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5-7-2020

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**Recommended Citation**

Bachman, Jeffrey (2020) "Cases Studied in *Genocide Studies and Prevention* and *Journal of Genocide Research* and Implications for the Field of Genocide Studies," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 14: Iss. 1: 2-20.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.14.1.1706>

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol14/iss1/4>

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## Cases Studied in *Genocide Studies and Prevention* and *Journal of Genocide Research* and Implications for the Field of Genocide Studies

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my former research assistant Lindsay Reesing for helping me gather data. I would also like to thank Benjamin Meiches, who not only provided me feedback when this was a conference paper, but continued to offer me feedback and guidance as the paper was being prepared for submission. Finally, I would like to thank Christian Gudehus and Matthew Krain for their feedback as my paper made it through the formal revision process.

# Cases Studied in *Genocide Studies and Prevention* and *Journal of Genocide Research* and Implications for the Field of Genocide Studies

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The field of genocide studies has greatly expanded over the last 20-30 years. Accompanying this growth has been a debate among scholars in the field that has, at times, been contentious.<sup>1</sup> As Adam Jones notes, the field has been in a “constant state of evolution, exploration—and confusion.”<sup>2</sup> As a result, Jones concludes it is best to accept that genocide “will forever be an ‘essentially contested concept’.”<sup>3</sup> Contestation and contention cover all areas of the genocide studies geography. The definition(s) and concept(s) forwarded by Raphaël Lemkin, who coined the very term “genocide,” have been discussed, debated, and disputed. The pragmatism of using the legal definition of genocide codified in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention) has been juxtaposed against the efficacy of employing such a constraining definition when it does not even fully account for Lemkin’s definition and conceptualization of the crime. How Lemkin’s understanding of genocide transformed into the one included in the Genocide Convention has also been widely chronicled, with some debate over which state(s) are primarily responsible for the resulting legal meaning of the term. Relatedly, questions have been raised about whether the term “genocide” ought to be placed alongside other egregious human rights violations as part of a broader conception of mass atrocity crimes. Finally, two of the remaining debates focus on the omission of protection for political and social groups and the exclusion of a prohibition against cultural genocide.

As the field of genocide studies expanded, two new journals emerged to deal with the questions and debates associated with the study of genocide, from cases and suspected cases, to the comparison of different cases, to legal, conceptual, and definitional debates, and to the prevention and punishment of the crime. The *Journal of Genocide Research* (JGR) published its first issue in 1999. As the Founding Editor, Henry Huttenbach identified a primary concern for the journal being the “sterile, dual-track approach to the Holocaust and to genocide.”<sup>4</sup> More specifically, Huttenbach noted that, despite efforts to point out the logical fallacy of treating the Holocaust as the “apple” and other genocides as merely other “fruit,” the separation of the former from the latter continued. Thus, JGR was created “instead to promote a study of genocide without relegating a special status on one or another incident of genocide.”<sup>5</sup> Additionally, JGR aims to encourage inquiry regarding theory and methodology, as well as to publish the works of authors from varied academic disciplines and policy experts.

Seven years later, in 2006, the International Association of Genocide Scholars itself, founded in 1994 by Helen Fein and Robert Melson, published the first issue of *Genocide Studies and Prevention* (GSP). GSP was created as an interdisciplinary journal to promote the prevention of genocide by educating, informing, and encouraging “new generations of scholars to conduct research on genocide and provide a forum for those who wish to work toward preventing it.”<sup>6</sup> To this end, GSP seeks to publish “innovative research on all aspects of the causes, dynamics, outcomes, and colossal consequences and implications” of genocide, and is “open to contributions that go beyond safe, approved, and established paradigms of scholarship and science,” when such contributions

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<sup>1</sup> This was experienced personally leading up to the launch of my book, Jeffrey S. Bachmann, *The United States and Genocide: (Re)Defining the Relationship* (London: Routledge, 2017). Andrew Woolford discusses some of the tensions in genocide studies in Andrew Woolford, “Unsettling Genocide Studies at the Eleventh Conference of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, July 16-19, 2014, Winnipeg-Canada,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 9, no. 2 (2015), 98-102. Additionally, Adam Jones offers evidence of the backlash he experienced from attempting to post to a genocide studies list: “Afghanistan: Rejected Posts to H-Genocide and Related Correspondence,” accessed May 1, 2019, <http://adamjones.freesevers.com/h-genocide.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Jones, *The Scourge of Genocide: Essays and Reflections* (London: Routledge, 2013), 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Henry R. Huttenbach, “From the Editor: *Apologia Rationalis*,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 1, no. 1 (1999), 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Israel W. Charny and Roger W. Smith, “Why GSP?” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1, no. 1 (2006), i.

are “anchored responsibly to the norms and safeguards of established academic and scientific disciplines.”<sup>7</sup>

JGR and GSP began with ambitious goals for the field of genocide studies. Though genocide studies is not “owned” by and, therefore, not limited to these two English-language journals, their missions, objectives, and reach make them ideal for the study of any trends that might be found in the study of genocide over the last twenty years. They offer a fixed sample of original research articles from which data can be extracted for this purpose. The genocide studies field is also ripe for self-analysis. As Alexander Hinton notes, “as the outlines of the field emerge more clearly, the time is right to engage in critical reflections about the state of the field.”<sup>8</sup> The purpose of this paper is to identify which cases of genocide have been studied by contributors to these journals and offer some thoughts about what this might indicate regarding the state of the field. From here, the paper is divided into four sections: methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

### Method

In order to identify the cases studied, every original research article published in JGR, from 1999-2018, and GSP, from 2006-2018, was cataloged. For the purpose of tracking changes to the field, four intervals were used for each journal. JGR articles were grouped together in five-year intervals: 1999-2003, 2004-2008, 2009-2013, and 2014-2018. Because there were years skipped in the publication of GSP, this journal was divided into intervals by volume as opposed to by year: volumes 1-3, volumes 4-6, volumes 7-9, and volumes 10-12.

Basic information for each article was recorded, such as the article’s author and title, as well as the volume and issue in which it was published. Articles were then cataloged according to three related variables: the genocide studies canon location of the cases studied,<sup>9</sup> the primary method of genocide used in the cases studied, and the type of government responsible for the perpetration of genocide in the cases studied.

The above variables were chosen for a number of reasons. First, historically, genocide studies scholarship has focused primarily on a small number of cases. According to Hinton, as represented in his canon, “the bulk of the scholarship in the field of genocide studies, especially from the 1980s through the 1990s, has focused on the Twentieth-Century Core, with the Holocaust both in the foreground and in the background.”<sup>10</sup> Tracking the cases studied in JGR and GSP will allow us to see whether this has changed. Second, most genocide scholarship seems to have focused on mass killing and direct physical violence as the means by which genocide is committed to the near exclusion of other methods of genocide, such as indirect violence and biological and cultural forms of destruction. Therefore, it is important we determine the accuracy of this perception and whether the expansion of the field has been accompanied by a growing focus on methods of genocide other than mass killing and direct physical violence. Third, certain types of governments have been better understood to be capable of and willing to commit genocide. This, perhaps, is most exemplified in Rudolph Joseph Rummel’s work on democide, with his heavy focus on Stalinist Soviet Union, Maoist China, and Nazi Germany.<sup>11</sup> Genocide, of course, is not a crime perpetrated only by authoritarian/totalitarian governments. History illustrates this much. Additionally, even when such governments are responsible for the commission of genocide, they often have the

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., i-ii.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Laban Hinton, “Critical Genocide Studies,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 7, no. 2 (2012), 4.

<sup>9</sup> The genocide studies canon was created by Hinton. Hinton, *Critical Genocide Studies*, 13. The canon is also updated and reproduced in Alexander Hinton et al., eds., introduction to *Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, Memory* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 6.

<sup>10</sup> Hinton, *Critical Genocide Studies*, 12. The Twentieth-Century Core includes the Holocaust, Armenians, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur [twenty-first century], and Indigenous Peoples [taken as a whole].

<sup>11</sup> Rudolph Joseph Rummel, *Lethal Politics: Soviet Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1917* (London: Routledge, 2017); *China’s Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (London: Routledge, 2017); *Democide: Nazi Genocide and Mass Murder* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1991).

helping hand of republics/democracies.<sup>12</sup> Hence, it is important we determine whether the field is limited predominantly to the study of genocide committed by some forms of government to the exclusion of others.

