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THE POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS OF GENOCIDES



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Introduction

Mass killing, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity are not phenomena restricted to a specific phase of human history. Nor do they occur in a specific region, religion or nation.

Since the emergence of the first civilizations a few thousands of years ago, until the present day, tens of millions of innocent people have been killed or displaced just because their existence was not in favor of particular individuals or groups to maximize their power and benefits.

Genocide has been a common phenomenon throughout history, and the twentieth century was not an exception. In 1915, the Ottomans systematically eradicated a million and a half of Armenians. The crime of those victims was their affiliation with a religion different from that of the killers. Or probably the Ottoman Sultan feared an eventual cooperation between them and the Russians who showed enmity toward the Ottoman Empire at that time. The genocide was committed by old-fashioned methods of throat slitting and drowning.

Around thirty years later, the Nazi Germans made use of the technological innovation to murder six million of Jews and Gypsies in gas chambers. The genocide, or what came to be known the Jewish Holocaust, was motivated by Hitler's

paranoid fears of permeation the 'Aryan race', and dominating the German economy by a 'sub-human species'.

Between 1975-1979, the Cambodian Communists or the 'Khmer Rouge', launched brutal attacks against a high percent of their own population accused of being influenced by western culture. It is estimated that between one and two million died.

Today, despite the efforts made by many global organizations and groups to prevent genocides, many human communities, all over the world, are suffering from eradication. Other communities are at risk. In Iraq, for instance, fighters of the so-called 'Islamic State in Iraq and Syria' (ISIS), who have already driven out Christians from their ancestral homes in northern Iraq, have especially targeted the religious minority 'Yazidis'. The United Nations called the situation in Shingal and other parts of the Iraqi province Nineveh, which is controlled by ISIS since June 2014, 'a humanitarian disaster'. According to '*Genocide Watch*', an organization concerned about genocides, ISIS has captured the primarily Yazidi towns of Sinjar and Zumar, killing nearly 2,000 and forcing 200,000 to flee into the nearby mountains without food and water. Moreover, hundreds of women and little girls were captured and treated as female slaves. Such an atrocity brought to mind the horribleness of the 'Dark Ages'.

The massacres of Syria, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan, Nigeria, and many other states and communities show that genocides became a global phenomenon from which no nation can assure full safety. Accordingly, dealing with this subject, especially in this time is a matter of high significance.

Problem Formulation

Due to the fact that the United Nations' definition of genocide does not mention the crimes carried out by the totalitarian regimes against the individuals and groups who opposite their policies, many of these regimes and their supporters attempt to justify those crimes by regarding them as measures adopted

to defend national security and interests. This research will try to answer the following questions:

How does 'politicide' differ from 'genocide'?

What are the political motivations behind committing politicides?

Is it possible to prevent geno- or politicides?

Method of Research

One of the methods used to test and evaluate the relationship among qualitative variables is to form hypotheses, deduce consequences from them, checking the deduced consequences against observations, and finally, making inferences about the hypotheses on the basis of the observations. This method is called '*Hypothetico-deductive method*'.[١] Adopting this method, I will form the following hypotheses and test them against empirical data to determine the motivations of perpetrating politicide.

1. The personal psychology, life and leadership experience, or ideological beliefs of the political leaders make them an ultimate source of genocidal policies.
2. Genocide is a rational choice made by leaders or elites to achieve specific policy goals, especially during wartimes.
3. The 'plural societies' and the regime type are crucial factors behind the emergence of genocidal policies.
4. The colonial legacy and negative external interventions in the genocidal conflicts pave the way for more geno- or politicides.

In accordance with this method, the research is divided into seven parts. In addition to determine the theoretical framework of the research, and defining the phenomena of genocide and politicide, the four hypotheses are tested in separate parts. Finally, the outcome of the whole research is summarized to give a comprehensive conclusion about the political motivations of committing genocides.

[١]Singleton, Jr., Royce A., Straits, Bruce C., Straits, Margaret Miller, "*Approaches to Social Research*", Oxford University Press, 2nd. ed. New York, (1993), P. 54

١. Defining 'genocide'

The term 'genocide', which is defined by Oxford English Dictionary as "*The deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular nation or ethnic group*" is not more than seventy years old. The Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959) whose family was decimated by the Nazis is the formulator of this term. His interest in 'genocide' started with concern over the unpunished Turkish massacre of hundreds of thousands of Armenians during the First World War.[٢] Motivated by the 'Jewish Holocaust', Lemkin formulated the term by combining '*geno*' from the Greek word for race or tribe with '*cide*' from the Latin word for killing. Then he defined 'genocide' as "*a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the life of the individuals belonging to such groups*"[٣] In addition to his academic activities, Lemkin launched a one-man diplomatic campaign to convince the newly formed United Nations to develop a treaty that would outlaw genocide. He succeeded and the General Assembly approved a convention on the 'Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' in 1948 and adopted it three years later (i.e. in 1951). The convention defined 'genocide' as the "*intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such*". It went on to delineate the acts that constitute genocide:

١. *Killing members of the group.*

[٢] King, Henry T., Jr. '*Origins of the Genocide Convention*', Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law. Volume: 40. Issue: 1-2, spring 2008, Ohio, US.

