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Contents

Research Article
The Future of Terrorism 1
Mehmet Erkin Kara

Research Article
The Rwandan Genocide: A Humanitarian Catastrophe in the Pages of History 13
Yaşar Onay

Research Article
Reimagining the Post-War City: Symbolic Landscape Transformation and Reconciliation in Brčko District 29
Adisa Avdić Küsmüş

Research Article
The Use of Education as a Control Mechanism in the Process of Colonialism and Slavery: A Study on the Views of Alexis de Tocqueville 43
Ali Yalçın

Research Article
The Relationship of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Entity Republika Srpska to the United Nations Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica 56
Muamer Džananović

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Research Article

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The Future of Terrorism

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Abstract The dramatic rise of terrorism has accelerated after the 9/11 attacks, and it has comprehensively affected the world within the public eyes and academic world. Although every human being uses the term terrorism and knows what a terrorist's methods are, most of them cannot explain properly the meaning of terrorism or the theory of terrorism. Evaluating the modern history of terrorism is very difficult to categorise too. Furthermore, there are a lot of definitions and descriptions of terrorism in the academic world. However, there is no prominent consensus about its definition and description in the international community. However, David Rapoport's academic article "The Four Waves of Terrorism" has been accepted as the most respectful analysed theory which is about history of modern international terrorism in the security and terrorism studies literature. According to his theory, terrorism waves emerge, peak, and recede in a wave-like pattern. The first wave began with anarchist terrorism, and they have been currently going on with the fourth wave of terrorism, which is a religion wave. Numerous studies were conducted after his four waves of modern terrorism theory. Most of them have searched for the fifth waves that may be seen in the future. But they have not been as influential as David Rapoport's four waves of terrorism theory. From this perspective, this study aims to add a new accessible approach for the fifth wave of terrorism. Thus, it simply seeks to fulfil this need.

Keywords Terrorism · Theory · Theory of terrorism · Wave of terrorism theory · The fifth wave of terrorism

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The Future of Terrorism

The dramatic rise of terrorism has accelerated after the 9/11 attacks. It has comprehensively affected the world within the public eyes and academic world. Currently, terrorism poses a big threat to the world system, the Weberian nation states and humankind. Moreover, it has mostly influenced our perception of ordinary life.

Although every human being uses the term terrorism and knows what a terrorist's methods are, most of them cannot explain properly the meaning of terrorism or the theory of terrorism. Evaluating the modern history of terrorism is very difficult to categorise too. Furthermore, there are a lot of definitions and descriptions of terrorism in the academic world. However, there is no prominent consensus about its definition and description in the international community. Because terrorism is a political concept, there are serious ontological and epistemological problems regarding its definition, description and structure. Nation states, their governments, academics, and citizens evaluate terror actors according to their interests, identity, and perceptions. It simply means that one man's terrorist is another man's hero in the international community (Gupta, 2006: 6-13).

Although there have been a few articles that have been accepted solidly by the international community in the security and terrorism studies literature, David Rapoport's (Professor Emeritus of Political Science at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)) academic article "The Four Waves of Terrorism," which was published in "The Encyclopaedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict Journal" in 2004, has been accepted as the most respectful analysed theory which is about history of modern international terrorism (Rosenfeld, 2010: 2.) (Walls, 2017: 2)·(Kaplan, 2008: 12–24). Numerous studies were conducted and numerous articles were written after his four waves of modern terrorism theory, which include anarchist, nationalist, leftist and the current religious waves of terrorism. Most of them have searched for the fifth waves that may be seen in the future. But they haven't been accepted influentially same as David Rapoport's theory. From this perspective, this article aims to add a new accessible approach for the fifth wave of terrorism.

Conceptual and Historical Framework of Terrorism

The world system includes sovereign nation states since the Peace of Westphalia was signed in October 1648. Even though modern nation states have different kinds of military power, economic power and soft power, they are equal members of the world system. Weberian nation states do not have any right in other nation states territory but in their own territory they have a right to coerce, use of force and give punishment to their citizens by jurisdiction. This means that they have a monopoly of using force and violence in their sovereign territory (Elfstrom, 2015: 41–85).

Max Weber who was a theoriser of Weberian nation state recognised the state as a "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." According to Max Weber, the modern state's most important specialty is (McConaght, 2017: 6). All terrorist movements have been obsessed with the state. It challenges, destabilises and threatens the legitimate state monopoly of using power and sole force in its own sovereign territory. Terrorism deliberately contests the legitimacy of the states. Terrorism is a threat mostly for this reason. As a result, it is a big threat for the modern world system (English, 2021: 48-52).