Each of the variables were pre-defined in an effort towards consistency. The case on which an article focuses was used to determine the canon location. Thus, if genocide in Rwanda is the focus of an article, it would be grouped with articles that focus on the canon's Triad. All repressive forms of government, including authoritarian, totalitarian, dictatorships, and absolute monarchies were categorized as "authoritarian/totalitarian," while all forms of republics, democracies, and parliamentary and constitutional monarchies were categorized as "republic/democracy." Therefore, articles on Soviet genocides would be grouped with those on genocide perpetrated by authoritarian/totalitarian governments and articles on settler-colonial genocides would be grouped with those perpetrated by republics/democracies. A method of genocide—mass killing and direct physical violence, indirect violence, biological, or cultural—was assigned to individual cases of genocide based on either the prevalence of one method or the predominant focus when a case is studied within the field. For example, genocide in Indonesia in 1965-1966 is categorized as mass killing and direct physical violence because that was the primary method of genocide when hundreds of thousands of real or perceived communists were killed in a matter of seven months. Though the Holocaust included a combination of all the methods of genocide, it has been primarily defined by the number of people killed. Therefore, it, too, is categorized as mass killing and direct physical violence.

Before detailing and discussing the results of this research, a number of difficulties and methodological concerns should be addressed. First, as previously noted, data collection was limited to two, though highly important, English-language journals. Thus, the data will be limited in its ability to represent the larger field of genocide studies. Second, and relatedly, because scholars from various fields contribute to genocide studies, where scholars publish research on genocide extends beyond these two journals. For example, Lindsey Kingston has an excellent article on cultural genocide and indigenous peoples published in *Journal of Human Rights*.<sup>13</sup> Thus, it is important to state clearly that the data collected is only representative of what is being studied in JGR and GSP. Though I try to draw some conclusions and understandings about the field of genocide studies from this data, the results of my research are not capable of reconstructing or meant to reconstruct the field. Third, the method of collection and categorization of the data provides only one perspective of the field. For example, in grouping all the different types of government into two broad categories, authoritarian/totalitarian and republic/democracy, some nuance may have been lost. Also, the grouping of cases within four methods of genocide—mass killing, indirect violence, biological, and cultural—might not fully represent the entire focus of individual articles. Additionally, it is important to note that many of the articles did not include research on specific cases of genocide. Instead, they focused on some of the definitional, conceptual, theoretical, and thematic issues in the field. Furthermore, some of the articles on cases of genocide also addressed some of these issues. Hence, in the future, it would be worthwhile to assess what elements of the field are receiving the most attention and on which there is room for increased attention.

Despite its limitations, the data collected is representative of what might be the first attempt at using statistical data to map a part of the field by analyzing what genocide studies journals have been producing. It is, then, a first step in a process of outlining changes to the field. It is my hope that other scholars will continue this work and launch more in-depth analyses of particular elements of the field.

## Results

From 1999-2018, JGR published 393 original research articles and from 2006-2018, GSP published 217 original research articles. In focusing on original research articles, this paper does not include

<sup>12</sup> Bachman, *The United States and Genocide*; Jeffrey Bachman, "A 'Synchronized Attack' on Life: the Saudi-Led Coalition's 'Hidden and Holistic' Genocide in Yemen and the Shared Responsibility of the US and UK," *Third World Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (2019), 298-316; Adam Jones, ed. *Genocide, War Crimes & the West* (London: Zed Books, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Lindsey Kingston, "The Destruction of Identity: Cultural Genocide and Indigenous Peoples," *Journal of Human Rights* 14, no. 1 (2015), 63-83.

book reviews, documentary reviews, comments, letters, or editorial introductions. Specific to GSP, IAGS conference proceedings are also omitted. Each of the following subsections measures the prevalence and change over time for the following: location of each case studied in the genocide studies canon, the primary method of genocide in each case studied, and the type of government that perpetrated the genocide in each case studied.

*Genocide: Canon Location*

In 2012, Hinton first introduced his genocide studies canon. The canon is divided into six sections: Prototype, Triad, Twentieth-Century Core, Second Circle, Periphery, and Forgotten Genocides. The specific cases in each of the six sections of the genocide studies canon include: Prototype (Holocaust), Triad (Holocaust, Armenians, Rwanda), Twentieth-Century Core (Holocaust, Armenians, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur [twenty-first century], Indigenous Peoples [taken as a whole]), Second Circle (East Pakistan, Kurdish Case, Guatemala, Herero/Namibian, Kosovo, Carthage, Settler Genocides, Ukrainian/Soviet, Myanmar), Periphery (Indonesia, Argentina, Specific Cases of Indigenous Peoples, Genocides of Antiquity, Assyrian and Greek Cases, East Timor, Burundi, Maoist China, Democratic Republic of the Congo), and Forgotten Genocides (defined as the “multitude of more or less invisible/hidden/forgotten cases”).<sup>14</sup>

In his article “Critical Genocide Studies,” published in GSP’s seventh volume, Hinton notes the bulk of early genocide studies scholarship focused primarily on the Twentieth-Century Core cases, with the Holocaust, which is also the Prototype case and one-third of the Triad, as the case to which others are compared. Case selection and selectivity is informative in the way it shines the light on some cases and, therefore, some perpetrators and victims, while excluding others.<sup>15</sup> As Hinton puts it, “why, we need to ask, are certain cases forgotten, remembered, reorganized, or even intentionally hidden or written out of history?”<sup>16</sup> Relatedly, in an email exchange, I asked Hinton where the U.S. war on Vietnam, which is covered in my book *The United States and Genocide: (Re)Defining the Relationship* as a case of U.S.-perpetrated genocide, would fall within the canon. He responded, “Vietnam would be a hidden genocide (which includes purposeful masking and/or forgetting).”<sup>17</sup> Importantly, the definitions scholars use and the cases they study “are not value-neutral but are also linked to issues of power and knowledge.”<sup>18</sup>

While the genocide studies canon illustrates some of the biases in the field of genocide studies, it is also not a fixed categorization. The places of cases within the canon may shift over time depending on changes within the field. As Hinton noted in an email correspondence, most cases of genocide are contested and may move from one section of the canon to another over time, and not always in only one direction. For example, Hinton noted that Argentina was once a forgotten case, along with the case of Bangladesh, but Bangladesh (East Pakistan) is now located in the Second Circle and Argentina in the Periphery. Meanwhile, Hinton sees the case of Darfur potentially moving out of the Twentieth-Century Core and into the Second Circle.<sup>19</sup>

Hinton’s genocide studies canon was chosen as a model against which cases studied in JGR and GSP could be juxtaposed specifically because the canon is illustrative of a belief that there exists a hierarchy of cases within the genocide studies field. Interestingly, the canon may be understood to be both objective and subjective. Through a measurement of cases studied in the field, the canon can be an objective representation of the field by situating cases within different levels of the canon based on how heavily they are studied. Yet, the canon is also subjective in that decisions are made by scholars regarding which cases they study. Therefore, the canon is built upon the choices made

<sup>14</sup> Hinton, *Critical Genocide Studies*, 13; Hinton et al., introduction to *Hidden Genocides*, 6. In an email communication, Hinton informed me that Myanmar’s genocide of Rohingya fits in the Second Circle. Hinton, email communication, March 11, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Hinton writes, “but we also need to consider why we focus on certain cases and topics and what sorts of inclusions and exclusions ensue,” Hinton, *Critical Genocide Studies*, 12-13.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Hinton, email communication, February 13, 2019.