[٣] Lemkin, Rafael. '*Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*', Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (1944), p. 79.

٢. *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.*

٣. *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.*

٤. *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.*

٥. *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group* [٤].

However, since its adoption (in 1951), the UN convention has been criticized by many scholars, mostly by those frustrated with the difficulty of applying it to different cases. Some scholars argued that the UN's definition of 'genocide', unlike that of Lemkin, was so narrow that none of the mass killings perpetrated since the treaty's adoption would fall under it. Moreover, the ambiguity of some concepts included in the convention has also been a subject of disagreement among scholars. Paul Williams [٥], for instance, wondered: What was meant by 'destroy'? Why was genocide limited to national, ethnical, racial and religious groups while ignoring the vulnerabilities of political groups, social classes and gender groups? How severe did 'bodily or mental harm' have to be before it could be considered genocidal?

Conteh Morgan argues that the UN definition is restrictive because it intentionally excluded the purposeful and deliberate annihilation of political groups and social classes. Thus, every assault on a group may be rationalized as a defense against a political movement [٦].

Excluding political crimes perpetrated by dictatorial and totalitarian regimes against their opponents affects the credibility of the convention. As noted by the British anthropologists Adam and Jessica Kuper, many of the worst

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[٤] Kuper Adam & Jessica Adam, '*The Social Science Encyclopedia'* (3rd. edn.), Routledge, New York (2009) P.409

[٥] Williams Paul D., '*Security Studies*', Routledge, New York (2013) P. 253.

[٦] Morgan, Conteh, '*Collective Political Violence: An Introduction to the Theories and Cases of Violent Conflicts*'. Routledge. New York (2004), P. 216.

atrocities of the twentieth century were committed against groups defined by their political orientation or social class. The deportations and killings of wealthy peasants and former landlords in the Soviet Union and China, the mass killings of political opponents in Indonesia, Argentina and Chile cannot be called genocides under the UN convention [٧].

Paul Williams also noted that difficulties of definition and application contributed to the Convention's sidelining as a legal instrument for several decades after it came into force.

A number of scholars, however, attempted to redefine 'genocide' so to be able to apply to all kinds of crimes committed against humanity regardless the ethnical or political orientations of the victims. A few years ago, Barbara Harff (a Professor of Political Science Emerita at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland) suggested a wide definition to this phenomenon in an effort to include more crimes against humanity. According to Harff's definition; '*Genocides and politicides are 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. In genocides, the victimized groups are defined by the perpetrators primarily in terms of their communal characteristics. In politicides, by contrast, groups are defined primarily in terms of their political opposition to the regime and dominant groups* [٨].

Harff's distinction between *genocide* and *politicide* is of a high significance for determining the motivations behind each of these two crimes against humanity. While the first one 'genocide' targets a group of people on the basis of their ethnic or religious affiliation, the second one 'politicide'

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[٧] Kuper Adam & Jessica Adam, '*The Social Science Encyclopedia'* (3rd. edn.), Routledge, New York (2009) P.P. 409-410.

[٨] Harff, Barbara (2003), '*No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955*', American Political Science Review 97, no. 1 (2003) P.P. 57-73.

targets a group of people on the basis of their ideological or political orientation.

Since the aim of this research is to explain the motivating factors of committing politicide, the main focus will be on the theories and assumptions which shed light on the political motivations of this phenomenon.

٢. Theoretical Framework:

There are two famous approaches within the field of genocide-studies; Agency-oriented approach and Structure approach. The first one is adopted by a group of scholars trying to explain genocide by concentrating on the role played by elite decision makers. For some authors who use this approach, such as Gerald Fleming,[٩] the genocidal process focuses on the role of specific individual leaders, such as Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and others. The argument used to justify this suggestion is that the most senior decision makers, for reasons of personal psychology, life and leadership experience, or ideological beliefs, make the decision to exterminate whole groups of people. Consequently, these individual leaders are the ultimate source of genocidal policies.

However, although such explanations tell in great details the role of specific leaders in the initiation and perpetration of genocide, they arise a more general comparative question: Are genocides primarily the result of the actions of individual leaders? Would the '*Holocaust*' have happened without Hitler, or the '*killing fields*' without Pol Pot? Is there a not-so-great-man theory of genocide? The answer to these questions, according to Maureen Hiebert, is that we simply do not know. That is because it is impossible to turn back the clock and factor out individual leaders from the equation to see whether a given genocide would have happened without them. As a basis for comparison, it is counterproductive to extrapolate from single case studies of individual leaders the idea that

[٩] Gerald Fleming (1982), '*Hitler and the Final Solution*', Berkeley: University of California Press (1982)

these leaders are the only significant actors in the genocidal process. The role of individual elites in a particular genocide may be highly idiosyncratic and therefore, not being comparable to those of other elites in other cases.[١٠]

Other scholars, such as Benjamin Valentino [١١]and Manus Midlarsky [١٢],have adopted a strategic actor model to account for the conditions under which elite actors make the decision to commit genocide. According to this model, genocide is a '*rational choice*' made by elites to achieve specific policy goals. Valentino sees genocide, or what he calls 'mass killing', as a barbaric, immoral, and seemingly illogical act but one that is the product of a rational choice made by elites to achieve specific policy goals. For Valentino, genocide is not an end in itself but a strategic means to achieve an end. In the pursuit of radical policy goals, perpetrator elites commit genocidal violence against a target group in order to force its members to do something they would otherwise not do but which is required for the realization of specific policy goals. The decision to commit genocide is made only when elites have concluded that other, less violent forms of repression or concessions to the target group for achieving their ends have failed or are impractical.

