tutsi-led RPF and on political grounds Hutu moderates who favoured democratization. A steady stream of genocide inciting radio broadcasts fuelled mass killings throughout Rwanda (Metzl 1997). Village by village massacres of Tutsis by local Hutus was in the face of RPF military victories and widespread Hutu perceptions that they would be soon subjugated again or even eliminated. By late 1996 revenge-seeking between Hutu and Tutsi communities extended into eastern Congo and was a key factor in a successful Tutsi-led 'rebel alliance' offensive against Congolese (formerly Zairian) troops (Reed 1997).

The *Lebensraum* ideology behind Rwanda's genocide evolved amidst harsh conditions of poverty, arable land scarcity, and income inequity. In an impoverished 'ethnocratic' state like Rwanda, 'ethnicity is also the ruling principle of economic and social differentiation', with ethnic groups then forced to 'confront each other in the process of competition for material and social resources', (Markakis 1993, 236). Such demography-linked 'pressures' as shrinking farm size (an average of less than 1 hectare) and high fertility rates (with a population doubling time of under 20 years and a young population age structure), as well as a stagnant economy, helped increase tensions between Rwanda's 7.8 million Hutus and Tutsis (Olson 1994). While conflict over access to land was a factor in Hutu-Tutsi hostility, it was not the trigger for Rwanda's genocide. Political leaders – from cabinet ministers to provincial *bourgmestres* – could have helped mediate land use conflicts, but instead they diverted scarce funds and helped organize massacres that extended into every commune. Rwanda and neighbouring countries remain

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Figure 1

intertwined within a resource scarce, impoverished region of overlapping homelands, with continued high risk of widespread violence (Homer-Dixon and Percival 1996). By 2000, political leaders in the region remain engaged in fomenting ethnic-based violence, primarily in the eastern Congo region adjacent to Rwanda.

Rwanda's *Lebensraum* is not so much a nationalistic myth, as it is in the Balkans, than an impossible dream for both Hutus and Tutsis. In contrast to Gellner's post 1945 'new age' in which '*Lebensraum* turns out to be irrelevant' because commercial success is not tied anymore to territorial acquisition (1996, 123), the two genocides reviewed here

seem to offer a less economically-rational conclusion. In both Rwanda and Bosnia, the genocides have been part of an overall socio-economic collapse that has left its perpetrators financially much worse off than they were before. Genocidists justify their actions more through an ideological than an economic view of 'national greatness', while exploiting difficult living conditions to scapegoat minorities (Staub 1992). In addition, they initiate genocidal measures in peripheral areas of the redefined 'living space'; some of the most brutal violence took place in the rural peripheries of northern and eastern Bosnia, eastern Croatia, northwest Rwanda, and eastern Congo. At the

same time, genocidists can go to great lengths to crush heterogeneous and thus politically suspect enclaves within the cultural core of an endlessly purifying homeland.

If nationalism idealized is Anderson's 'imagined community' of shared values, genocide is the dark side, a nightmare of xenophobia and murder. Gaonon's comments on Serbian leaders can be applied equally to Hutu leaders in Rwanda: 'violence on a scale large enough to affect international security is the result of purposeful and strategic policies rather than irrational acts of the masses' (1997, 166). While genocidal actions in Bosnia and Rwanda were driven by the specific intentions of each set of perpetrators, their 'final solutions' appear similar: cut out the offending ethnic group from the beleaguered state organism so that the rightful homeland heirs can correct historic injustices and realize their destiny. Such a *Lebensraum*-inspired operation on the body politic, though, requires a thorough scouring before amputation can proceed.

Forced migration

The foremost geographic factor in genocide is that – like all forms of enforced territorial nationalism – it is directed at a particular group living in the 'wrong place'. While an ethnic group has some common cultural or racial trait(s) that can be used to mark its members for elimination, ethnic distinctions are exaggerated to serve the linked causes of nationalist ideology, cultural homogeneity, and territorial secession (Williams and Kofman 1989). Genocidal intent does not necessarily entail killing all members of a group, just their physical removal so that landscapes are 'purified' for nation building. The Balkans and Central Africa are by no means the only regions to have 'unmixed' its population in the last half century – others include South Asia, the Caucasus, parts of Central Europe, and Cyprus (Hayden 1996). In Europe, both the birthplace of the nation-state concept and the region where it was expected to die (1792–1992), resurgent nationalism has 'reframed the political space' with irredentist claims for 'core' homelands and pleas for human rights protection by ethnic minorities (Brubaker 1996).