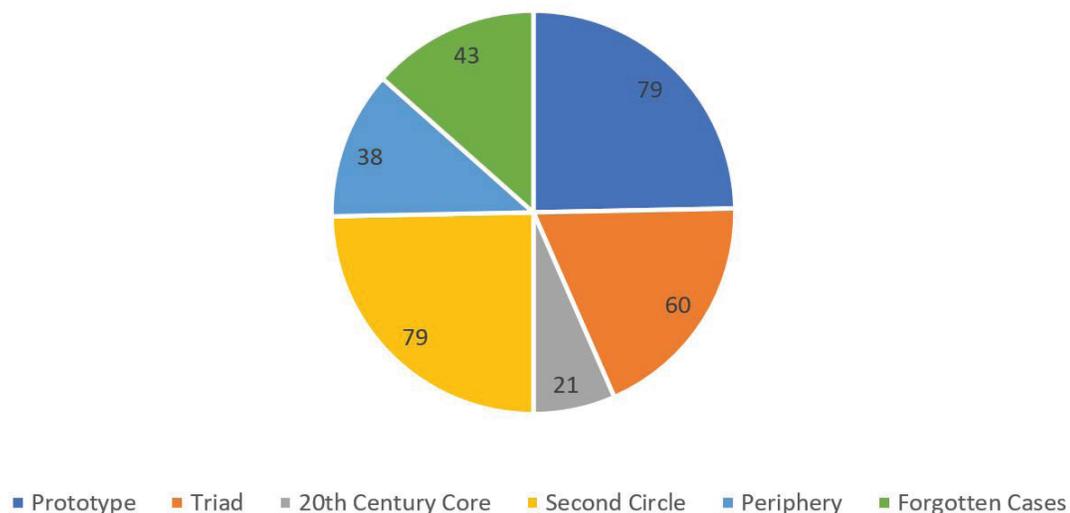
<sup>18</sup> Hinton, *Critical Genocide Studies*, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Hinton, email communication, March 11, 2019.

by scholars who are informed by their own biases. It is with this in mind that the canon location of cases studied in JGR and GSP were tracked for this study. In what follows, it will be shown both the overall number of cases in each canon and any changes over time.

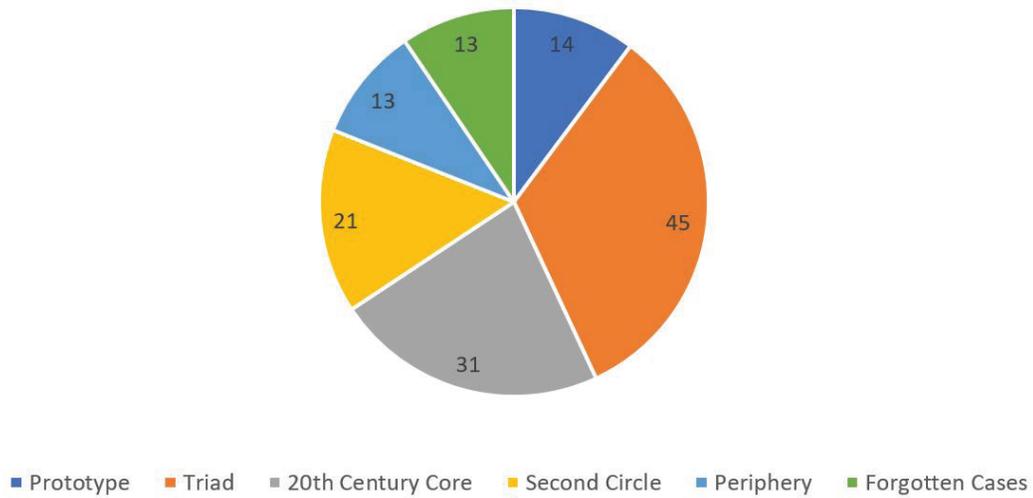
Among the original research articles in JGR between 1999 and 2018, there were 320 total cases studied. The Prototype accounted for 24.7 percent of cases studied, the Triad for 18.8 percent, the Twentieth-Century Core for 6.6 percent, the Second Circle for 24.7 percent, the Periphery for 11.9 percent, and Forgotten cases for 13.4 percent. These numbers do not tell the whole story because the Holocaust is also part of the Triad; the Holocaust, Armenian Genocide, and Rwanda account for nearly 43.5 percent of all cases covered. The Holocaust, Armenian Genocide, and Rwanda are also part of the Twentieth-Century Core. As can be seen on the right half of Figure 1 below, when combined, the entire Twentieth-Century Core accounts for a full 50 percent of all cases covered in articles published in JGR. Still, more can be learned by breaking down some of the other categories further. For example, among the 79 articles that focused on Second Circle cases, 28 of them analyzed Settler Genocide cases, while 24 of them focused on Soviet cases. This is significant not because Soviet cases are overrepresented, but because there is a near-equal focus on cases committed by one perpetrator as there is on the multiple settler perpetrators. Notably, however, of the 38 Periphery cases, 26 of them focused on specific cases of indigenous genocide. Finally, when combined, only 54 of the articles focus on settler/indigenous genocide, or 16.9 percent of all JGR articles.

Figure 1. JGR: Canon Location of Cases Studied



Between 2006 and 2018, original research articles in GSP studied 137 cases. Significantly different from JGR, only 10.2 percent of GSP articles were on the Prototype. However, at 32.8 percent, there was a large focus on the Triad. Another 22.6 percent of articles were on the Twentieth-Century Core. As represented in Figure 2, when combined, the entire Twentieth-Century Core accounts for 65.6 percent of all articles, a significantly larger portion than found in JGR. The focus on the first three sections of the genocide studies canon has ramifications for the study of cases lower in the canon. Only 15.3 percent focused on Second Circle cases, 9.5 percent on Periphery cases, and 9.5 percent on Forgotten cases. Settler/Indigenous cases accounted for only 10 of the 137 cases studied, or 7.3 percent.

Figure 2. GSP: Canon Location of Cases Studied



As is evident in Figures 3 and 4, there was increased coverage of the bottom half of the genocide studies canon from the first interval to the last in both JGR and GSP. In JGR, during the first interval, the top half of the canon was represented in 68.4 percent of the cases. By the last interval, this was nearly inverted with the bottom half of the canon represented in 62.5 percent of the cases studied. Coverage of the bottom half of the canon peaked in the third interval at 65.6 percent. Meanwhile, GSP started with 87.5 percent of cases studied in the first interval coming from the top half of the canon. By the fourth interval, this had decreased to 51.4 percent. Though GSP increased its coverage of the bottom half of the canon, such cases only represented the majority during one of the four intervals—60 percent in the third.

Figure 3. JGR: Change in Canon Location over Time

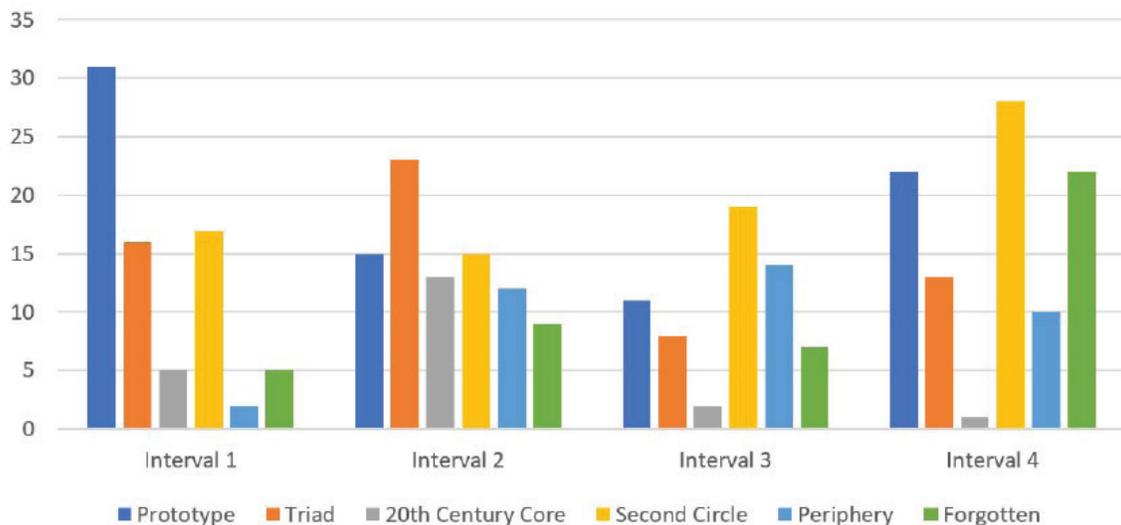
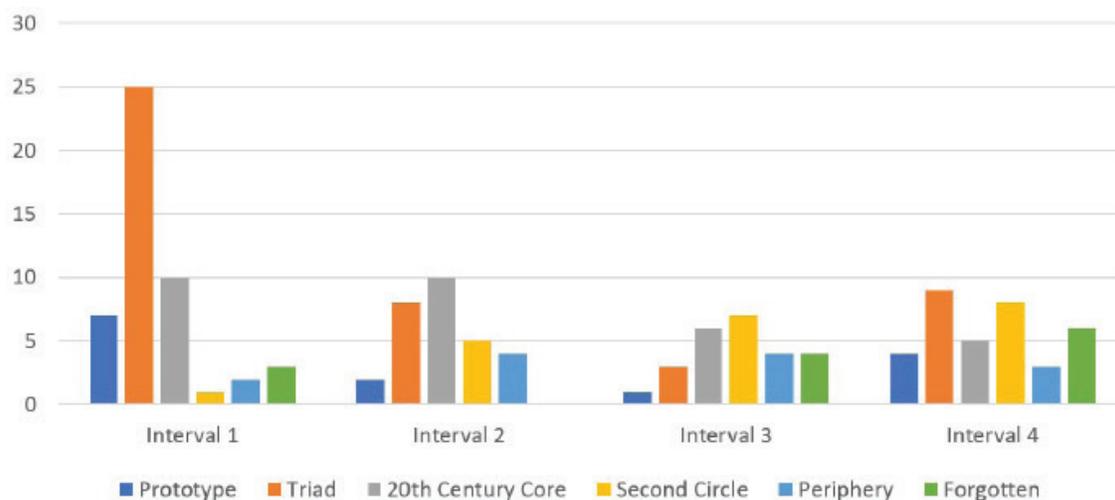


