

Genocide and Social Time¹

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De acordo com Donald Black, todo conflito resulta de movimentos do tempo social – alterações na diversidade, na estratificação, ou no grau de intimidade. É o caso para os conflitos genocidas, que envolvem transformações em termos de diversidade e estratificação. Genocídios resultam de ampliações na diversidade, como no caso do contato intercultural, e reduções na estratificação, como quando membros de um grupo étnico subordinado buscam elevar seu status. Mas o genocídio é ele próprio um movimento no tempo social, uma redução da diversidade e um aumento na estratificação, e que provoca ainda mais conflito. A teoria aqui apresentada explica os conflitos que levam ao genocídio, bem como aqueles que dele resultam.

Palavras-chave: genocídio, moralidade, sociologia pura, tempo social, violência

According to Donald Black, all conflicts result from movements of social time – changes in diversity, stratification, or intimacy. This is true of genocidal conflicts, which involve changes in diversity and stratification. Genocide results from increases in diversity, such as through intercultural contact, and decreases in stratification, such as when members of a subordinate ethnic group seek to increase their status. But genocide is also a movement of social time, a reduction of diversity and an increase in stratification, and it causes further conflict. The theory presented here explains the conflicts that lead to genocide as well as those that result from it.

Keywords: genocide, morality, pure sociology, social time, violence

Introduction

In 1915 Turkey, Turkish gendarmes play the so-called “game of swords,” which involves tossing Armenian women from horses and impaling them on swords sticking up from the ground (BALAKIAN, 2003, p. 315). In 1942, the men of German Police Battalion 101 kill 1,500 Jews from Jozefow, Poland. Often their bullets strike the targets in such a way that “blood, bone splinters, and brains” spray everywhere (BROWNING, 1998, p. 64). The men are “quite literally saturated in the blood of victims shot at point-blank range” (BROWNING, 1998, p. 162). In 1994 Rwanda, Hutus kill their Tutsi victims with low-tech weapons such as machetes and clubs studded with nails. They chop off arms, legs, and breasts. They throw children down wells (DIAMOND, 2005, p. 316). They impale people like kebabs (HATZFELD, 2005, p. 81). They cut the Achilles tendons of those they cannot kill right away to keep them from running (ALVAREZ, 2001, p. 109; TAYLOR, 2002, p. 164).

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These are glimpses of *genocide* – a form of ethnically based mass killing (CAMPBELL, 2011). Genocide scholars sometimes focus on “desk killers,” “bureaucratization,” and the like, but scenes like these remind us of the reality of so much face-to-face, enthusiastic killing. These behaviors shock and disturb us, and we may refer to genocide as “extraordinary human evil” (WALLER, 2002, pp. 9-22), a “miracle of evil” (OPDYKE and ARMSTRONG, 1999, p. 118), an “icon of evil” (BERGER, 2004, pp. 145, 157), “more than wickedness (...) more than barbarity” (quoted in HATZFELD, 2005, pp. 27, 50), the “most heinous” variety of violence (PINKER, 2011, p. 320), or the “work of *Homo sapiens* at its worst” (DAVIS, 2005, p. 35). Condemnations of genocide are not explanations, though, and if we are to explain genocide, we must not confuse our own moral judgments with those of the killers. The truth is that the killers often see themselves as righteous and their targets as evil. Recognize this and genocide immediately becomes easier to understand. Though we see the targets of genocide as victims and find the violence against them shocking, the killers see them as offenders, wicked people who deserve their punishment – apostates, heathens, invaders, rebels, traitors, parasites, murderers, or thieves.

In sociological terms, genocide is not just *deviant behavior*, a behavior that some people condemn; it is also *social control*, a way of handling deviant behavior. It arises out of conflicts – clashes of right and wrong. In previous work, I have offered a theory of genocide as social control (CAMPBELL, 2009; 2010; 2011). But this was limited in that, as a theory of social control, it explained only the handling of ethnic conflicts, not the conflicts themselves. Here I focus on genocidal conflicts – the conflicts that give rise to genocide, and also those arising from genocide. As we shall see, the same theory can help us better understand why genocides occur and why people react to them as they do. The theory is sociologist Donald Black’s (2011) new theory of conflict, which views all conflict as the result of movements of *social time*.