First, the definition of the terrorism question must be answered. Terrorism and terror terms are derived from the Latin verb “terrere” (Forst, 2009: 300). It means that cause to tremble, to frighten from in Latin (Wilkinson, 2003: 27). Terrorism is described in Britannica encyclopaedia that “the calculated use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective.” (Jenkins, 2022: (accessed 19 January 2022)). The Oxford Dictionary defines terrorism with these sentences. “The calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear.” Terrorism is intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological (The Oxford Essential Dictionary of the U.S. Military, 2001, (accessed 19 January 2022).).

There has not been any consensus on the definition of terrorism among the United Nations member states. But the condemnation of the terror act in 1994 has been accepted by the United Nations. It has been the most important definition of terrorism in international relations. According to the 1994 General Assembly Resolution, terrorism was defined as “Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them.” (Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, United Nations, 1994 (accessed 23 January 2022).)

Some terrorism criteria agreed in the international community. From these definitions, it is very clear to see seven terms that have relations with terrorism. Using politically motivated unlawful violence or threat,

1. The intention to use fear,
2. Propaganda by deeds,
3. Conducted by non-state actors (group or person),
4. Target population,
5. Civilian or non-combatant victims
6. Political motives and political aims

First, the main subject of terrorism is about politically aimed violence and its threats. If there is no politically aimed violence or threat, it will not be considered terrorism (Whittaker, 2004: 2). It may be named as a criminal, mafia or crime syndicate without politically aimed violence or threat. For instance, the Gandhian movement cannot be named as a terrorist group. The Gandhian Movement was a political dissident of the colonial British Empire. Their nonviolent deeds against the British Raj were too affective to decrease its political and soft power on the Indian public. But it is not qualified as terrorism. The reason is that the Gandhian Movement was a nonviolent politically motivated group. There have been individuals or groups with the intention of overthrowing their rulers or governments, such as the Gandhian Movement, in world history. This means that if it is a peaceful political movement, it cannot be named as a terrorist movement. Furthermore, not just the violence-orientated deeds are considered terrorism, the threat of violent deeds is considered as terrorism as well. It indicates that if the police force is contacted for threatening of bombing a street without any actions will also be an act of terrorism by using threatening (Gupta, 2021: 9).

Terrorism is not a new instrument for humankind in politics. From the ancient times to the modern times, it was used by historical figures and groups. Although every state in the ancient world faced revolts, uprisings, and political assassinations with the tools of violence, it was not considered terrorism. The reason is that the basic political, social, and economic structures did not change when a king was killed by a rival or overthrown by a revolt. Terrorism is different from this concept. The main intention is to create fundamental

changes in the society and governance by using violence and force. The focus is to alter the ordinary system of the state. This is one of the most important characteristics of modern terrorism (Taylor, 2001: 12).

In modern times terrorism, there is a method which has been used by the non-state actors and groups. These modern terrorist movements target the nation states that are very different from each other in terms of identity perspectives.

Terrorists' violent deeds serve as a message to the target population. Continuing these communication deeds is critical for terrorism. Terrorists can send messages to the target population and their own supporters by using violent deeds. (Forst, 2009: 4) While these messages create psychological coercion against the system, government and the public, they particularly target the population's mind and heart. Because terrorists need to win the hearts and minds to advance their agenda.

There is no consensus about the victims of terrorism. Two approaches have been accepted by academics. The first approach is that the military personnel which are not on duty and civilians (non-combatants) can be accepted as the victims of terrorism. Another approach defends that only civilians can be accepted as victims of terrorist acts (Richards, 2015: 136).

Most scholars trace the origins of the modern terrorism of the Jewish Sicarii Zealots, who were noted for their strict observance of Jewish laws in the Roman Province of Judea in the first century A.D. They assassinated Roman soldiers and Jewish collaborators with a primitive dagger, which was named "sica" in crowded surroundings (Brosteaux, 2019: 4-5). They tried to liberate their country from Roman rule by using terrorism. It was the earliest example of a terrorism campaign directed towards political ends (Lutz and Lutz, 2008: 79-80). The Nizari Isma'ili Assassins were another pre-modern terrorist group established at the end of the tenth century. Hassan Sabbah was the founder of the Nizari Assassin's institution and their doctrine (Law, 2015: 34-38). They were a weak group who could not confront the might of the Turk Seljuk Empire directly. However, they challenged the powerful Seljuk Empire by assassinating important bureaucrats. One of them was Nizam al-Mulk, who was a legendary and the most successful vizier of his time (Webel, 2004: 25-27). Consequently, the use of violence for political change has been a metaphor for terrorism since ancient times.