Figure 4. GSP: Change in Canon Location over Time



#### *Genocide: Perpetrator Government*

In 1982, Irving Horowitz argued that “democratic and libertarian states” can be differentiated from “repressive or totalitarian states” by the types of state violence in which they engage.<sup>20</sup> According to Horowitz, “wars have been fought between democratic and authoritarian states throughout the twentieth century. And while this is by no means a simple struggle between good and evil, the fact does remain that wars are common to all sort of social systems. Genocide, on the other hand, is the operational handmaiden of a particular social system, the totalitarian system.”<sup>21</sup> The problem with Horowitz’s claim is that it is inaccurate. It is inaccurate in its primary claim but is also inaccurate in the way it portrays democratic and libertarian states as uninterested bystanders to violence and genocide committed by repressive and totalitarian states. As is made clear in my own book on the U.S. and genocide and edited volume on cultural genocide, as well as the works of so many other scholars who have turned a bright light on the acts of the West in relation to the direct commission of genocide, acts of conspiracy, and acts of complicity, it is short-sighted to conclude that one form of government is more genocidal than another. Doing so, as Patrick Wolfe asserted in a different context, “confuses definition with degree.”<sup>22</sup>

Despite a history of genocidal activity by governments of all forms, data shows that scholars tend to focus more heavily on those committed by governments classified as authoritarian/totalitarian. In JGR, 61.9 percent of cases studied involved an authoritarian/totalitarian perpetrator. Similarly, in GSP, 61.3 percent involved an authoritarian/totalitarian perpetrator. Though the ratios above do not indicate what might be considered an extreme imbalance in coverage of authoritarian/totalitarian genocides as compared to genocides committed by republics/democracies, Figures 5 and 6 give an impression regarding just how much larger the authoritarian/totalitarian pieces of the pie are.

<sup>20</sup> Irving L. Horowitz, *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1982), 22.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006), 398.

Figure 5. JGR: Type of Government Perpetrator

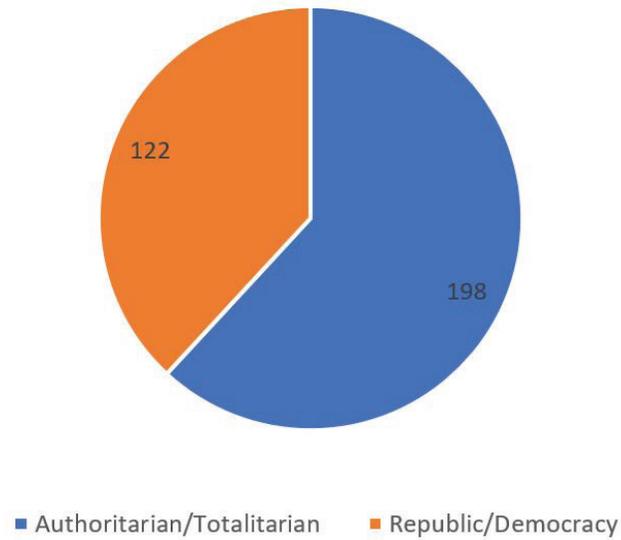
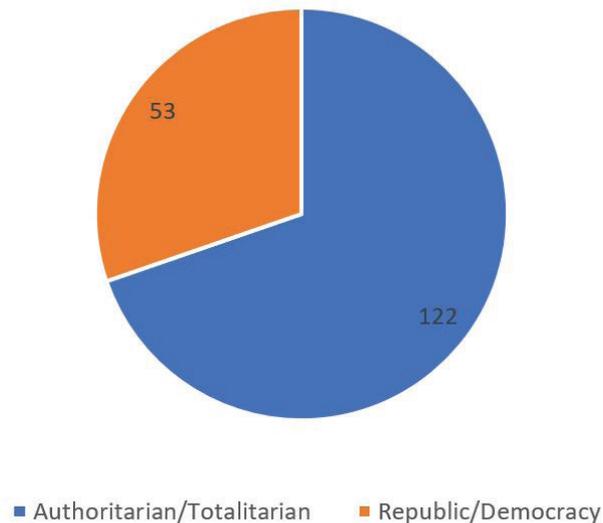


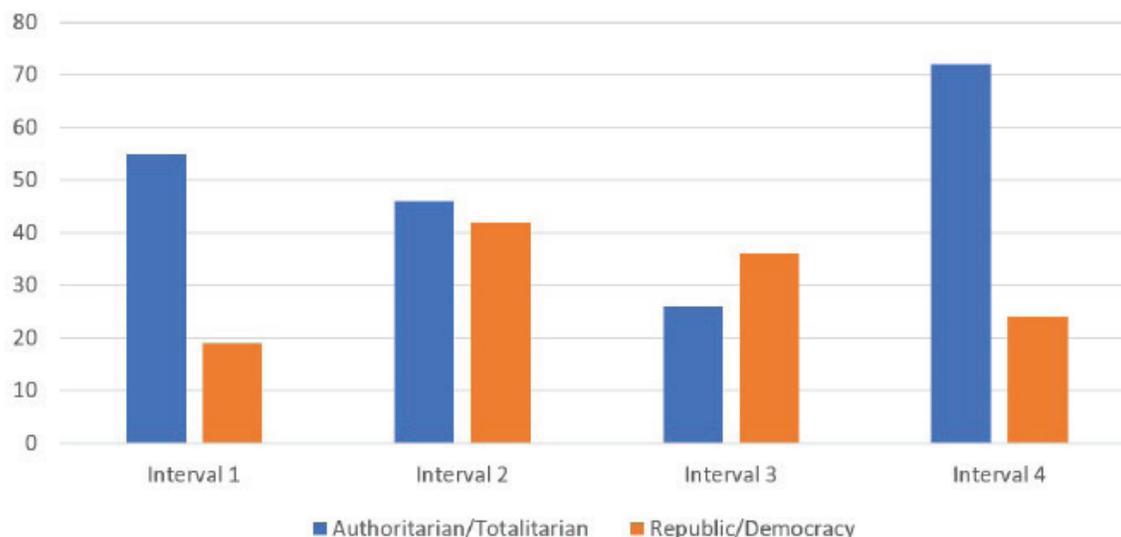
Figure 6. GSP: Type of Government Perpetrator



As shown in Figures 7 and 8, the government perpetrator fluctuated over time in both journals. In JGR, coverage of authoritarian/totalitarian perpetrators peaked during the final interval at 75 percent, closely followed by 74.3 percent during the first interval. At its low, JGR articles focused on authoritarian/totalitarian perpetrators 41.9 percent of the time during the third interval.<sup>23</sup> This was also the only time in the combined eight intervals between JGR and GSP in which the study of cases involving a republic/democracy perpetrator exceeded those studied that involved an authoritarian/totalitarian perpetrator.