Social space and social time

Social time is a new concept in Black's *pure sociology*, a theoretical strategy that previously explained various kinds of behaviors only with their location and direction in *social space*. Black introduced pure sociology – and the idea of social space – in *The Behavior of Law* (1976), which predicted the extent to which *law*, or “governmental social control,” would be used in response to conflicts. For example, within a society, conflicts across greater distances in social space – such as conflicts between strangers – attract more law than closer conflicts – such as conflicts between intimates (BLACK, 1976, pp. 40-48). Thus, the killing of a stranger, to give one example, is punished more severely than the killing of an intimate (COONEY, 2009, pp. 156-167). Conflicts at higher elevations in social space – such as conflicts between two high-status persons – attract more law than conflicts at lower elevations – such as conflicts between two low-status persons (BLACK, 1976, pp. 16-21). When husbands kill their wives, then, the killing is treated more severely the higher the couple's status (COONEY, 2009, pp. 36-37). Conflicts with a downward direction in social space – such as when someone has a grievance against a subordinate – attract more law than upward conflicts – such as when someone has a grievance against a superior (BLACK, 1976, pp. 21-29). In many slave societies, for example, masters could kill their slaves without penalty, while slaves who killed their masters were tortured and executed (COONEY, 2009, pp. 39-42).

Subsequent to *The Behavior of Law*, Black and others not only expanded and applied the theory of law (e.g., BAUMGARTNER, 1992; BLACK, 1989; COONEY, 1994; 2009), they also applied pure sociology to the explanation of social control generally (BLACK, 1998; HORWITZ, 1990) and to specific forms of social control – such as collective violence (SENECHAL DE LA ROCHE, 1996), domestic violence (BAUMGARTNER, 1993), suicide (MANNING, 2012; forthcoming), drug testing (BORG and ARNOLD, 1997; BORG 2000), employee theft (TUCKER, 1989), criticism (HOFFMANN, 2006), and apology (COONEY and PHILLIPS, 2013)². Using the same theoretical strategy, we can examine any form of social control. Every conflict has a position in social space, and this explains how it is how it is handled.

2 Pure sociologists have mostly studied social control and conflict, and that is the focus here, but the strategy may be applied to any form of human behavior, and it has in fact been applied to subjects such as art (BLACK, 1998, pp. 168-169), ideas (BLACK, 2000; PHILLIPS and LAPUCK, forthcoming), research (JACQUES and WRIGHT, 2008), welfare (MICHALSKI, 2003), and predation (CAMPBELL, forthcoming; COONEY, 1997a; 2006: 58-60; COONEY and PHILLIPS, 2002).

This is the strategy I have used in my work on genocide. Genocide, I have argued, is a direct function of social distance and inequality. It is more likely when the antagonists are lacking in intimacy, interdependence, cultural similarity, and other forms of closeness, and when the aggressors have more authority, military power, and other forms of status than the targets. This theory enables us to predict when conflicts are most likely to be handled with genocide, who is most likely to participate, and whom the participants will target (CAMPBELL, 2009). It also explains the occurrence of predatory behaviors alongside genocide (CAMPBELL, forthcoming), the differences between cases of genocide (CAMPBELL, 2011) and the puzzling phenomenon of *contradictory behavior*, where the same individuals act as killers and rescuers (CAMPBELL, 2010). But as noted above, what it does not do is to explain the conflicts themselves – why the aggressors have grievances against the targets to begin with. Nor does it take into account the seriousness of the conflict – the nature of the grievances. It explains the handling of conflicts only with their position in social space.

But why are some conflicts more serious than others? And why do they occur in the first place? In regard to genocide, why would anyone have grievances against Turkish Armenians, European Jews, Rwandan Tutsis, or any of the other targets? Answering these questions requires a theory that explains what people define as wrong and whom they define as wrongdoers – a theory of conflict rather than just a theory of social control. Black's new theory of conflict answers such questions, and it does so, as noted above, with the concept of social time.

What is social time? It is simply the dynamic dimension of social life. Social life is unstable. No position in social space is fixed. Cultural distance, which refers to diversity, or cultural differences, increases and decreases as people accept and reject new ideas, new forms of music, or new ways of dressing. Relational distance, which refers to a lack of intimacy, increases and decreases as relationships end and new ones begin. Vertical distance, which refers to inequality, or stratification, increases and decreases as people gain and lose status. In other words, social space fluctuates – it changes. And just as change in the physi-

cal world may be identified with time, so too in the social world: Social change is social time. Each fluctuation of social space, then, is what Black calls a “movement of social time”, and it is these movements of social time, he says, that cause all conflict (2011, pp. 4-5).