Similarly, Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley argue that, for elite perpetrators, mass murder is the 'cheapest' way to overcome resistance to policies favored by the perpetrators or simply to get rid of groups that are perceived to be 'in the way' of the realization of desired policies. Chirot argues that there are many ways of handling political resisters. They may be persuaded or forced to compromise their claims to partially satisfy the stronger group. But the leaders of those resisting may believe the costs of giving in are higher than the costs of

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[١]Maureen S. Hiebert, '*Theorizing Destruction: Reflections on the State of Comparative Genocide Theory'*, Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal, Vol. 3, 2008.

[١١]Valentino, Benjamin, '*Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*', Cornell University Press, NY. (2004)

[١٢]Midlarsky, Manus, '*The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century*', Cambridge University Press, 2005.

resistance. Continuing resistance, of course, raises the costs for those trying to impose their will, and eventually, the stronger party may consider mass expulsion or mass murder as the cheapest solution [١٣].

In sum, agency-oriented approaches, mostly focused on psychology, offered by scholars in recent years give us a foundation upon which we can try to understand and explain elite, individual, and societal behavior in genocide. But they cannot account for what the structural explanations give us—the macro cultural, social, economic, political, security, and ideational contexts that also shape genocidal policies and behaviors.

The second approach (i.e. structural) is adopted by scholars suggesting that societies riven by ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, or other cleavages are particularly vulnerable to genocide. One of those scholars, Leo Kuper, took the prior existence of what he labeled '*plural societies*' as the 'structural base for genocide' [١٤].

As a necessary condition, but one that does not make genocide inevitable, Kuper argued that '*plural societies*' in which cleavages are particularly 'persistent and pervasive' are more likely to experience genocide, especially when political or economic inequality is 'superimposed' on ethnic, religious, racial, or socioeconomic differentiation. This kind of social structure, in turn, aggregate the population into distinctive sections, thereby facilitating crimes against collectivities. The divisions being so pervasive, and relatively consistent in so many spheres, issues of conflict may move rapidly from one sector to another, until almost the entire society is polarized [١٥].

Helen Fein also notes that societies that are marked by 'ethnic stratification' are more likely to be predisposed to ethnic, racial, or religiously based genocides but that political revolutionary or anti-revolutionary genocides, such as those in

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[١٣] Chirot Daniel and McCauley Clark, '*Why Not Kill Them All? The Logic and Prevention of Mass Murder*', Princeton University Press, NJ. (2006), P. 20

[١٤] Kuper (2009: 57)

[١٥] Kuper (2009: 58)

Cambodia or in Indonesia during Suharto's attack on the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965, are the product of other factors (legitimacy problems, moral exclusion, blaming the victim, 'tolerance' of an international patron for a regime's genocidal policies, social unrest due to economic conditions, and the onset of war).[١٦]

Other structural explanations focus on how the structure of political regimes determines the adoption (or not) of genocidal policies. One of the earliest comparative explanations of genocide, offered by Irving Horowitz ,[١٧]argues that genocide is inherent to totalitarian political systems. Because totalitarian regimes attempt to exert total political, economic, and social control over all aspects of life and over all members of society, such regimes inexorably end up liquidating whole groups of people who are deemed to be outside of, or hostile to, the totalitarian order.

With the help of these theories and assumptions I will test the hypotheses already formed to determine the most important factors behind committing politicides.

٣. Elite

A number of geno- politicides in both recent and contemporary history are strongly associated with political leaders who are always described as brutal, cruel, merciless and alike. This association makes some scholars think that the brutality of these leaders, and not something else, were the source of the geno- politicides committed during their periods of reign. A number of scholars try to explain the Jewish Holocaust, for instance, by the personal psychology and life of Hitler. Walter Langer is an example of such scholars. In his book '*The Mind of Adolf Hitler: The Secret Wartime Report*', Langer quoted Hitler words in '*Mein Kampt*': "Among the five children there is a boy, let us say, of three.... When the

[١٦] Helen Fein, 'Revolutionary and Anti-revolutionary Genocides: A Comparison of State Murders in Democratic Kampuchea, 1975 to 1979, and in Indonesia, 1965 to 1966', Comparative Studies in Society and History 35 (1993): 796–823.

[١٧] Horowitz, Irving, '*Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power*, 4th ed.', Transaction Publishers, NJ. (1997)

parents fight almost daily, their brutality leaves nothing to the imagination; then the results of such visual education must slowly but inevitably become apparent to the little one" and concluded, on the basis of Freud's assumption about the importance of the first years of a child's life in shaping his/her future character, that "Human life and human suffering seem to leave this individual completely untouched as he plunges along the course he believes he was predestined to take" [١٨].