Nationalizing territory itself poses a logistical challenge in the 'unmixing' of heterogeneous settlements. Because formal territorial divisions and political jurisdictions are often imprecisely defined across such settlement patterns, local ethnic groups are likely to be even more distrustful and fearful of their 'neighbours' once violence has erupted and the cycle of revenge-seeking has begun (Kaufmann 1996). In both Bosnia and Rwanda, the belligerent ethnic groups speak the same language and most Tutsis and Hutus even belong to the same religion. Political leaders in both areas exaggerated perceived 'ethnic' differences and old grievances. They also manipulated violence-inciting propaganda, such as broadcasts by Rwanda's infamous Radio Mille Collines describing Tutsis as 'cockroaches' and the pronouncements by Bosnian Serb leaders that Bosnian Muslims were part of a devious 'Turkish' conspiracy against 'European' civilization (Kirschke 1996; Cohen 1996; Metzl 1997).

Ethnic cleansing patterns are influenced by the distribution and size of the targeted group, usually a minority, in relation to the dominant group (Mikesell and Murphy 1991). Unassimilated ethnic groups – mostly but not always tied to officially sanctioned discrimination – are often clustered spatially, whether in an ethnic neighbourhood, a village, or partially autonomous region. In these cases, expulsion is a relatively straightforward exercise of selectively removing all residents from defined areas – a row of houses here, a village there, or a whole ghetto. Genocide, though, is often committed against largely assimilated groups, making more difficult the perpetrators' mission of isolating the target group and making them, in Goldhagen's words, 'socially dead' (1996). Victims must be systematically identified and listed, forced out of their mixed neighbourhoods, corralled into camps, ghettoes, or 'transit' centres, methodically dehumanized, and finally expelled or killed *en masse*.

'Ethnic cleansing' is not new to the Balkans. The term was used explicitly by Serb *Chetnik* nationalists in the 1912–13 Balkan War and was implicitly practiced before then to drive Muslim communities from Serbia proper. Ominously, it resurfaced again during the Second World War among *Chetniks* who collaborated with the Nazis (who also collaborated with Croat nationalist *Ustasha* against Serbs) in eliminationist campaigns against both Muslims and Serbian Jews (Cohen 1996). Bosnia's latest ethnic cleansing campaign reflected the country's complex ethnic geography, with numerous scattered enclaves and heterogeneous *opstinas* (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Of the six former Yugoslav republics, Bosnia was the most heterogeneous and thus at the greatest risk of widespread and prolonged internecine violence. Bosnia's 4.4 million people in 1991 were comprised of 44 per cent Muslim, 31 per cent Serb, and 17 per cent Croat, with 8 per cent 'other', including those of mixed parentage and those who identified themselves as 'Yugoslavs'. Of the three ethnic groups, Bosnian Muslims were the most concentrated in urban areas where they tended to dominate the middle class. Bosnian Serbs, in contrast, were more represented in rural opstinas, while Bosnian Croats were dominant in the south-

west. These ethnic patterns determined much of the strategic military goals of the war as well as the various peace plans. JNA-supported attacks in eastern and northern Bosnia succeeded in expelling Bosnian Muslim and Croat communities and were complemented by the Serb siege of Sarajevo, which represented the cultural core of a plural Bosnian society, and thus became a richly symbolic target (Gjelten 1995).