Movements of social time cause conflict, and the faster and greater the movements, the more conflict they cause. All deviant behaviors, for example, are movements of social time. This is why they cause conflict, why they are deviant. So rape causes conflict – people condemn it, criminalize it, and punish it – because it is a drastic reduction of relational distance, a movement of relational time. Likewise, heresy causes conflict because it is a movement of cultural time, and theft causes conflict because it is a movement of vertical time. The same is true of cross-dressing, blasphemy, intolerance, insanity, bad manners, drunkenness, homicide, trespassing, promiscuity, adultery, lying, voyeurism, public nudity, and arrogance: All are movements of social time (BLACK, 2011, pp. 3-9).

Not all movements of social time are deviant behaviors, though. People sometimes praise those who form new relationships or achieve new successes. And many illnesses, injuries, and deaths may have no human cause. But such movements of social time may cause conflict even when they are not themselves defined as deviant. They may intensify or cause conflicts about other things, as when former friends or lovers begin finding fault with one another as they grow more distant. Or they may lead to false accusations of wrongdoing. In many societies, for example, someone who is downwardly mobile, such as a wealthy person who suddenly becomes poor due to illness, may falsely accuse someone of witchcraft, while someone who is upwardly mobile, such as a poor person who suddenly becomes very wealthy, may be the target of false accusations (BLACK, 2011, pp. 10-11, 15-16, 61-63, 83-84). Not all conflicts are as they seem, then, but all conflicts have the same kinds of causes: increases or decreases in diversity (in Black’s terminology, “overdiversity” or “underdiversity”), increases or decreases in intimacy (“overintimacy” or “underintimacy”), or increases or decreases in stratification (“overstratification” or “understratification”) (Idem, pp. 5-6).

The causes of genocide

The fundamental cause of genocide is overdiversity. Whenever two previously separated ethnic groups come into contact, conflict results. And wherever two ethnic groups live alongside one another, conflict is present. The latter situation may not seem to involve an increase in cultural diversity, and at the societal level, it may not. But in any multicultural society, people are constantly encountering those who are different, increasing the diversity in their lives. Diversity is thus an unstable property of social life, and as Black puts it, “who says diversity says conflict” (2011, p. 102). This applies to all types of diversity – including political, religious, and ethnic diversity. All lead to cultural clashes, even if only mild ones. Cultural clashes have a tendency to intensify, though. In most cases, if I offend you, our conflict may remain between the two of us. But if my political beliefs offend you, so do the beliefs of all those who share them – Democrats if I am a Democrat, Republicans if I am a Republican. The same is true of religion: A conflict with me over religion is also a conflict with my co-religionists. In cultural conflicts, then, the stakes are high. All cultural conflicts are prone to collectivization. This is all the more true of ethnic conflicts, since ethnic groups, whatever the reality, are normally thought of as extended kinship groups, and ethnic identity is relatively unchangeable. One thing this means is that those who are closest to us – our mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters – usually share our ethnicity. In any ethnic conflict, all who are closest to me, those I care about the most, are on my side. I am more likely to join in their grievances and fight in their battles. And since I cannot alter my ethnicity, I cannot easily switch sides, or come to share your view. Ethnicity is thus an especially dangerous cultural distinction.

An increase in ethnic diversity alone may lead to genocide – or similar behavior – such as when certain tribal groups kill all outsiders they encounter (BLACK, 2011, p. 103). Usually, however, something else must happen: An inferior group rises (or threatens to rise) or a superior group falls (or is in danger of falling). These social changes are understratification, reductions in stratification. Recall that

genocide normally involves superior ethnic groups attacking inferior ones. But prior to the genocide, the stratification between these groups decreases, and this causes the conflict that leads to genocide. Note that even though this involves a change in inequality rather than culture, all conflicts that occur across cultural boundaries – such as across ethnic boundaries – are in danger of becoming cultural conflicts. When murders or thefts cross ethnic boundaries, they are no longer just murders or thefts of individuals, but offenses by one group against another. Even if the original conflict has nothing to do with ethnicity, interethnic conflict has the potential to become collective, with each side mobilizing its own ethnic supporters.³

Scenarios of genocide

Colonialism is one situation that may involve large and sudden increases in diversity. In the 1850s, for example, white ranchers began moving into the Round Valley of Northern California, the home of the Yuki Indians. Ethnic conflict began immediately, as the white settlers made use of the valley without much regard to the prior inhabitants. They depleted wild game and other natural resources, fenced off areas of land used by the Indians, and kidnapped and enslaved Indian women and children, sometimes for their own use and sometimes to sell to others. The Indians then began killing stock belonging to the ranchers. And it was this offense – the Indians’ theft – that led to genocide. At first the genocide consisted of unconnected genocidal expeditions. Whenever cows, horses, or hogs were missing or found dead, the aggrieved ranchers would gather together a group of men to go out and kill nearby Indians – perhaps 50 at a time. Later, the settlers successfully petitioned the state government to fund a more permanent militia group – the Eel River Rangers – to deal regularly with such offenses (MILLER, 1979; CARRANCO and BEARD, 1981). As Black (2011, p. 87) notes, theft is always a reduction of wealth, and when, as in these cases, someone of lower status steals from someone of higher status, theft decreases stratification, if only slightly.