Edmund Burke is an important person for terrorism literature. Edmund Burke, who was the founder father of conservatism, used the term terrorism first. He described Maximilien Robespierre and the Jacobin party's governance after the French revolution as a reign of terror. Because the Jacobin party of Robespierre executes thousands of anti-revolutionary and dissident revolutionary French citizens by the guillotine. The cruelty of the Jacobins was so impactful that they surpassed the dissident parties and groups by using violence (Croce, 2015: 133). Although this period was named as the reign of terror, it is not similar to the current use of terror. It can be named as a state terrorism, which is different from terrorism.

The other important person for terrorism literature is Karl Heinzen. The German revolutionary Karl Heinzen was the first to articulate the use of violence for politics in his book "Mord and Freiheit." Even more freedom fighter (Freiheitskämpfer) term was first written in this book (Parker and Sitter, 2016: 203). He argued that the revolutionaries must use violence and threat for their political motives and the aim of violence was to terrorise the enemy (Carlos, 2019: 31).

Last of all, before explaining the waves of terrorism theory, Felice Orsini, who was an Italian nationalist revolutionary and a follower of the Italian revolutionary leader Giuseppe Mazzini, who was one of the main figures of the Italian Liberation Movement, must be referred. He tried to assassinate the Emperor of France Napoleon III owing to not supporting the Italian Liberation Movement adequately, at Paris in 1857 by using

his own bomb, which he invented. After this incident, the Orsini Bomb was used worldwide in terror acts by many anarchist terrorists and his assassination attempt of Napoleon III gave courage for new assassinations and new terror acts (Laqueur, 1999: 37).

Waves of Terrorism Theory

David Rapoport is a substantial academic in security and terrorism studies. He explained and theorised modern history of terrorism in four-wave approaches like Samuel Huntington who conceptualised democratisation process at the world by using a wave metaphor (Parker and Sitter, 2016: 197-199). According to his theory, terrorism waves emerge, peak, and recede in a wavelike pattern (Rosenfeld, 3). Rapoport argues that all waves need some type of grand event for being the global movement. Any waves of terrorism last in forty years (Radil and Pinos, 2022: 311–330).

The first wave began with anarchist terrorism, and they have been currently going on with the fourth wave of terrorism, which is a religion wave. This theory has shown that terrorism is a dynamic phenomenon that has historically evolved. D. C. Rapoport, "Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," Terrorism and Political Violence, 2004, pp.46–73. Although there are some critics that different types of terrorist groups could not categorise with one common wave among academics like IRA, English, p.44. ETA (Parker and Sitter, 2016: 197-198). and the Ku Klux Klan, (Chiangi, 2021: 11–29) waves of terrorism theory has been accepted essential by the international community.

First Wave of Terrorism

According to Rapoport's Theory of Modern Terrorism, it was started by the Russian anarchic movement that opposed any form of government in Tsarist Russia. The first wave of terrorism strengthened after Tsar Alexander II's iron fist governance and slow democratisation processes

Mihail Bakunin and Sergei Nechaev were the most important figures in Russian Anarchism. Bakunin was a theorist and the most respectful person in the anti-Tsarist Anarchist Movement. Bakunin has been called "the prophet of terrorist immoralism" and "guerrilla insurrectionism." He believed that the Tsarist regime could be overthrown by individuals' or small groups' terror acts (Kushner, 2003: 8). He wrote a manifesto of modern terrorism, "Revolution, Terrorism, Banditry", in 1869 (Clymer, 2003: 160). He made the proposal for propaganda by deed. He argued that revolutionaries should kill people who represent an existing Tsarist social order. He implied that assassinations of prominent government figures would cause a fear and horror environment in which revolution could be successful (Kushner, 28). Mikhail Bakunin called for bombing and assassination attempts in his books. He frankly encouraged terrorism actions (Jensen, 2015: 111).

Another important figure of anarchists was Sergey Gennadiyevich Nechayev, who wrote a terrorist manifesto. Its name was "The Catechism of a Revolutionist." This manifest is essential for the terrorism theory. It was a programme for destruction of the state. He wrote details of the prototype anarchist terrorist and the anarchist's revolt. He recommended making propaganda by the deeds. He proclaimed the target of the assassination, and most of them were part of Tsar's government and supporters (Law, 2015: 98).