The Soviet leader between (1924-1953), Joseph Stalin, like Hitler, has also had unhappy childhood. He grew up in poverty. His mother was a washerwoman and his father was a cobbler. He caught small pox aged seven and was left with a pockmarked face and a slightly deformed left arm. He was bullied by the other children and felt a continual need to prove himself. His father was an alcoholic who dealt out regular beatings.[١٩] However, the similar childhoods of the two dictators resulted in quite different ideological orientations. Thus, Hitler executed millions of Jews after blaming them for supporting the Russian Communist revolution and the collapse of the German economy.[٢٠] Stalin followed the teachings of Karl Marx and Lenin, and was one of the leaders of the Communist revolution. Under his reign, Stalin executed millions of his own people after accusing them in acting against the communist style of economy.

The Cambodian dictator, Pol Pot, who also killed hundreds of thousands of his population had a different childhood from that of Hitler and Stalin. Pot's family was rich so he had the opportunity to study in Paris where he espoused the Marxist ideology and return to Cambodia to fight for communism. [٢١]

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[١٨] Langer Walter C. '*The Mind of Adolf Hitler: The Secret Wartime Report*', Basic Books, New York, (1972), P. 153.

[١٩] Biography Online. http://www.biographyonline.net/politicians/russian/joseph-stalin.html

[٢٠] Allan Hall, '*Has historian finally discovered real reason for Hitler's obsessive hatred of Jews?*' Mail Online, June 19, 2009. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1194194/Has-historian-finally-real-reason-Hitlers-obsessive-hatred-Jews.html#ixzz3phpZBjDK

[٢١] Encyclopedia Britannica

Like Pol Pot, Mehmet Talaat Pasha, the Ottoman leader who was the main penetrator of the Armenian genocide in 1915, has not mentioned to suffer from any psychological complex in his childhood.

On the other hand, one can mention many political leaders who have had hard raising, such as the former Malaysian president Mahathir Mohamad, but not involved in any violent action against innocent people. Accordingly, it could be concluded that there is no firm correlation between perpetrating geno- or politicide and the psychology of the perpetrators. One can also conclude that the ideological affiliation of the political leader is not an indicator for his/her political violence. Both Stalin and Gorbachev, for instance, are Marxist-Leninist and both led the Soviet Union and its communist party but while the leadership of Stalin caused the death of millions of innocent people, the leadership of Gorbachev resulted in the revival of democracy and the right of self-determination for the empire nations. Similarly, both Osama bin Laden (the former leader of al-Qaeda Network) and Rached Ghannouchi (the leader of the Tunisian Islamic movement En-Nahda) are Islamic fundamentalist but while bin Laden turned Afghanistan into a base for terrorism, Ghannouchi contributes to build modern and democratic state in Tunis. So, it is not the ideologies of the political leaders, but their own extreme ideological interpretation, and their own extreme political views are the crucial factor behind adopting genocidal policies.

Based on these facts the hypothesis suggesting that 'elite' is a crucial factor behind committing geno- or politicides is not acceptable.

٤. Rational Choice

The standard model of the '*rational choice theory*' depicts the agent as being capable of choosing the 'best' way to act in a given (often subjectively perceived) situation, after having assessed the consequences of the available (feasible)

opportunities [٢٢]. Applying this theory to politics, Benjamin Valentino and Manus Midlarsky assume that genocide is a rational choice made by elites to achieve specific policy goals. Furthermore, Valentino argues that the political elites employ genocide against a particular group in order to force victims to acquiesce. Genocide is employed when earlier, less radical policies have failed or are no longer practical. [٢٣]

Unlike Langer and other scholars who try to explain geno- or politicide on the basis of the perpetrators' psychology, Valentino and Midlarsky try to explain geno- or politicide with the political crisis, especially war, where phenomenon takes place. Following a quantitative method of research, Martin Shaw, Valentino and Jay Ulfelder [٢٤] found that wars vary positively with genocides. Shaw argues that 'genocide is a form of war and that the logic of genocide is closely associated with the logic of war'. In war, he argues, the civilian groups are more likely to be constructed as 'enemies', military means of destruction are more likely to be deployed, and military and political centers of power are more likely to be closely allied [٢٥]. According to Valentino, "governments are most likely to perpetrate mass killing when they are fighting insurgencies or engaged in civil wars" [٢٦]. Midlarsky views genocide as a response to threat. War creates conditions of state-insecurity and vulnerability, he argues, and loss in war triggers disproportionate responses to what he calls 'imprudent realpolitik' in which civilian populations are constructed as threatening enemies. [٢٧]

Based on these theories or assumptions, one can assume that war is a source for genocides. Further, the more the states involve in wars the more genocides occur. Such an