3 Although all cultural conflict is collective in logic, and although all interethnic conflict may potentially collectivize, other features of conflicts help determine whether collectivization actually occurs (SENECHAL DE LA ROCHE, 2001; see also CAMPBELL, 2011, pp. 593-595).

The Round Valley Genocide was similar to the killings of other California Indians and to the killings of Aborigines in Australia (KROEBER, 1961; REYNOLDS, 2006). In these cases the natives sometimes killed white settlers in addition to stealing from them, and in other colonial genocides, even greater threats to stratification might occur. In South-West Africa, for instance, an organized rebellion against German imperialism led to genocide of the Hereros in the early 1900s (DRECHSLER, 1980; MADLEY, 2004). What we see in all these cases is a massive increase in diversity, when two previously separated ethnic groups come into contact, followed by a decrease in stratification – sometimes very small, but sometimes much larger – when the natives offend the settlers.

Many other cases of genocidal conflict, though, do not begin with sudden increases in diversity. In Rwanda, for example, Tutsis and Hutus had lived alongside one another for centuries prior to the 1994 genocide. The degree of overdiversity was low, the result of fluctuations of cultural diversity in daily life rather than the drastic increases that arise from previously separated groups coming into contact. The degree of understratification, on the other hand, was much greater. The minority Tutsis had been politically subordinate to Hutus for decades when, in 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) – consisting mostly of Tutsi exiles from Rwanda – launched an invasion from Uganda. Prior to this, Rwanda's ruling party had faced an internal political challenge, and the president, Juvénal Habyarimana, had allowed rival political parties to form. After the invasion, he began peace talks with the RPF and eventually agreed to what were known as the Arusha Accords, a power sharing agreement very favorable to the RPF. The Arusha Accords would have excluded a major anti-Tutsi political party from the government, and they would have mandated that 50% of Rwanda's army officers and 40% of its troops come from the RPF. The president's party, though, and later President Habyarimana himself, opposed the agreement and sought to block its implementation. Others, too, began to see the RPF invasion and the Arusha Accords as a threat to the gains Hutus had made in the 1959 revolution, when the previously subordinate but majority Hutu population had gained political power. Each of the opposition parties thus split into a "Hutu Power" faction, which aligned with the re-

gime to oppose the Arusha accords, and a “moderate” faction, which continued to support the power-sharing agreement. The anti-Arusha Hutu Power forces gained further support with the October 21, 1993 assassination of the Hutu president of neighboring Burundi by Tutsi army officers and the anti-Hutu massacres that followed (FUJII, 2009; MAMDANI, 2001; PRUNIER, 1995).

The invasion by Tutsi exiles, the Arusha agreement, and the assassination of Burundi’s president were all movements of social time, and they led to a resurgence of ethnic grievances in Rwanda. Extremists within the government and their allies portrayed the civil war in ethnic terms. Tutsis had oppressed Hutus in the past and now sought to do so again. All Tutsis were enemies, whether they were members of the Burundian military, members of the Ugandan based RPF, or ordinary Rwandan citizens. But another fateful event occurred on April 6, 1994, when President Habyarimana’s plane was shot down. The Hutu Power forces immediately blamed the Tutsis – the RPF and their “accomplices.” The extremist forces began eliminating opposition leaders and formed an interim government composed only of the ruling party and the Hutu Power factions of the opposition parties. The RPF resumed its invasion, and the Hutu Power forces in Rwanda began killing Tutsi civilians – eventually about 800,000 of them.

In the Rwandan case, as with the colonial genocides, overdiversity and understratification together caused the genocide. Where the cultural changes are greatest, as in the colonial genocides, the immediate provocation to genocide might be small threats to ethnic stratification, such as thefts or isolated killings. But in a context of longstanding diversity, as in the Rwandan case, it takes something major, such as a rebellion or invasion. So in Rwanda, the RPF invasion and the events surrounding it threatened to end – or even to reverse – the political dominance of Hutus over Tutsis.