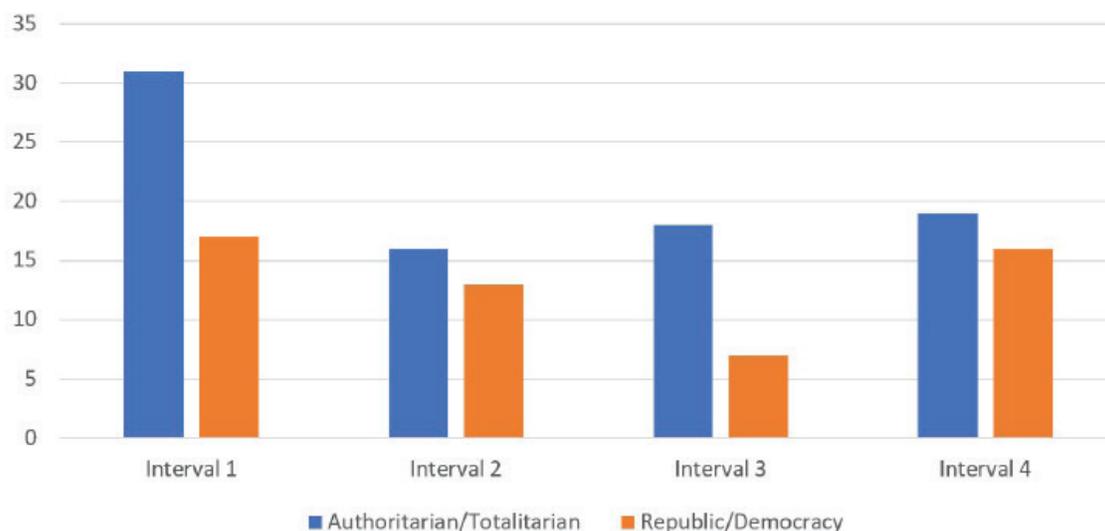
<sup>23</sup> During this interval, there were two special issues that focused on perpetrators categorized as republic/democracy.

Figure 7. JGR: Change in Government Perpetrators Studied over Time



In GSP, coverage of authoritarian/totalitarian perpetrators peaked at 72 percent during the third interval and was at its lowest during the final interval at 54.3 percent.

Figure 8. GSP: Change in Government Perpetrators Studied over Time



The data on government perpetrators appears consistent with the genocide studies canon location data. Because the top half of the canon primarily includes cases of genocide perpetrated by authoritarian/totalitarian governments and because the top half of the canon has received more attention by scholars published in JGR and GSP, it is not surprising to see a corresponding focus on authoritarian/totalitarian perpetrators. This raises important questions that could be the focus of future research: (1) does case selection influence arguments made by some genocide scholars about how regime type might influence the propensity for genocide, or (2) does regime type make a significant difference regarding propensity for genocide?<sup>24</sup>

*Genocide: Method of Commission*

According to the legal definition of genocide, the crime can be committed against national, ethnic, racial, and religious groups when any of the following acts are committed with the intent to destroy

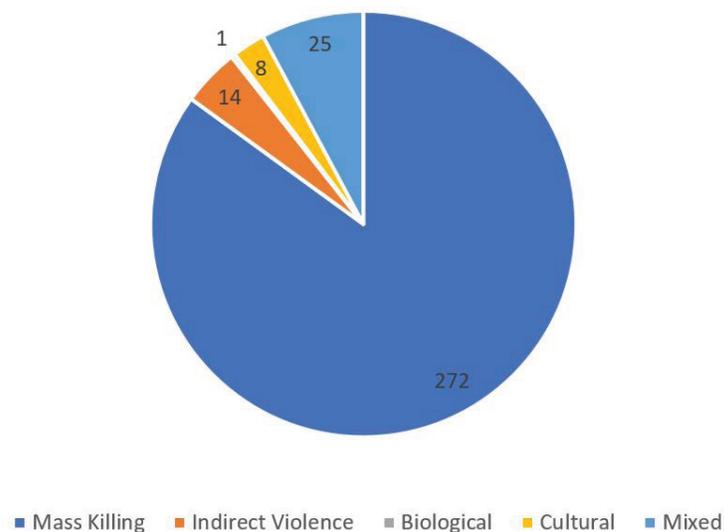
the group, in whole or in part:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; or,
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the legal definition of genocide includes acts of direct physical violence, acts of psychological violence, indirect and structural violence, attempts at eliminating the viability of a group biologically, and attempts at eliminating the viability of a group by forcibly assimilating members of one group into another. As will be discussed later, genocide scholars also employ definitions of genocide other than the legal one. Some of these definitions expand upon the legal one to include cultural genocide, while others use an even narrower definition than Lemkin, limiting genocide to mass killing.

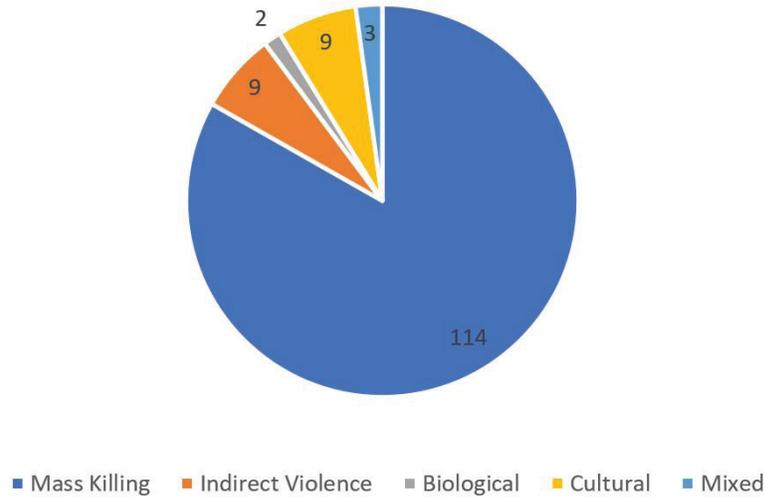
Though the Genocide Convention includes five acts of genocide, only one of which involves mass killing by direct physical violence, articles published in JGR and GSP overwhelmingly focus on cases of mass killing and direct physical violence. Among the 320 cases included in JGR, in 85 percent of them mass killing was the primary method of genocide. In GSP, 83.2 percent of the 137 cases studied involved mass killing. Cases involving indirect physical violence were the second most represented in JGR and GSP at 4.4 and 6.6 percent, respectively. Though, in GSP, cultural genocide was equal second to indirect violence. In both journals, biological cases were nearly nonexistent. The stark contrast between cases studied involving mass killing and those involving a method other than direct physical violence is clear in Figures 9 and 10.

Figure 9. JGR: Methods of Genocide Studied



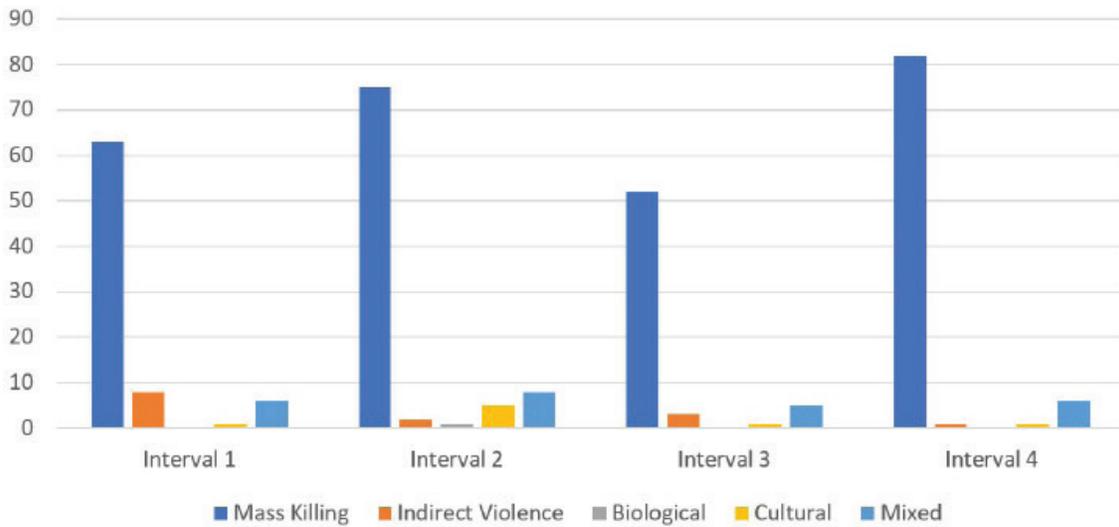
<sup>25</sup> United Nations, *General Assembly Resolution 260, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, December 9, 1948 (UN Doc. A/RES/260(III)), accessed January 31, 2020, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3ac0.html>.