Forced population displacement was carefully planned in conjunction with strategic military objectives, such as access to key resources and control over major transportation routes. Genocide

in Bosnia was not the result of a sudden burst of nationalist hysteria, but rather the calculated means to expand the parameters of an ethnically homogeneous territory. Non-Serbs who were not incarcerated or killed, were often fired from their jobs, robbed of their possessions, forced to sign over their properties to local officials, and only then 'allowed' to leave Bosnia as refugees. Those areas not under direct Bosnian Serb control were subject to bombardment and siege, which included preventing all residents from leaving and obstructing UN and NGO relief agencies and UN peacekeepers from delivering food, clothing, and winterization supplies. Once eastern Bosnia was 'cleansed' of non-Serbs, displaced Serbs were encouraged to resettle and newly empowered criminals were allowed to control major economic transactions, such as sanctions-busting fuel imports. Thus, despite the impoverishment of most Serbs, a criminal elite – exemplified by the late Serbian war criminal 'Arkan' – flourished by controlling illicit trade and even relief supplies across often ill-defined and shifting 'front lines'.

Bosnian Serb-run concentration camps were established in the spring of 1992, with torture, rape, and murder routinely practiced by guards (Hukanovic 1993/1996). The infamous Omarska, Prijedor, and Trnopolje camps set up by Serbs, and the organization of 'detention centers' for thousands of civilians provides another spatial blueprint of ethnic cleansing (Figure 3). Systematic rapes were another manifestation of deliberate attempts to 'cleanse' lineage as well as the landscape of non-Serbs. Bosnia's mis-named 'safe areas' – established by the UNSC in 1993 – also inadvertently served genocidists in ways reminiscent of the Nazis' aims in setting up Jewish ghettoes: wear down and humiliate the inhabitants and increase tensions between those inside the ghetto walls and those outside (Hilberg 1992). Once the Jews were physically isolated, the Nazis and their local collaborators could slander those behind the walls and then use these contrived accusations to justify even more punitive actions (Marrus 1987, 95). Fifty years later, once non-Serbs were isolated within the confines of 'safe areas', Bosnian Serb leaders could use rumors of 'Muslim fundamentalist' or 'Turkish' plots and renewed *Ustasha* atrocities to rally 'ordinary Serbs' under the protection of a nationalist umbrella (Cushman and Mestrovic 1996; Gagnon 1997).

In Bosnia, ethnic segregation served to reinforce xenophobic nationalism, not diminish it, particularly when orchestrated by leaders intent on fomenting hatred. Mixed village communities, in which ethnic identities were often complicated and ambiguously perceived (varying by household and generation), were targeted for the careful removal of one group or another to achieve ethnic homogeneity (Bringa 1995). The horrific conclusion of segregation, isolation, and elimination was realized for the residents of the 'safe area' of Srebrenica: of the 18 172 missing persons cases reported to the ICRC for all of Bosnia, 7063 were last seen alive when Srebrenica was captured by Bosnian Serbs in July 1995 (ICRC 1997; Honig and Both 1998).

While not the grand territorially defined strategy that it was in Bosnia, ethnic cleansing was also the goal of Rwandan genocidists. Unlike Bosnia, during Rwanda's April–June ethnic cleansing campaign there were no internationally administered safe areas into which Tutsis could seek refuge (a French security zone came several months after and primarily protected Hutus – including those who committed the genocide). In Rwanda the mechanics of ethnic cleansing were simpler than in Bosnia. Tutsis and some moderate Hutus were killed on the spot or rounded up (either encouraged or forced) in convenient locales, usually church and school compounds, and then massacred by the thousands. But like Bosnia and other twentieth century genocides, ethnic cleansing could not be contained within Rwanda.

Expulsion

If ethnic cleansing is the ideology-driven strategy in which genocidists use terror, rape, murder, and incarceration to lay absolute claim to a national territory, forced migration is the fate for most survivors in this, 'the century of expulsions' (quote from Gunter Grass, in Hayden 1996). Most of those uprooted are fleeing ethnic violence, along with other overlapping causal factors (Wood 1994). Their expulsion, in turn, creates a whole new set of cultural, economic, and political problems beyond the ethnically cleansed area, especially for refugee receiving countries (Rogge 1987; Black and Robinson 1993). By late 1995 ethnic Tutsis in the Masisi area of eastern Congo were being massacred by the Hutu refugees who had previously led the genocide (Yett 1996). Many Hutus and Tutsis were still being murdered in eastern

Figure 3

Congo in 2000, part of a cyclical pattern of terror and expulsion by one group of vengeful refugees against another.