Many other cases are similar. For example, Bosnia’s secession from Yugoslavia in 1992 would have given Bosnia’s Muslim plurality (44%) political power over less numerous Serbs and Croats. Serbs were the dominant ethnic group in the Yugoslav Federation, and the Serbs in Bosnia, who made up 31% of the population, refused to become subordinate in an independent, Muslim-led Bosnia. Aided by the federal army and

outside paramilitaries, Bosnian Serbs began taking control of parts of Bosnia, and by the end of 1992 the newly declared Republika Srpska covered 70% of what had been Bosnian territory (CIGAR, 1995, p. 5; JUDAH, 1997, p. 239; MALCOLM, 1994, pp. 224-238). Because Muslims, Serbs, and Croats lived alongside one another throughout Bosnia, in order to turn this part of Bosnia into a new Serb state, the Serbs engaged in what would come to be called “ethnic cleansing,” which consisted of mass killings, imprisonment, gang rapes of women, deportations, and the destruction of mosques and other cultural artifacts (MANN, 2005, pp. 356-357). Genocide was thus only one component of the larger campaign of violence against Croats and Muslims, their property, and their symbols. In all, 200,000 to 250,000 Bosnian Muslims were killed – more than 10% of their population (GUTMAN, 1993, p. xxxi).

Combinations of overdiversity and understratification cause genocide, then. In many cases, as in the previous examples, these movements of social time are largely identical to the aggressors’ grievances against their targets. The grievances accurately describe the targets’ behavior – the cause of the genocide. But the aggressors might also make false accusations. Indeed, most genocidal conflicts involve a mixture of true and false accusations. In Rwanda, for example, the RPF had certainly invaded Rwanda, but they probably did not assassinate President Habyarimana (REUTERS, 2012). Hutus also falsely accused many Tutsis of conspiring with or aiding the rebels⁴. In other genocides, the major accusations are completely false, perhaps delusional. This was the case during the Holocaust, where, according to political scientist Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, the Nazis’ “proneness to wild, ‘magical thinking’ (...) and their incapacity for ‘reality testing’ generally distinguishes them from the perpetrators of other mass slaughters” (1996, p. 412). One false accusation was of Jewish treachery – a “stab in the back” – that led to Germany’s defeat in World War I (STAUB, 1989, p. 100; FRIEDLANDER, 1997, pp. 73-74). But the idea of Jews as organized conspirators went much further. For example, the Nazis believed that all their apparent enemies were simply Jewish puppets. The Nazis’ form of socialism – National Socialism – differed from both capitalism and communism, and they believed that international Jewry was the real source behind both of these

4 One Tutsi survivor, for example, tells of the false accusations against her father, who was said to have aided the RPF. After learning of these accusations, the Hutu man who was hiding this woman in his home told her, “Your father was a very bad Tutsi.” When he said the authorities had found 600 guns in her father’s home and a death list of Hutu names, she became furious: “If my father had so many guns, why didn’t he pass them out to the thousands of Tutsis who came to us asking for protection (...) why didn’t he use the guns to protect his wife and daughter from killers and rapists?” (ILIBAGIZA, 2007, pp. 95-97).

competing economic systems. This belief was later confirmed, the Nazis believed, by the alliance of capitalist and communist nations – the US, Britain, and the Soviet Union – against Germany (SNYDER, 2010, p. 217). More broadly, the Nazis believed the Jews sought to dominate all of humanity, and that they were thus behind all sorts of other evils. Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels, speaking of the Jews in 1937, put it like this: “Look, there is the world’s enemy, the destroyer of civilizations, the parasite among the peoples, the son of Chaos, the incarnation of evil, the ferment of decomposition, the demon who brings about the degeneration of mankind” (quoted in COHN, 1969, p. 204).

False accusations such as these result from the same kinds of movements of social time that lead to other genocidal conflicts. For example, warfare is an extreme movement of social time. As we have seen, when wars are inter-ethnic, they may lead to conflict involving all those who share the antagonists’ ethnicity. Wars may also lead to conflict with others. When a state loses a war, especially when this leads to a loss of territory, genocide becomes more likely. The Ottoman Empire had lost almost half of its territory during the two centuries prior to the 1915 genocide of Armenians in Turkey, and prior to the Holocaust, defeat in World War I had resulted in major territorial losses for Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (MIDLARSKY, 2005, pp. 135-162). Neither the Armenians nor the Jews were responsible, but in both cases these losses – a kind of downward mobility – not only exacerbated the already existing conflict with the losers’ ethnic inferiors, but also led to new, and false, accusations against them. In the case of the Holocaust, World War II also threatened the Nazis’ status, especially when the war with the Soviet Union began to prove much more difficult than expected. Hitler blamed the Jews for this war, and it was only after the invasion of the Soviet Union that the large-scale mass killing of Jews began⁵. A state that loses a war, loses territory, or fights a war experiences a rapid loss or threat of loss to its status. These social upheavals cause so much conflict that they may result in the creation of new enemies, as socially distant and inferior ethnic groups, regardless of their actual behavior, are accused of treason and other offenses.