Figure 10. GSP: Methods of Genocide Studied



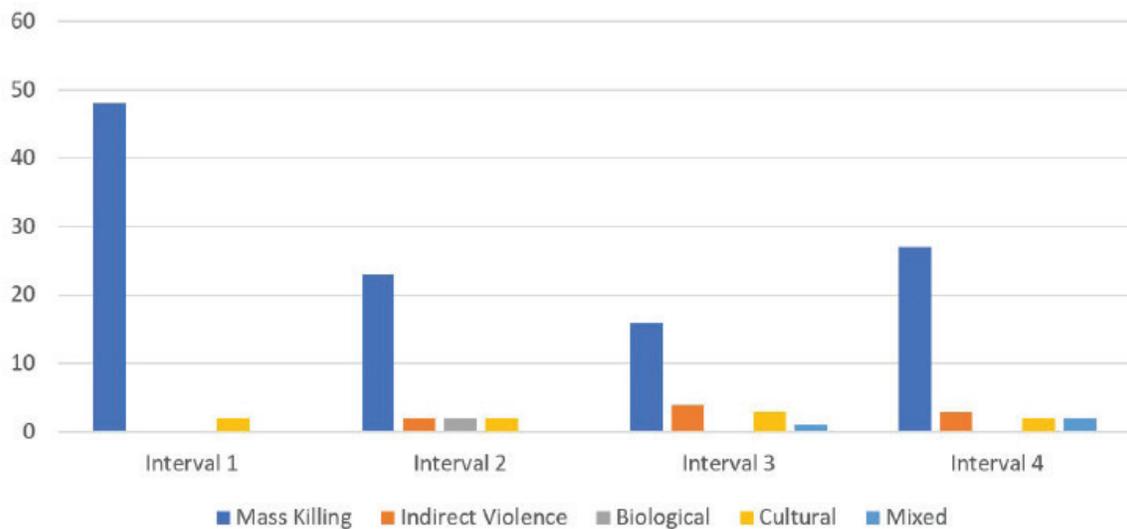
The focus on mass killing and direct physical violence over time was most marked in JGR. Scholars published in this journal who focused on this method of genocide accounted for 80.8 percent, 82.4 percent, 85.2 percent, and 91 percent of all articles across the four intervals. See Figure 11 for comparisons between the four intervals.

Figure 11. JGR: Method of Genocide Studied over Time



Though only marginally, as can be seen in Figure 12, the methods of genocide were slightly more evenly distributed in GSP as compared to JGR. Mass killing, as the primary method of genocide, was included in 96 percent of the cases studied in the first interval, which was also the largest representation in any of the combined eight intervals, 79.3 percent in the second, 66.7 percent in the third, and 79.4 percent in the fourth.

Figure 12. GSP: Method of Genocide Studied over Time



As with the data on canon location and government perpetrators, the data on primary method of genocide used in the cases studied appears consistent with what one might expect based on the previous data. Cases located in the top half of the canon tend to be those with large numbers of people killed by mass killing. This, too, leaves room for further research. Are the cases that are studied most frequently chosen because they have the tell-tale signs of what is broadly understood to be genocide—the deaths of a substantial number of people who are members of a group by mass killing? Or, is genocide broadly understood to involve mass killing because scholars have made a deliberate choice to study some cases more than others based on their own perceptions and biases? What follows in the discussion will offer an initial response to some of the questions raised.

### Discussion

In *The Politics of Annihilation: A Genealogy of Genocide*, Benjamin Meiches analyzes how ideas, concepts, and understandings about genocide have become entrenched. Meiches defines what he refers to as the hegemonic understanding of genocide as the “dominant series of assumptions and practices” that exist as part of a belief that “genocide is a self-evident concept...supported by strong presumptions about meaning, language, and law.”<sup>26</sup> Importantly, Meiches does not limit the hegemonic understanding to a single definition of the concept of genocide. Rather, the hegemonic understanding is “a form of discursive practice within the politics of genocide, which operates as if the concept of genocide may be defined by more or less objective criteria, has stable political implications, and can be used to set up a static taxonomy or hierarchy for governing mass atrocities.”<sup>27</sup> As Meiches articulates, the hegemonic understanding of genocide is problematic because it is exclusionary; it places groups and identities that do not conform to those protected outside the possibility of genocide, while also restricting genocide to mean only one type of violence and its variants.

The results of the analysis presented in this paper support Meiches own analysis. It is possible that a hegemonic understanding of genocide has contributed to a study of genocide that is *generally* limited to particular cases perpetrated by one form of government carried out by a single method. As previously shown, 50 percent of cases studied in JGR focus on the top half of the genocide studies canon. This might at first glance appear to be parity, but when considering the distribution of cases in the canon, the reality is far from it. The top half of the canon, made up of the Prototype,

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin Meiches, *The Politics of Annihilation: A Genealogy of Genocide* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 12.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Triad, and Twentieth-Century Core, includes the following cases: Holocaust, Armenian Genocide, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur, and Indigenous Peoples taken as a whole. This means that seven cases account for 50 percent of case studied in JGR. Meanwhile, the bottom half of the canon, made up of the Second Circle, Periphery, and Forgotten cases, includes 15 specific cases,<sup>28</sup> plus all Soviet cases, individual indigenous cases, settler cases, cases of antiquity, and the innumerable forgotten cases. The heavy emphasis on the top half of the canon is even more pronounced in GSP. Nearly 66 percent of the cases studied are located in the Prototype, Triad, and Twentieth-Century Core, leaving only 34 percent of cases studied being among the plethora that make up the bottom half of the canon.

Mass killing was the primary method of genocide in 85 percent of the cases studied in JGR and 83.2 percent of cases studied in GSP. There is a link in this regard to the cases chosen to be studied. Among the seven cases in the top half of the canon, mass killing, and direct physical violence are emphasized. This is especially true of the Holocaust, Armenian Genocide,<sup>29</sup> Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur. The overall death toll in Bosnia from the war, as well as the deaths of 8-10,000 men and boys at Srebrenica, are of particular focus, though attention is paid to ethnic cleansing and cultural destruction as well.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, though indirect means and cultural destruction are prominent in Indigenous genocides taken as a whole, when focusing on the whole the massive loss of life remains at the foreground. Though cases involving mass killing and direct physical violence remain prevalent in the bottom half of the canon, there are many cases that involve indirect violence, cultural destruction and prohibitions, or some combination thereof. Such cases include the settler genocides, specific cases of indigenous genocide, Soviet cases, and China under Mao. Additionally, there are the innumerable Forgotten cases, including West Papua, the results of the sanctions imposed on Iraq in the 1990s and early 2000s, Palestine, ISIS, and Yemen, to name just a few, which involve indirect and/or cultural violence.<sup>31</sup>

The choice of cases and the method of genocide employed within these cases also influence what types of governments are most likely to be studied as perpetrators of genocide. Because settler genocides and individual cases of indigenous genocide are most likely to have been committed by republics/democracies, they have also received less attention based on the focus on the top half of the canon, while they are in the bottom half. It is also likely that there are Forgotten cases, including some of those mentioned above, for which republics/democracies are responsible. With increased attention to Second Circle, Periphery, and Forgotten cases could come greater parity between cases for which authoritarian/totalitarian governments are responsible and those committed by republics/democracies. Furthermore, there is also room for future research on the role external state actors, including and especially republics/democracies, play in directly aiding authoritarian/totalitarian genocides or in facilitating the conditions in which genocide is possible.