Forced migration invariably draws in the international community directly through the formal mechanism of according refugee status and protection to those who have crossed an international boundary (Dowty and Loescher 1996; UNHCR 1997). Driven from their homes by physical removal, death threats, or other acts of intimidation, many of those forcibly displaced remain unprotected within their own country. Those that manage to obtain refugee status in another country carry a bitter legacy of their expulsion that will feed future unrest and threaten renewed regional instability. Bosnian refugees, for example, have became part of a larger 'European' migration dilemma with its own geopolitical discourse as well as nationalistic, racist, and even violent backlashes against immigrants (Tesfahuney 1998).

Genocidal policies leave a crude record in the form of a dramatic population redistribution that would include a disproportionate representation of targeted ethnic groups among the displaced. While

records of forced migration are usually compiled well after the ethnic cleansing has occurred, they are useful as a gross measure of the magnitude of genocidal repression, particularly when the international community is prevented from working directly in the targeted area. Of the data collected on genocide victims, those pertaining to refugees are relatively good, especially when compared to the paucity of reliable information on numbers, locations, and conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The latter are at higher risk of renewed violence than refugees, but are usually without international protection.

By the Fall of 1992, over 1.2 million Bosnians had become refugees outside of Bosnia and another million displaced within its borders – in total, more than half the pre-war population. Many fled to the neighbouring states of Croatia and Serbia, but for many Muslims these were not ideal asylum countries; almost 700 000 Bosnians ended up in Western Europe and other countries. Bosnia's Serbs, like Rwanda's Hutus, became both perpetrators and victims of forced expulsion – with over 200,000 Croatian Serbs pushed into Bosnia and Serbia in 1995, many now occupying the dwellings of forcibly uprooted Muslims and Croats. UNHCR's 'durable solution' of safe repatriation for many displaced Bosnians remains, by 2000, unrealized.

An ironic twist of the Rwandan genocide is that the refugees were not the victims but the *genocidaires* and their supporters. By 1995, over half a million Hutus were displaced and even more had become refugees, with up to 900 000 in eastern Zaire, 140 000 in Burundi (with its own history of genocidal acts), and 500 000 in Tanzania (US Committee for Refugees 1996, 60). Their sprawling camps were sustained by a multitude of UN and NGO relief agencies, but political authority resided with leaders of the ousted government. Most Hutu refugees refused to return to Rwanda, creating a dilemma for the UN; on one hand the ICTR had a mandate to prosecute those responsible for the genocide and on the other the UNHCR was caring for them (Figure 4). Warfare in November 1996 in eastern Congo finally broke up the camps and pushed over 600 000 Hutus back into Rwanda; in December 1996, another half million Rwandans returned from Tanzania. This *en masse* repatriation, while a marked contrast to the slow return of refugees to Bosnia, has not ensured peace in Rwanda.

While much writing on ethnic conflict resolution has focused on political aspects of power sharing, imposed solutions have usually entailed formalized segregation; in cases of genocide, the 'critical variable is demography, not sovereignty' (Kaufmann 1996, 161). Partition schemes, however, can generate their own hard-to-reverse problems (as witnessed in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, India, and Bosnia). Territorial partitions can lead to renewed violence and mass refugee flows, entail an indefinite international peacekeeping presence, and paradoxically can result in new sets of sectarian demands (Kumar 1997). Thus, a geographic reading of recent ethnic conflicts would predict that an imposed partition only rarely results in a neatly packaged homogeneous territory and all too often leads to renewed bouts of mass expulsions.

Genocide as a legacy

Any comparative analysis of genocide risks being overwhelmed by an incomprehension of how 'ordinary' people can become willing agents of a nationalist policy that demands killing defenceless women and children (Browning 1992; Goldhagen 1996). For genocide to be confronted forcefully requires more than ad hoc demonstrations of compassion by those living in 'zones of safety' on behalf of those living under modern-day warlords in Hobbesian 'zones of danger' (Ignatieff 1997). The UN and its member states, despite being better informed about such genocidal triggers, remain ill prepared to prevent genocide and unable to institute appropriate constitutional safeguards for individual and minority rights (Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict 1997; Urquhart 2000).