5 Other movements of social time, such as Germany’s economic depression in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the Jews’ upward mobility during the early 20th century, no doubt also contributed to the false accusations that led to the Holocaust (BLACK, 2011, pp. 68-70).

Genocide as deviant behavior

Genocide responds to movements of social time – usually increases in diversity and decreases in stratification. But genocide is itself a movement of social time. It decreases diversity and increases stratification, so it, too, causes conflict. The targets of genocide condemn their killers, and when they are able, they may punish them. For example, in 1921 Soghomon Tehlirian, an Armenian, assassinated former Turkish Interior Minister Talaat Pasha, one of the architects of the Armenian genocide. Likewise, in 1960 Israeli operatives captured Adolf Eichmann in Argentina and took him to Israel, where he was tried, found guilty, and hanged for his role in the Holocaust. Outsiders, too, may involve themselves in genocidal conflicts and attempt to punish or prevent genocide. Or they may simply condemn it. So even though genocide is social control, a response to deviant behavior by the targets, it is also a deviant behavior – often extreme deviance, or evil – and its perpetrators may be subject to social control by others.

It may seem obvious that genocide is deviant⁶. But the deviant nature of genocide is a variable, not a constant. The targets condemn the genocides against them, but the aggressors might see their own actions as praiseworthy. And though some outsiders to the conflicts might condemn genocides or even try to prevent them, others might not care. Apathy was especially common in the distant past, when genocide was hardly deviant at all. “The shocking truth,” psychologist Steven Pinker notes, “is that until recently most people didn’t think there was anything particularly wrong with genocide – as long as it didn’t happen to them” (2011, p. 334; cf. CHALK and JONASSOHN 1990, p. 8; EVANS, 2008, p. 13; PAYNE, 2004, pp. 44-51). Since few people in the predmodern world viewed genocide as wrong – much less *evil* – people boasted of the genocides they committed, and they might falsely claim to have committed other genocides, exaggerating their brutality in order to frighten their enemies or impress their subjects (CHALK and JONASSOHN, 1990, pp. 59-60; FREEMAN, 1995, pp. 214-220). Even religious leaders might praise genocide and condemn restraint, as when Moses, in the Old Testament, chastises the Israelite army for allowing defeated Midianite women and children to live (NUMBERS 31: 14-

6 It is certainly much more common to think of genocide as a deviant behavior than to think of it as a form of social control – a response to the deviant behavior of others. After all, most genocidal scholars identify with the targets of genocide and condemn their killers. But social science is “value-free” (BERGER, 1963, pp. 5-6; BLACK, forthcoming; SEUBERT, 1991; WEBER, 1958). It cannot tell us whether the targets’ or the killers’ or our own values are correct, and in any case, such information would be sociologically useless – a distraction from the task of explanation. Understanding this difference – the difference between factual statements and value judgments – is especially important when studying deviant behavior and social control, where we are otherwise in danger of completely misunderstanding our subject. In this case, if we were to mistake our condemnation of genocide for a sociological classification, we might be tempted to think of genocide and the social control of genocide as behaviors completely unlike one another. But both are acts of social control, reactions to deviant behavior. Genocide involves moral judgments against the targets, and the condemnation and punishment of genocide involve moral judgments against the aggressors. They can be understood similarly.

17). But in modern societies, genocide has become more deviant. It is roundly condemned, and instead of boasting, those who commit genocide – and those who defend them – now engage in what is called *genocide denial* (FREEMAN, 1991, p. 195; PAYNE, 2004, p. 57; PINKER, 2011, p. 335; WIKIPEDIA, 2012a).