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[٢٢] (Kuper, 2009: 847)
[٢٣] (Valentino, 2004: 72–74)
[٢٤] Jay Ulfelder and Benjamin Valentino, '*Assessing Risks of State-Sponsored Mass Killing*', Washington, DC: Political Instability Task Force (2008)
[٢٥] Martin Shaw (2003), '*War and Genocide: Organized Killing in Modern Society*', Cambridge: Polity, (2003).
[٢٦] Ulfelder (2008: 14)
[٢٧] (Midlarsky, 2005: 94)

assumption, however, cannot be confirmed. Even the Jewish Holocaust, which is viewed as the most brutal genocide in the recent history, cannot be considered as a product of the war waged by Hitler's Germany against its neighbors in Europe. In his book, '*Genocide: A Reference Handbook*', Howard Ball notes that in 1935, the German citizenship of the Jews was revoked. In 1938, more than 500 synagogues were destroyed as well as hundreds of Jewish businesses. Just before the war began in 1939, in a speech in Berlin, Hitler said that if there was a world war, it would result in the "annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe" [٢٨].This is a clear evidence that the Holocaust was planned before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Similarly, no war had something to do with the genocide of Rwanda in 1994. The April 6, 1994 shooting down of the Habyarimana's plane in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, provided a perfect pretext for militant Hutus to take up machetes against the Tutsi minority, whom they suspected of killing their president. This frenzied war continued for three months, from April to July, 1994 in which a million Tutsis were hacked to death [٢٩].

Pol Pot provides one more example of genocide where no war has been waged. Thus, from 1975 to 1979, the rebel Cambodian leader Pol Pot overthrew the government and led his Khmer Rouge army in a reign of violence, fear, and execution of nearly two million of his domestic enemies. [٣٠]

These examples and many others do not support the assumption of Martin Shaw and other theorists that genocide is a form of war and that the logic of genocide is closely associated with the logic of war. Nor do they support the assumption that war is a source of genocides. Otherwise, genocides would occur in every state involved in wars but the

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[٢٨] Ball Howard (2011), '*Genocide: A Reference Handbook*', ABC-Clio, Santa Barbara, CA. (2011), P. 96

[٢٩] Mohan, Raj P. (2005) '*Genocide: Approaches, Case Studies, and Responses*', Algora (2005), P. 188

[٣٠] (Ball, 2011: 101)

historical evidences say something different. However, the rejection of this hypothesis does not deny the fact that wars could, in some cases, provide a suitable environment for committing genocides. Many dictators, have exploited wartimes to get rid of undesired groups by accusing them of cooperation with the enemy. Saddam Hussein, for instance, launched many genocidal campaigns against the Iraqi Kurds during the war with Iran. Tens of thousands of innocent Kurds were killed on the pretext that they supported the Iranians.

It is also impossible to believe that killing millions of innocent people can be a rational choice. History, repeatedly tells us that geno- politicides always result in the destruction of societies even when the perpetrators gain some advantages in the short run. The fatal fate of Talaat Pasha, Hitler, Pol Pot, Milosevic, Saddam Hussein and many other genocide perpetrators shows that mass killing can never be a rational choice. Accordingly, the hypothesis that the 'rational choice' is a source of geno- or politicides cannot be accepted.

٥. 'Plural Society' and Regime Type

As mentioned above, Leo Kuper finds a strong link between genocide and ethnically divided society, or what he calls 'plural society'. Such a society could easy be an arena for struggle amongst its ethnic groups. This struggle may turn into a large scale civil war if the ruled regime allies itself to one group against the other(s). Such civil wars almost result in mass killing, ethnic cleansing and genocides. Richard Hovanissian applied similar argument to the Armenian Genocide and concluded that the existence of a plural society "with clearly defined racial, religious, and cultural differences" in Ottoman Turkey was one of the preconditions for the genocide of 1915 .[٣١] Helen Fein also notes that

[٣١] Hovannisian, Richard G. (1994), '*Etiology and Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide*' in Andreopoulos George J. ed., '*Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*', University of Pennsylvania Press, (1994), P. 112

societies marked by ethnic stratification are more likely to be predisposed to ethnic, racial, or religiously based genocides.[٣٢] However, both Kuper and Fein stress that 'plural societies' will not be vulnerable to geno- politicides unless two variables are available:

١. They are ruled by totalitarian regimes.

٢. Political or economic inequality is superimposed on ethnic, religious, racial, or socioeconomic differentiation.

With regard to the first variable, the strong connection between totalitarianism and geno- politicides lies in the nature and characteristics of the totalitarian regime itself. According to Bruce Pauley, *'Totalitarianism' is characterized by: (1) the extraordinary powers of the leader; (2) the importance of an exclusionist ideology; (3) the existence of a single mass party; (4) a secret police prepared to use terror to eradicate all domestic opposition; (5) a monopoly of the communications media as well as over the educational systems; (6) a determination to change basic social, artistic, and literary values; and (7) an insistence that the welfare of the state be placed above the welfare of its citizens* .[٣٣] Moreover, the totalitarian dictators, according to Pauley, are free to reach major decisions without consulting other individuals or institutions. They were not bound by any laws or customs and were unlikely to be affected by appeals to conscience, sentiment, or pity. They are not even restrained by official ideology because they alone decide what the ideology *du jour* should be; they do not hesitate to reverse previously held ideological positions however much they might deny it.[٣٤] Therefore, it is easy to note that the vast majority of the geno-politicides committed in the recent history have been carried by totalitarian regimes or occurred in societies ruled by such regimes. The Ottoman Turkey, the Soviet Union, Nazi

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[٣٢] Helen Fein, 'Accounting for Genocide after 1945: Theories and Some Findings', *International Journal on Group Rights* 1 (1993): 88–92.