Genocidal acts are signalled geographically through the plans of their instigators, the patterns of ethnic cleansing, and, ultimately, the ruins where communities once thrived. Apart from murder and expulsion, the perpetrators of genocide also attempt to eradicate the targeted group's cultural presence on a landscape (Schama 1995). It is the destruction of place – not just the built environment, but the cultural attachments to it – that leaves the targeted community adrift in an otherwise 'centreless' modern world (Entrikin 1991). Genocide in this way creates its own transgenerational landscape of fear (Tuan 1981). Geographers are trained to read such genocide-corrupted landscapes and thereby can, potentially, advise on programmes for reconstruction.
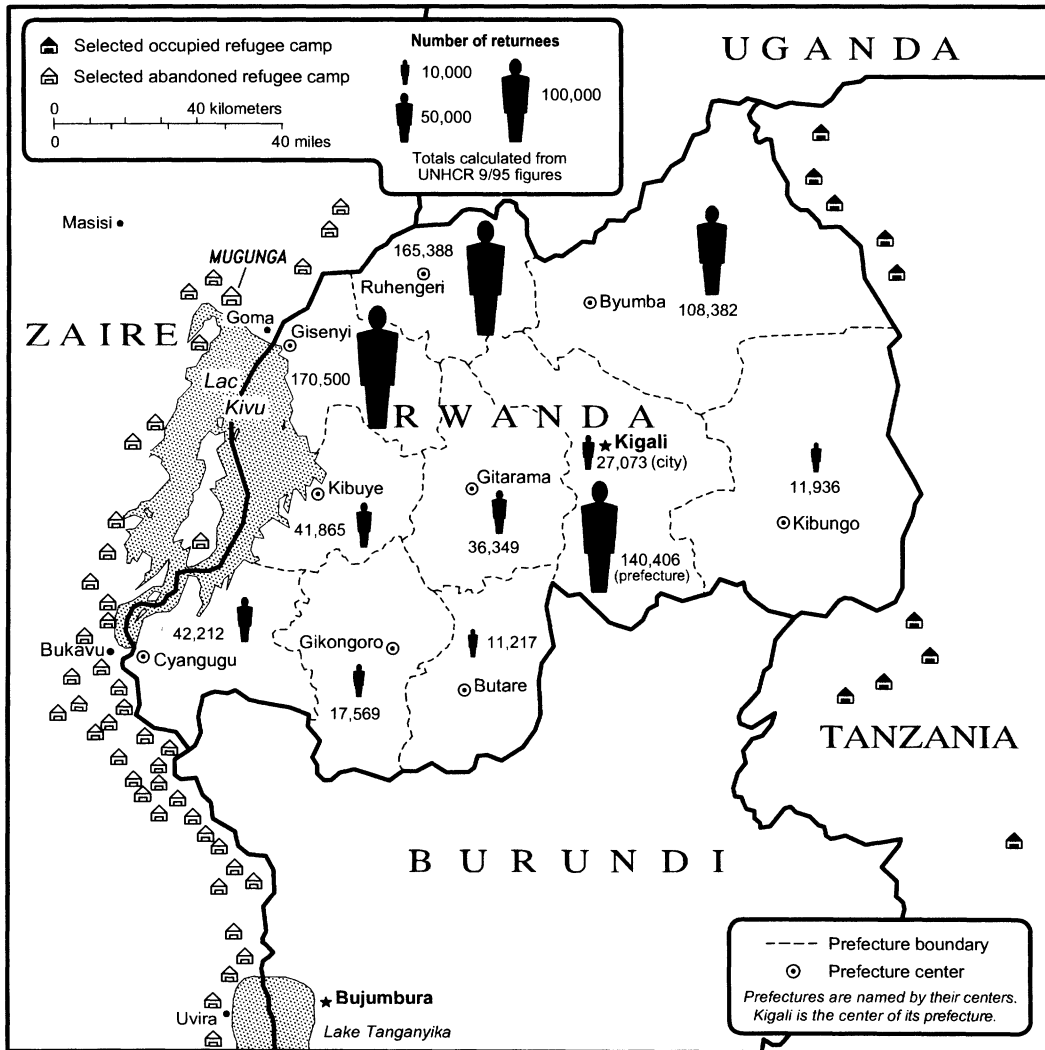
Figure 4 Hutu refugee returnees by prefecture, November 1996