The move from boasting to denial occurred as *genocide* increasingly became more deviant. Even the coining of the word genocide is an example of this process. After Winston Churchill described the Nazis' destruction of nations as a "crime without a name," jurist Raphael Lemkin determined to name it and to get it recognized as a crime under international law (POWER, 2002, pp. 29-45). He succeeded, and in 1948 the United Nations passed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This has not always led to the willingness of outsiders to stop it. For fear that it might require military intervention, governments are often reluctant even to label an ongoing mass killing a genocide (MILES, 2006, pp. 255-256; POWER, 2002). But intervention has not been completely absent, and it appears to be increasing. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), established by the United Nations after the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides, have convicted more than 100 persons of genocide and other international crimes (HOLA, SMEULERS, BIJLEVELD, 2011, p. 412). And governments and intergovernmental organizations sometimes use military force to try to prevent or halt genocides and other mass killings. Examples include the 1994 United Nations Aid Mission for Rwanda (Unamir), a small operation that saved thousands of Tutsis, though it was unable to stop the genocide; the 1995 and 1999 Nato air strikes against Bosnia and Yugoslavia, respectively; and the 2011 air strikes against Libya by the United States and several other nations. The UN Security Council resolution authorizing the intervention in Libya's civil war referred to a 2005 UN document that identified an emerging norm known as the "responsibility to protect." Governments, according to the document, have a responsibility to protect their civilian populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, and when they cannot or will not do so, this becomes the international community's responsibility (EVANS, 2008, pp. 48-49; WIKIPEDIA, 2012b).

We have moved from a world where most people cared little about the genocides of others – perhaps not even disapproving of them – to a world where genocide is a crime, where international courts convict and imprison government officials for killing their own citizens, where nations intervene in civil wars to prevent the killing of civilians, where humanitarian groups document and publicize what they consider human rights violations all over the world, and where academics from numerous disciplines fill bookshelves with discussions of the evil of genocide and ways to prevent it. Why this change? Why is genocide – once ignored or even praised – now thought of as an incomprehensible evil? Why is genocide so deviant? Why does it attract so much social control?

Genocide has become more deviant, first of all, because it is a reduction of diversity – underdiversity – and underdiversity has become more deviant in the modern world. Underdiversity is more serious in diverse settings, while overdiversity is more serious in homogenous settings (BLACK, 2011, p. 139)⁷. With modern communication and transportation technologies have comedramatic increases in the diversity in people's lives – increases, for example, in their knowledge of and participation in other cultures and their interaction with cultural outsiders (COWEN, 2002, pp. 79-80). International organizations like the United Nations or multicultural societies like the US are especially diverse, and those associated with them are especially likely to condemn political censorship, religious persecution, and other assaults on diversity. But genocide is also more deviant now than in the pre-modern world because it involves a greater movement of social time. If the Israelites slaughtered the Midianites, the effects were mostly localized, but in an interconnected world with dispersed populations, the effects of genocide might be felt all over the world. Hitler's slaughter of European Jews, for example, altered the lives of Jews everywhere – and the lives of those connected to them relationally or culturally. Lemkin himself pointed to the possible effects of genocide on the culture of people other than the targets:

We can best understand this when we realize how impoverished our culture would be if the peoples doomed by Germany, such as the Jews, had not been permitted to create the Bible, or to give birth to an Einstein, a Spinoza; if the Poles had not had the opportunity to give to the world a Copernicus, a Chopin, a Curie; the Czechs, a Huss, a Dvorak; the Greeks, a Plato and a Socrates; the Russians, a Tolstoy and a Shostakovich (Quoted in POWER, 2002, p. 53).

7 Likewise, underintimacy is more serious between intimates, overintimacy between strangers, understratification between unequals, and overstratification between equals (BLACK, 2011, p. 139).

The future of genocide

As genocide becomes more deviant, intervention to prevent or punish genocide becomes more likely. And intervention makes genocide less likely for two reasons. First, it may directly prevent or stop the killing, and indeed, though not all interventions are successful, those that involve direct challenges to the aggressors or support for the targets do tend to reduce the severity of genocide (KRAIN, 2005)⁸. Second, remember that genocide occurs in a context of inequality, where the aggressors are superior to the targets – normally in size, political authority, and military strength. But as intervention becomes expected, conflicts are equalized. Outside opposition to the aggressors decreases their status, and support for the targets increases theirs.

For the same reason, genocide declines with the proliferation of liberal democracies. Many genocides have been led by states, but these are more likely to be totalitarian and authoritarian states, where political elites have so much power relative to the populations they rule, rather than democratic states, where political power is more diffuse (RUMMEL, 1994; 1995; see also COONEY, 1997b). Already, more than half of the world's population lives in a democracy (up from just over 12% in 1900), and the democratic form of government continues to spread (MODELSKI and PERRY, 2002, p. 365)⁹.

Remember also that genocide is more likely in a context of ethnic diversity – where there is cultural distance between ethnic groups – and that increasing diversity is one of the common causes of genocide. But increasingly, communication and transportation technologies allow for social closeness despite physical distance. While this increases the diversity in people's lives by bringing diverse peoples into contact with one another, it reduces the distances between them. They become culturally closer, more intimate, and more interdependent (BLACK, 2004, p. 24; COWEN, 2002, p. 79). Ultimately, globalization destroys the social distances conducive to genocide. There is no genocide in a global village¹⁰.