All the above begs the question: why have a small number of cases perpetrated by authoritarian/totalitarian governments through mass killing received a disproportionately large focus? As noted at the outset of this discussion, the existence of a hegemonic understanding of genocide appears to be highly influential in this regard. The definitions of genocide utilized by scholars has a direct impact on the choice of cases studied. Mass killing through direct physical violence essentially requires the murder of large numbers of peoples. An explicit specific genocidal intent requirement includes some acts of violence and excludes others, such as the murder of a large number of people when done so in the context of armed conflict or the continuous implementation of policies that have foreseeable consequences. The ubiquitous focus on cases of genocide involving mass killing and direct physical violence has significant implications for the study of genocide and is deeply

<sup>28</sup> East Pakistan, Kurdish Case, Guatemala, Herero/Namibian, Kosovo, Carthage, Myanmar, Indonesia, Argentina, Assyrian and Greek Cases, East Timor, Burundi, Maoist China, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

<sup>29</sup> Of course, this is not absolute. For example, Anush Hovanissian, "Turkey: A Cultural Genocide," in *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, ed. Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinian, 147-153 (London: Macmillan Press, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Donna-Lee Frieze, "The Destruction of Sarajevo's Vijećnica: A Case of Genocidal Cultural Destruction," in *New Directions in Genocide Research*, ed. Adam Jones, 57-74 (London: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> In Bachman, *United States and Genocide*, 136-146, it is argued that the U.S., though arguably also other members of the Security Council, is responsible for genocide in Iraq.

rooted in the definitional and conceptual constraints in the field. As Kjell Anderson notes in relation to what he labels “slow-motion” or “cold” genocides,

the lack of adequate engagement of policy-makers and theorists with colonial and neo-colonial slow-motion genocides is also a failure to engage with structural violence – violence in which a social structure prevents people from meeting their basic needs. There are several explanations for this analytical deficiency. Firstly, the concept of genocide largely arose from the historical context of the Holocaust. As such, there is a tendency among genocide scholars to ignore genocides which do not fit the Holocaust model of mass killing in pursuit of a racist ideology. Secondly, structural violence is often more subtle than mass killing.<sup>32</sup>

“More subtle” here should not be interpreted as an assessment of the seriousness of the violence. As is clear in Anderson’s work, genocide can take different forms and be perpetrated in different contexts without some cases being devalued in comparison to others.

Further evidence of a hegemonic understanding of genocide and its influence on the study of genocide can be found in surveys of scholarly definitions of genocide. These surveys reveal that definitions advanced by many scholars are even narrower than the legal definition, which is itself narrower than that advanced by Lemkin. Thus, there exists a disconnect between the legal definition, the definitions typically employed by scholars in the field of genocide studies, and that forwarded by Lemkin.

In 1933, Lemkin presented his “Acts Constituting a General (Transnational) Danger Considered as Offences against the Law of Nations” at the 5th Conference for the Unification of Penal Law in Madrid. As Donna-Lee Frieze points out, it was at this conference that Lemkin described genocide “in its incipient forms: ‘barbarism’ and ‘vandalism’.”<sup>33</sup> In *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government*, Lemkin describes genocide as a process, one that does not necessarily involve the immediate destruction of a national collectivity, though such a result is possible by mass killings of all its members. Instead, Lemkin explained, genocide signifies

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 lives of the individuals belonging to such groups.<sup>34</sup>

Importantly, Lemkin did not limit genocide to mass killing of members of a national collectivity. He believed there are other ways the existence of a group of people can be destroyed, which he divided into eight techniques of genocide. These include political, social, cultural, economic, biological, physical, religious, and moral. As a holistic concept, each of the eight techniques shares some relationship with one or more of the other techniques.

Three years after the publication of *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin participated in the development of the Secretariat Draft of the Genocide Convention. The Secretariat Draft retained much of Lemkin’s concept of genocide, with the eight techniques of genocide pared down to three methods of genocide: physical, biological, and cultural. Though the language moved away from Lemkin’s eight techniques of genocide, elements of most are present in the triumvirate of genocidal methods. From the Secretariat Draft to the text adopted by the General Assembly in December 1948, the Genocide Convention evolved through a complex and contentious period of negotiations. For the purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to say that domestic and international politics greatly influenced the negotiations, which resulted in the elimination of protection for political groups and

<sup>33</sup> Donna-Lee Frieze, ed., introduction to *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*, by Raphael Lemkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), xii; Raphaël Lemkin, “Acts Constituting a General (Transnational) Danger Considered as Offences against the Law of Nations,” accessed May 1, 2019, [www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/madrid1933-english.htm](http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/madrid1933-english.htm).

the exclusion of cultural genocide. Furthermore, what remained of Lemkin's concept of genocide was greatly weakened. The spirit of Lemkin's concept partially remains, but the language is ambiguous, making it far more subjective.

In the final legal text, the erosion of Lemkin's concept of genocide was nearly complete. Though the text retains some elements of his concept, it does so in a way that divorces them from their interconnectedness. What began as a holistic concept of genocide became, in a matter of years, based on the determinations of state actors, a list of five acts: killing group members, causing them serious bodily or mental harm, inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to physically destroy it in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, and forcibly transferring children from one group to another. Even the one component of the cultural technique that remained, transferring children, did not retain the meaning it once had. As A. Dirk Moses explains, the inclusion of the forced transfer of children was not meant to define genocidal attempts to impede the generational sharing of group social and cultural characteristics, but rather to "complement the emphasis on the physical/biological consequences of genocidal techniques."<sup>35</sup>

When comparing some of the most recognized scholarly definitions of genocide to Lemkin's own, the disconnect between the legal definition, the definitions typically employed by scholars in the field of genocide studies, and that forwarded by Lemkin is clear. Rather than using Lemkin's holistic concept of genocide as a starting point, many scholars in the field of genocide studies have chosen to use the adopted text of the Genocide Convention for this purpose. Of course, there are practical reasons for doing so. As Leo Kuper wrote in 1981, "I shall follow the definition of genocide given in the [UN] Convention. This is not to say that I agree with the definition.... However, I do not think it helpful to create new definitions of genocide, when there is an internationally recognized definition and a Genocide Convention which might become the basis for some effective action, however limited the underlying conception."<sup>36</sup> Yet, this alone cannot explain why so many of Lemkin's ideas about genocide were abandoned, not only by states acting in their own self-interests during the Genocide Convention's negotiations, but also by scholars who are not limited by the politics of international treaty making.

In departing from many of Lemkin's core ideas about genocide, it is arguable that the proliferation of scholarly definitions has resulted in the emergence of a hegemonic understanding of genocide, one that essentially synonymizes genocide with mass killing, albeit when targeting members of a specific group. If accurate, this could offer one explanation for the data found in JGR and GSP. Evidence of such definitional hegemony can be found in two independent, but overlapping surveys conducted by Adam Jones and Scott Straus.<sup>37</sup> In *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Jones collected twenty-five definitions, developed by twenty-nine scholars, spanning from 1959 to 2014.<sup>38</sup> By my interpretation, fifteen of the definitions limit genocide to the mass killing/murder of members of the targeted group.<sup>39</sup> Eight of the remaining ten definitions included by Jones go beyond mass killing, but are nonetheless limited to physical (and, in some cases, biological) genocide.<sup>40</sup> Notably, only two of the scholarly definitions in Jones' text include methods

<sup>35</sup> A. Dirk Moses, "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide," in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 38.

<sup>36</sup> Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 39.

<sup>37</sup> A similar comparison of Jones' and Straus' surveys is included in Jeffrey S. Bachman, "Introduction: Bringing Cultural Genocide into the Mainstream," in *Cultural Genocide: Law, Politics, and Global Manifestations*, ed. Jeffrey S. Bachman (London: Routledge, 2019), 2-3.

<sup>38</sup> Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2017), 23-27. Six of the definitions are co-authored, and Irving Louis Horowitz and Helen Fein are each cited twice.

<sup>39</sup> These include definitions by Peter Drost, Nehemiah Robinson, Irving Horowitz (twice), Leo Kuper, Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, Steven Katz, Israel Charny, Manus Midlarsky, Mark Levene, Jacques Sémelin, Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley, Martin Shaw, Daniel Feierstein, and Donald Bloxham. Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 23-27.