A 'critical' inquiry into the geopolitics of geno-cide would entail research beyond the scope of this paper into its multiscalar causes and consequences; it should challenge the assumptions and motives of those institutions that attempt to deal with the political, territorial, and cultural dimensions of ethnic violence (Tuathail 1996). At the local level, a geopolitical inquiry might include in-depth research on the relationship between local agents of violence and their targets. At the national level, it would analyse governmental institutions and national media and their role in fomenting vio-lence. And at the international level, it would

critique how the 'international community' – foreign governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations – collectively intervenes before, during, and after each genocidal eruption. (Wood 1996).

While genocidal campaigns are instigated primarily by one group against another, secondary groups often become involved, either as imple-menting agents or as other undesirables slated for elimination. Genocidal chain reactions are most intense in the immediate vicinity, but they do not stay there. If they are able, survivors will cross international boundaries and demand protection

and care from foreign governments and international organizations. In analysing such forced dislocations, geographers can advise relief agencies on strategies for more effective cross-border assistance to genocide survivors.

Genocidal policies can be destructively implosive, leading some nationalist movements to self-destruct along with their cherished homeland. They can also be explosive, pulling neighbouring countries into genocide-catalyzed violence against their own minorities. Genocide sets in motion 'centrifugal' political forces, such as in Bosnia, that erode the state's functional cohesion, raise doubt about its *raison d'être*, and make international peacekeeping efforts very difficult. Once the genocidal momentum has begun, the risks of long-lasting regional and international problems rise sharply. Both the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides are linked to those in neighbouring areas that have generated intensive international responses. Ethnic cleansing against over a million ethnic Albanians living in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999, for example, was carried out by some of the same forces responsible for massacres in Croatia and Bosnia dating back to 1991 (US Department of State 1999). Similarly, Rwanda's genocide is directly linked to the civil war in the Congo that, by the end of the decade, had drawn in military forces from most surrounding countries.

Genocide also becomes geopolitical in the traditional sense when it fundamentally alters relations between states within a region and beyond. In some cases, such as between Rwanda and its neighbours and among Balkan countries, post-genocide regional relations are now skewed by cross-border ethnic-based insurgencies and unfulfilled irredentist aspirations. Beyond the region, regimes that have sponsored mass killings may seek international legitimacy as a perceived step toward national vindication for past atrocities and/or as a pragmatic means to solidify military and economic control through governmental channels of weapons acquisition and financial assistance. Geographers can help map the cross border 'grey economics' of small arms flows, contraband commodity trading (such as diamond smuggling), sanctions circumvention, and movements of military forces – all of which help prop up genocidal regimes and hinder international prevention efforts.

Conclusion

As of June 2000, the number of new ethnic conflicts has declined from a peak in the early 1990s, apparently because of steps taken by many governments to recognize minority group political and cultural rights, and in some cases even to negotiate various levels of autonomy (Gurr 2000). At the same time, Amnesty International's annual report for 2000 documents the widespread practice of extrajudicial killing, recruitment of child soldiers, arbitrary imprisonment, and torture by security forces – all of which suggest continued high risk for future mass atrocities in several world regions (Amnesty International 2000).

Even if mass killings are stopped before most targeted victims are eliminated, genocidal intentions still have lasting repercussions. Half a century after the Holocaust, the once dynamic Jewish cultural presence in Europe has largely faded away. On a smaller scale, the historic Muslim and Croat presence in eastern Bosnia has largely been erased. Six years after its massive genocide, villagers in Rwanda and neighbouring countries are still threatened by massacres. Bosnia and Rwanda, two radically different geographic contexts, are testimony to how dormant ethnic mistrust and fear can be manipulated into a swift genocidal eruption. In an increasingly heterogeneous and crowded world, genocide will remain a fundamental international security threat. Geographers can help policy makers better understand genocide's persistence and its implications, and, by so doing, help galvanize a more decisive international prevention and response.

Note

1   The views expressed in the paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the US government.

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