[٣٣] Pauley, Bruce F. (2003) '*Hitler, Stalin, and. Mussolini: Totalitarianism in the Twentieth Century*', 2nd ed., Harlan Davidson, Wheeling, IL. (2003), P. 1

[٣٤] (Pauley, 2003:2).

Germany, Cambodia, China, North Korea, Ethiopia, Syria, Sudan, Iraq, Uganda, Rwanda and many other states provide good examples of this phenomenon.

With regard to the second variable, the unjust distribution of political power and economic resources amongst the ethnic groups of which the plural society constitutes results in social cleavages which, in return, lead to bloody ethnic conflicts and geno- or politicide. The most brutal genocides occur when an ethnic minority enjoys political power and economic resources at the expense of the majority. Rwanda is an example here. As concluded by Graham Kinloch and Raj Mohan, the skewed resource distribution and consequent resource scarcity (in Rwanda) fueled an ethnic war that erupted into its most violent form in the postcolonial era [٣٥].

The struggle for power and economic resources was also the main motivation behind the geno- politicides of East Pakistan, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, in the beginning of 1971, and in Burundi in 1972 when Hutu radicals launched an uprising against the country's Tutsi-dominated military, massacring several thousand Tutsi civilians. In response, Micombero's government began a selective genocide, aimed at eliminating Hutu political aspirations for good. [٣٦]

However, it is worthy to know that some totalitarian regimes or rulers make use of the ethnic divisions in their society to broaden their popularity through allying with one ethnic group against the others. The Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir is an example for such a phenomenon. In 2003, al-Bashir initiated a violent bloodbath in Darfur between the Muslims with whom he allied and the Afro-Arab population. Nearly 400,000 residents of the Darfur region have been murdered by al-Bashir's Muslim militia, the *Janjaweed*. Millions more have been displaced from their villages and living in poverty

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[٣٥] Kinloch, Graham C. & Mohan Raj P. (2005) '*Genocide: Approaches, Case Studies, and Responses*', Algora, New York. (2005), P. 171

[٣٦] (Ball, 2011: 99-100)

in camps in Darfur and across the border in Chad.[٣٦]Today's Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Turkey and many other states are simply arenas where the struggle for political power and economic resources is causing politicides in the name of identity and different ethnic affiliations. On the basis of these facts, the hypothesis of the crucial role of '*plural society*' and 'regime type' in causing politicides, is accepted.

٦. Colonial Legacy and External Intervention

Another important factor behind committing politicides is the colonial legacy and external interventions in the interior affairs of the states suffered from ethnic divisions. Thus, the strategy of "*Divide and Rule*" which has been adopted by the colonial powers to control their colonies in the so-called *Third World* resulted, among other things, in a large number of ethnic conflicts from which many of them turned into geno- or politicides. The partition of India after its independence in 1947 into two states is probably the best example of the '*Divide and Rule*' strategy of the British colonial empire toward the weak nations of the Third World.

As argued by William Hewitt,[٣٨]India and Pakistan have shared a feeling of 'mutual distrust' ever since the partition of India and the eventual creation of Pakistan as an independent state. This distrust was an outcome of the colonial strategy of 'divide and rule'. Then, the relationship between the Hindu Indian and the Muslim Pakistan was characterized by mutual fear and hatred.

The 'ideological orientations' of the Hindus and the Muslims; 'Secular Indian Nationalism' and 'Islam in Danger', became the basis for the Kashmir conflict between the two countries. The issue became more complicated because the ruler of Kashmir (Maharaja) was a Hindu and the population of

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[٣٦](Ball, 2011: 110)

[٣٨]Hewitt William, '*Defining the Horrific: Readings on Genocide and Holocaust in the 20th Century*', West Chester University, (2004).

Kashmir was predominantly Muslim.[٣٩] Consequently, Kashmir witnessed many genocidal episodes.

The Jewish state 'Israel' which was created with a huge British help in Palestine is another example of the influence of the colonial legacy on the region's peoples. Thus, since the partition of Palestine into two states (in 1947) until the present day, tens of genocides have been carried out by the Israelis against the Palestinians. Sabra and Chatila was probably the most brutal one of them. The British journalist Robert Fisk described this genocide: "*Lebanese Christian militiamen enter camps at Sabra and Chatila, in Beirut, to carry out revenge attacks on Palestinian refugees, with occupying Israeli forces guarding the camps and firing flares to aid the attacks at night. After three days of rape, fighting and brutal executions, militias finally leave the camps with 1,700 dead*".[٤٠]

Germany and Belgium have also left their imprints on many conflicts in Africa. According to Howard Ball "The Herreros were native African herdsmen who migrated to present-day Namibia in the 17th century. When Germany entered Africa in the 19th century as a colonial power, the Herrero territory was annexed in 1885 as a part of German South West Africa. After a series of uprisings against the German colonial farmers, the German military, between 1904 and 1907, exterminated four-fifths of the Herrero population". [٤١]