<sup>40</sup> These include definitions by Helen Fein (twice), Vahakn Dadrian, Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr, Yehuda Bauer, Christopher Powell and Julia Peristerakis, John Thompson and Gail Quets, and Isidor Walliman and Michael Dobkowski. Jones, *Genocide*, 23-27.

of genocide other than physical.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, only one definition explicitly recognizes genocide as a process, rather than simply as an end result of mass death. Christopher Powell and Julia Peristerakis define genocide “as the violent erasure of a collective identity and understand genocide as a multidimensional process that works through the destruction of the social institutions that maintain collective identity as well as through the physical destruction of human individuals.”<sup>42</sup>

In Jones’ survey of scholarly definitions, fifteen of the twenty-five definitions (60 percent) limit genocide to mass killing, twenty-three of the twenty-five definitions (92 percent) recognize genocide as the physical destruction of a targeted group, whether by direct or indirect violence, leaving only two definitions (8 percent) with attacks on the life of a group that go beyond physical. Straus’ survey shows similar results. Straus includes fourteen definitions, one of which is Lemkin’s.<sup>43</sup> Of Straus’ thirteen definitions, not including Lemkin, seven limit genocide to mass killing (54 percent),<sup>44</sup> five more to physical genocide (38 percent),<sup>45</sup> and one that approaches genocide more as a multidimensional process (8 percent).<sup>46</sup> Combined, Jones and Straus review 33 non-repeating scholarly definitions of genocide. Only three of these definitions, or 9 percent, include methods of genocide other than those that will result in the physical destruction of the group.

The definitions used by genocide scholars, no doubt, influence which cases they choose to study. This does not mean that cases that do not fit within a hegemonic understanding of genocide will be excluded altogether, but it does mean that some cases will receive greater attention, while others will be pushed to the margins or forgotten altogether. As already discussed, this also has an impact on canon location, method of genocide, and perpetrator regime type, and raises questions for further research. In addition to those areas for further research mentioned previously, it could be worthwhile to see who is citing who in the genocide studies literature. If a small number of voices are treated as having greater intellectual authority on the subject of genocide, this could be a contributing factor to the emergence and perpetuation of a hegemonic understanding of genocide. This should not be interpreted as a slight against or a devaluation of the work of early genocide scholars. Rather, it is a recognition of the importance of the new ideas being generated by recent and emerging scholars.

## Conclusion

When scholarly definitions like those surveyed in Jones and Straus are compared to Lemkin’s concept of genocide, one can see how much was lost. Lemkin’s holistic concept of genocide as a “synchronized attack on different aspects of life” has been largely replaced by mass killing and other means of causing mass death among members of a group. Such limited conceptions of genocide stand in stark contrast with the one advanced by Lemkin in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. The near total absence of the method of cultural genocide from the scholarly definitions is especially significant. As Jones notes, “Lemkin was deeply attached to the concept of cultural genocide, and it was his most personally wounding experience, during the drafting of the UN Convention, to see his concept jettisoned.”<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, Moses writes that some in the field of genocide studies have consciously or unconsciously misinterpreted Lemkin, noting how “even his texts have been bowdlerized to make genocide mean mass killing and/or resemble the Holocaust.”<sup>48</sup> Not only have many scholars defined genocide narrower than Lemkin, who it bears repeating coined the term, but they also define genocide narrower than the definition codified in the Genocide Convention, a definition

<sup>41</sup> These include Yehuda Bauer’s and Christopher Powell and Julia Peristerakis’ definitions. Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 24, 27.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 27; Christopher Powell and Julia Peristerakis, “Genocide in Canada: A Relational View,” in *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*, ed. Alexander Hinton et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 70.

<sup>43</sup> Scott Straus, “Contested Meanings and Conflicting Imperatives: A Conceptual Analysis of Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 3, no. 3 (2001), 350-355.

<sup>44</sup> Definitions by Drost, Kuper, Charny, Chalk and Jonassohn, Horowitz, Steven Katz, and Bauer. Straus, *Contested Meanings*, 350-355.

<sup>45</sup> Definitions by Harff and Gurr, Henry Huttenbach, Fein, Levon Chorbajian, and Ervin Staub. Straus, *Contested Meanings*, 350-355.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Melson’s definition. Straus, *Contested Meanings*, 355.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 40.

<sup>48</sup> Moses, *Raphael Lemkin, Culture*, 21.

that is broadly criticized in genocide studies as being deficient. It is important to note that Lemkin's own concept of genocide was far from static. It evolved as his ideas about and understanding of what genocide is progressed. It even regressed in practical terms while the Genocide Convention was being negotiated out of a need for political expediency. In other words, to allay the anxieties of the treaty's negotiating parties, Lemkin sacrificed elements of his conception.<sup>49</sup> Yet, as Thomas Butcher notes, even though the Genocide Convention excludes Lemkin's triumvirate of physical, biological, and cultural genocide, "it seems clear that Lemkin was satisfied with this new tripartite schema, as he continued to use it for the rest of his life."<sup>50</sup>

The results of the research presented in this paper, when combined with other evidence of a hegemonic understanding of genocide, demonstrate the influence conceptual hegemony has on the study of genocide. Some cases of genocide receive significantly disproportionate attention than others, mass killing is overwhelmingly the method of genocide studied, and authoritarian/totalitarian governments are more likely to be associated with the crime. Of course, a hegemonic understanding of genocide is only one explanation. There could be others, which in turn might also contribute to a hegemonic understanding, such as: (1) the observability of mass killing as compared to that of structural violence; (2) the quantifiability of death as compared to the effects of structural violence; and/or (3) the increased attention to the study of genocide among conflict scholars.<sup>51</sup>

Interestingly, as Meiches points out, the emergence of critical genocide studies, introduced by the likes of Dirk Moses and Alexander Hinton, has roughly coincided with an active (re)engagement with Lemkin.<sup>52</sup> In 2010, Dirk Moses' chapter on "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide" led off the significant edited volume he co-edited with Donald Bloxham, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*. In 2013, Donna-Lee Frieze edited Lemkin's autobiography, *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*. In 2016, Douglas Irvin-Erickson wrote what is arguably the seminal text on Lemkin, *Raphaël Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide*. There have also been special issues of JGR (Volume 7, Issue 4, 2005) and GSP (Volume 13, Issue 1, 2019; see also parts of Volume 7, Issue 1, 2012) on Lemkin. Though only speculative at this moment, it is nonetheless quite possible that this return to Lemkin's understanding of genocide offers at least a partial explanation for a change in the amount of attention being paid to cases of genocide located in the bottom half of the genocide studies canon.

Though it will not come without contention, as the field of genocide studies continues to expand, it will benefit from increasing reengagement with definitional, conceptual, and theoretical debates. This requires the creation of space for the entry into the debate of scholars with ideas that challenge what has largely been the status-quo in the field. As I describe in the introduction to the edited volume *Cultural Genocide: Law, Politics, and Global Manifestations*, those who seek to expand the study of genocide beyond the hegemonic understanding, such as through the study of cultural genocide, should not be viewed as "insurgents seeking to topple an existing regime, rather than equal contributors to the study of a phenomenon first recognized as such by Lemkin."<sup>53</sup> Broad recognition of a definition of genocide that more fully incorporates Lemkin's understanding of genocide, or one that at least recognizes that the legal definition contains five acts of genocide rather than one or two, could have a trickle-down effect on what cases are studied, what methods are employed in these cases, and what types of governments are associated with the crime.

<sup>49</sup> In order to ensure what he committed so much of his life to succeed, Lemkin compromised with states, especially the more powerful state actors who were more interested in a treaty that, as Beth Van Schaack puts it, "could not implicate member nations on the drafting committee." Beth Van Schaack, "The Crime of Political Genocide: Repairing the Genocide Convention's Blind Spot," *The Yale Law Journal* 106, no. 7 (1997), 2268.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Butcher, "A 'Synchronized Attack': On Raphael Lemkin's Holistic Conception of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15, no. 3 (2015), 260.

<sup>51</sup> In other research, I found that conflict studies represented the largest subfield of scholars published in JGR and GSP.

<sup>52</sup> Benjamin Meiches, personal communication, May 31, 2019. See A. Dirk Moses, "Toward a Theory of Critical Genocide Studies," Mass Violence and Resistance Research Network, accessed May 1, 2019, <http://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/toward-theory-critical-genocide-studies>; Hinton, *Critical Genocide Studies*.

<sup>53</sup> Bachman, *Introduction*, 10-11.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my former research assistant Lindsay Reesing for helping me gather data. I would also like to thank Benjamin Meiches, who not only provided me feedback when this was a conference paper, but continued to offer me feedback and guidance as the paper was being prepared for submission. Finally, I would like to thank Christian Gudehus and Matthew Krain for their feedback as my paper made it through the formal revision process.

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