Already we see a decline in the kinds of situations that lead to serious ethnic conflicts, and fewer of these conflicts means less genocide. Many of the large movements of social time that commonly lead to genocidal conflicts – colonial wars, interstate wars, civil wars, and revolutions – are much less common. Colonial wars have ended, and since the end of the Cold War, interstate wars

8 But the possibility of intervention may increase the likelihood of genocide in some cases. Aggrieved members of subjugated ethnic groups may rebel against their governments – despite the likelihood of retaliatory genocide and despite the impossibility of military success – in the expectation that outside intervention in response to the genocide will enable them to achieve their goals (KUPERMAN, 2005; 2009). Conceivably, then, increasing intervention, if it leads to more rebellions that provoke genocide, could lead to more genocide overall. This does not appear to be happening, though, and in the long term, if intervention becomes more certain and more effective, genocide is likely to decrease.

9 In some cases, though, increasing democratization may lead to genocide by giving political power to otherwise disadvantaged ethnic majorities who have grievances against economically successful ethnic minorities (CHUA, 2003, pp. 163-175; see also MANN, 2005). To some extent, this is what happened in Rwanda. But overall, democracies are less genocidal than other governments, and we can expect less genocide in the long term.

10 Media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1964) coined the term "global village" to emphasize that modern technology had made instantaneous communication – something originally possible only face-to-face, at the village level – possible on a global scale. Black (2011, pp. 148-151) points out that as the relationships between people throughout the world come to resemble those of villagers in their closeness, they also resemble them morally. People become more concerned about what happens to one another, and they behave more altruistically (see also PINKER 2011, p. 292).

have “become few in number, mostly brief, and relatively low in battle deaths” (PINKER, 2011, p. 302). The number of civil wars peaked in the 1990s, but has declined since then. The decline in the number of deaths caused by civil wars is even greater (Idem, pp. 303-305). Revolutions have likewise become less frequent, and when they occur, less violent (PAYNE, 2004, pp. 100-115).

The causes of genocide and the conditions associated with it are declining, and the people of the world have become more hostile to it. But is genocide really any scarcer? All the attention given to genocide recently may leave the impression that it is not, but the evidence suggests otherwise. Since the end of World War II and the mass killings associated with it, the world has not again seen such a high level of genocide. The killings in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur were severe, but they were “spikes in a trend that is unmistakably downward. (...) The first decade of the new millennium is the most genocide-free of the past 50 years” (PINKER, 2011, p. 340).

Ending genocide, of course, is the goal of many genocide scholars, whose work, as sociologist Thomas Cushman puts it, is “characterized by a strong ideological belief that genocide is preventable and that knowledge about genocide will help bring about prevention” (2003, p. 524). Much of the work on prevention is valuable, and it makes sense for those working to prevent genocide to consult it. The larger story about genocide, however, is not that it occurs because of a lack of knowledge about its causes. Information about genocide cannot prevent genocide if no one wishes to prevent it – if people wish instead to exterminate their ethnic enemies or to stay out of others’ conflicts. Rather, genocide is caused by particular kinds of social changes occurring in particular social contexts. When the social conditions conducive to genocide were strongest, the conditions conducive to genocide prevention were weakest. Better knowledge about genocide earlier on would not have done much to prevent it. Conversely, perfect knowledge about genocide is not required now for its prevention. Recent social trends have led to the decline of genocide and to an increase in efforts to stop it when it occurs. This is likely to continue, regardless of how much our theories of genocide advance. And the theory I have presented explains why. Perhaps some of the trends identified here are only temporary, but should they continue into the far future, the pure sociology of genocide makes this prediction: Genocide is destined for annihilation.

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RESUMEN: En consonancia con Donald Black, todo conflicto resulta de movimientos del tiempo social – alteraciones en la diversidad, en la estratificación, o en el grado de intimidad. Es el caso para los conflictos genocidas, que envuelven transformaciones en términos de diversidad y estratificación. Genocidios resultan de ampliaciones en la diversidad, como en el caso del contacto intercultural, y reducciones en la estratificación, como cuando miembros de un grupo étnico subordinado buscan elevar su estatus. Pero el genocidio es él propio un movimiento en el tiempo social, una reducción de la diversidad y un aumento en la estratificación, y que provoca aún más conflicto. La teoría presentada em **Genocidio y tiempo social** explica los conflictos que llevan al genocidio, así como aquellos que de él resultan.

Palabras clave: genocidio, moralidad, sociología pura, tiempo social, violencia

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