Graham Kinloch also notes that both German and Belgian colonists in Rwanda favored the Tutsis over the Hutus for natural and social resource distribution in land and cattle to educational and job opportunities, and this discrimination had its significant influence on the genocide. [٤٢]

Vamik Volkan also notes that "*Rwanda's population was just over eight million, with 90 percent Hutu, 9 percent Tutsi, and 1 percent Twa. Under Belgium administration of the territory,*

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[٣٩] Jauhari, Alka. '*India-Pakistan Relations: International Implications*', Asian Social Science, January 2013

[٤٠] Robert Fisk, '*The Forgotten Massacre*', The Independent, September 15, 2012

[٤١] (Ball, 2011: 93)

[٤٢] (Kinloch, 2005: 169)

the political power of the minority Tutsi was preserved because they were considered a more 'advanced' tribe. The conscious and unconscious racist attitudes of the colonial powers, both German and Belgian, helped maintain distinctions between Hutu and Tutsi" [٤٣].

Today's great powers, especially the United States, also intervene in the genocidal conflicts that occur in different regions around the world. These interventions, however, are almost characterized by selectivity and duality. The US intervention in former Yugoslavia, for instance, was positive or constructive. That is because it put an end to the genocides perpetrated by the then Serbian leaders against other ethnic groups. At the same time, the United States insists on supporting Israel despite all of its genocides against the Palestinians.

The American opposition to the creation of International Crime Court (ICC) weakens the efforts made to prevent geno- or politicides, and simultaneously protects the perpetrators.

According to Howard Ball, "there is the perception that ceding legal and prosecutorial powers to an independent (ICC) is equivalent to turning over a segment of the United States' "national sovereignty" to the (ICC) and that American military personnel and their political leaders would become the targets for partisan prosecutors". [٤٤]

These, and many other examples, can confirm the hypothesis that the colonial legacy and the negative or destructive external interventions (i.e. aligning with the strongest and aggressive party of the genocidal conflict) could be a source for more geno- or politicides.

٧. Conclusion

As a response to the efforts made by Raphael Lemkin, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved a

[٤٣] Volkan, Vamik (1998) '*Blood Lines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*', Westview Press, Colorado, (1998), P. 14

[٤٤] Ball, 2011: 71)

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948 and adopted it in 1951. Lemkin defined genocide as "a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves". On the basis of this definition, the UN Convention defined genocide as "the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such". Since then many scholars have been occupying with redefining and explaining the phenomenon of genocide. Some of those scholars, such as Combs, [٤٥]Porter [٤٦]and Barbara Harff, argued that the UN definition suffers from several flaws; most importantly is that it is restricted to ethnic cleansing or mass killing and does include the crimes carried out by the dictatorial and totalitarian regime against the groups and individuals who oppose their policies.

Barbara Harff made an important difference between genocide and politicide. According to Harff, politicide, unlike genocide, includes the crimes committed against groups defined primarily in terms of their political opposition to the regime and dominant groups. Including the political genocide in the UN Convention is of high significance to protect the political groups and parties against the persecution posed by the totalitarian regimes on their own populations.

The source of geno- or politicides is a subject of disagreement among the scholars within the field of social and political sciences. Therefore, I formed and tested four hypotheses regarding this phenomenon in order to achieve a comprehensive analysis.

The first hypothesis assumes that psychology of the leaders is the most important factor behind perpetrating geno- or politicide. This hypothesis could not be confirmed due to the fact that there are not common psychological features characterizing the perpetrators of geno- or politicide. Nor does

[٤٥] Combs, C. C., '*Terrorism in the 21st Century*', New Jersey: Prentice Hall, (2003)
[٤٦] Porter, J. N. (ed.), '*Genocide and Human Rights, A Global Anthology*', Washington, DC: University Press of America, (1982)

the ideological affiliation of the leaders play a significant role in the ultra-aggressive behavior of the leaders.

The second hypothesis, which assumes that committing geno- or politicide is a rational choice made by leaders to defeat the threats they face during wartimes, can also not be confirmed. That is because many geno- or politicides have been committed during periods of peace.

A third hypothesis assumes that geno- or politicide is more likely to occur in the 'plural societies' or the societies who are divided among two or more competing ethnic groups, and ruled by dictatorial or totalitarian authorities, than in the homogenous societies. Thus, the socially divided societies are always available to struggle for power and economic resources, and this struggle can be turn into a large scale armed conflict and even genocides when the government aligns itself with one of the fighting groups. The absence of democracy and the violation of the human rights are also significant factors behind the emergence of geno- or politicide in the plural societies. This hypothesis is confirmed by the vast majority of observations about genocides in the recent history.

The last hypothesis assumes that the colonial legacy and the external interventions, especially those of the great powers, in the genocidal conflicts could be reasons for perpetrating more geno- or politicide. The principle of 'divide and rule', and the political and economic domination imposed by the great powers on the weak nations contribute to create or trigger competing ethnic groups and, then, a bloody struggle amongst these groups. The world's recent history provides us with many examples of genocides caused by colonial legacy and destructive external interventions through which a great power support the aggressor at the expense of the weak party of the conflict. Accordingly, the hypothesis is confirmed.

On the other hand, one can conclude that consolidating the principles of democracy and human rights, fighting poverty and economic backward, and supporting the developing

nations to fight the colonial legacies and putting an end to the negative or destructive external interventions in their interior affairs are the most effective weapons to fight and prevent geno- or politicide.

ملخص البحث

"الدوافع السياسية لجرائم الإبادة الجماعية"

يهدف هذا البحث الى تحديد الدوافع السياسية لارتكاب جرائم الإبادة الجماعية. ولبلوغ هذه الغاية لابد من التمييز بين جريمة "الإبادة الاثنية" (Genocide) وجريمة "الإبادة السياسية" (Politicide). ففي حين يشير المصطلح الأول الى الجرائم التي تُرتكب ضد مجموعات اثنية، يشير المصطلح الثاني الى الجرائم التي تُرتكب ضد مجموعات كبيرة من السكان بسبب معتقداتهم السياسية ومعارضتهم لنظام الحكم الذي يدير بلدهم. وهذا التمييز بين المصطلحين له أهمية بالغة في حماية الافراد والمجموعات والأحزاب السياسية، ومنع ارتكاب جرائم بحقهم.

وبالاستعانة ببعض النظريات في حقل العلوم السياسية والاجتماعية تمت صياغة أربعة افتراضات حول مصادر جرائم الإبادة الاثنية والسياسية، ومن ثم فحص تلك الافتراضات على ضوء ملاحظات واقعية.

واستخلص البحث ان المجتمعات غير المتجانسة أو المنقسمة الى مجموعات اثنية متنافسة هي أكثر عرضة لجرائم الإبادة الاثنية والسياسية لا سيما حين تُحكم تلك المجتمعات من خلال أنظمة دكتاتورية وشمولية. ولا تتعرض المجتمعات ذات المكون الاثني الواحد الى جرائم مشابهة الا في حال وقوعها تحت حكم شمولي لا يعير أهمية لمبادئ الديمقراطية وحقوق الانسان.

واستنتج البحث كذلك ان الإرث الاستعماري في بلدان ما يُسمى بالعالم الثالث عاملا مهما في صنع وتحفيز جرائم الإبادة الاثنية والسياسية. فقد ساهمت سياسة "فرّق تسد" التي اتبعتها القوى الاستعمارية في تقسيم المجتمعات التي خضعت لسيطرتها الى مجاميع متناحرة وعمقت الصراعات فيما بينها.

أما تدخلات القوى العظمى في النزاعات الداخلية للبلدان النامية فهي الأخرى لها دورها الكبير في اثارة الاقتتال الاثني والسياسي، كما هو حال التدخل الغربي السلبي في الازمة السورية. وفي الوقت ذاته، يُمكن لتدخلات القوى العظمى ان توقف الاقتتال وحروب الإبادة إذا كانت تلك التدخلات إيجابية وبنّاءة كما هو حال تدخل حلف الناتو في يوغسلافيا السابقة.

ان توسيع مفهوم الإبادة الجماعية ليشمل الجرائم السياسية التي ترتكبها الأنظمة الشمولية بحق شعوبها كفيل بتوفير حماية لتلك الشعوب مما تلاقيه من تعسف على ايدي حكامها. كما وان تقديم

الدعم والمساندة للمحاكم الدولية المختصة بمحاكمة مرتكبي جرائم الإبادة الاثنية والسياسية يسهم الى حدكبير في تقليل تلك الجرائم.

Abstract

This research aims at determining the political motivations of perpetrating genocide. To achieve this goal, it is inevitable to make difference between 'genocide' and 'politicide'. While the first term refers to an eradication targeting an ethnic group, the second one refers to mass killing targeting a large number of people who are defined in the term of their political and ideological orientations.

Distinguishing 'genocide' from 'politicide' is of a high significance for protecting political parties, groups, and individuals, and preventing political regimes from committing politicide against them.

Relying on several theories and assumptions within the field of social and political sciences, four hypotheses regarding the sources of geno- or politicide, are formed and tested against many empirical observations.

It is concluded that 'plural societies' or societies which are divided amongst more than two competing ethnic groups are more likely to have geno- or politicides, especially when they ruled by totalitarian regimes. However, the homogeneous societies could also be subjects for geno- or politicide if the rulers reject the principles of democracy and human rights.

The colonial legacy in the so-called Third World is also an important factor for creating geno- or politicides. Thus, the policy of '*divide and rule*' has resulted in dividing many societies into competing groups and then deepening the struggle amongst these groups.

The '*destructive'* interventions of the great powers in the interior affairs of the Third World countries, such as the US intervention in Syria, also contribute to flame the ethnic conflicts from which those nations suffer. While the '*constructive'* interventions, such as the NATO intervention in the Yugoslavian conflict, contribute to deter the aggressors and prevent geno- or politicides.

Additionally, widening the United Nations' definition and convention of genocide to include crimes against political individuals, groups, and parties would provide an effective protection to the world's nations against genocides.

Moreover, supporting the efforts made by the world's tribunals to prosecute perpetrators of geno- or politicide, wherever they are, is an effective way to fight and prevent geno- or politicides.