After publishing "The Catechism of a Revolutionist" manifest, *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will), which was the first modern terrorist group, was established. They planned to assassinate Russian government representatives. They predicted that ordinary citizens of Russia who did not like inequality in society could revolt against the proper order. They believed that terror strategy leads to quick and solid success. Laqueur, pp.17-18. *Narodnaya Volya's* terrorists assassinated Tsar Alexander II and several government officers and

soldiers. The assassination of Tsar II in 1881 was the most successful action of anarchic terrorism (Whittaker, 2002: 15). However, it was very awful for *Narodnaya Volya* that a great number of its supporters were killed or sentenced to death (Neumann and Smith, 2007: 32).

As a result, the murder of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 was an example of their "propaganda by deed." After the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, numerous important people were assassinated in the world from 1881 to 1914 by anarchist terrorists. They were responsible for France President Marie François Sadi Carnot (1894) and USA President William McKinley (1901) (Meisels, 2008: 41). Empress Elizabeth of Austria-Hungary, King Elberto of Italy (1900) and King Carlos I of Portugal's assassinations (1908) (Pichtel, 2016: 4). These successes were the first step of modern terrorism. This time was named the "Golden Age of Terrorism." (Walls, 2017: 22).

Alfred Nobel invented dynamite, which was a breakthrough in technology. But dynamite was a powerful, portable, and concealable weapon, and it could be made easily by a private person. Anarchists used dynamite more easily than other explosives in terrorist attacks. The other cause of the first wave was the new development of communication technologies that allowed knowledge of ideas and events to be rapidly distributed across the world (Parker and Sitter, 2016: 202). Telegraphs were a major factor in the rise of anarchist terrorism (Chaliand and Blin, 180). Another factor of the first wave was the development in railways and transportation technology (Parker and Sitter, 2016: 202).

After the first wave, modern terrorism methods began to occur. Consequently, it showed a way that the weak could challenge the strong by using terrorism. The Assassination of Austria-Hungary Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914, which caused World War I, was the end of the first wave of terrorism. After the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife by Gavrilo Princip, a nationalist Serb terrorist, the first wave of terrorism ended (Chaliand and Blin, 2016: 177).

Second Wave of Terrorism

After the Versailles Peace Treaty, which ended World War I, the second wave of terrorism started. The most comprehensive specialty of this wave was its anti-colonial ideology. Consequently, terrorism was used as a tool for national self-determination, ending colonialism in the Third World and started being international in scope by the late 1950s.

Terrorist tactics changed during the second wave. Although the main victims of the first wave were prominent government officials, the second wave assassinated police officers and their families, which were an important factor for the colonial empires. Second wave terrorists used guerrilla tactics against the colonial military forces. Hit and run style attacks were mostly chosen by them. Especially the "freedom fighter" term was first used in this wave. Freedom fighter- terrorist analogy depute occurred (Jach-chrzaszcz, 2018: 385–91).

As a leader of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Michael Collins led an urban guerrilla campaign that played an important role in securing the independence of Ireland in 1921. It affected other terrorist groups as a successful example (Parker and Sitter, 2016: 205). The diaspora and colony folk began contributing money to anti-colonial terrorist organisations in second wave process. The IRA, EOKA, Irgun and ETA terrorist groups were the most important members of the second wave of terrorism. By the mid-1960s, the second wave had all but faded away (Kaplan, 2016: 24). According to Rapoport, the second wave of terrorism was the most successful wave (Rapoport, 2004: 46–73).

Third Wave of Terrorism

The new left wave, which was the third wave of terrorism, emerged in the mid-1960s in response to the Vietnam War. According to Rapoport, the effectiveness of the Viet Cong's army against the United States military power was the main motive of the third wave (Ibid, 56). Third wave terrorist groups acted on Marxist, Leninist and Maoist ideologies. They had more revolutionary and anarchistic views. The left wave terrorist's attack types were different from the first and second. They prefer to act as hostage-taking agents in the form of airline hijackings and kidnappings. Some types of bombing in crowded areas were especially prominent in the left wave era's attacks (Ibid, 20).

Terrorist groups found a suitable environment not just in third world countries but also in the Western world in this period. Third wave terrorist groups emerged in different parts of the world, such as Turkey (PKK) to Italy (Red Army Faction), Germany (Baader-Meinhof Gang) to Palestine (The Palestine Liberation Organisation), Colombia (FARC) to France (Corsican National Liberation Front). Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was considered by Rapoport as the most important terrorist organisation (Radil and Castan Pinos, 2022: 311–330).

Terrorist and terrorism perceptions have changed from 1900s to Third Wave of Terrorism's time in the international community. For example, Vera Zasulich, who was an important Narodnaya Volya member, tried assassinating Dmitri Feodorovich Trepov, who was the Governor-General of St. Petersburg on 15 September 1906. After the assassination attempt, she did not try to escape. She was calm and polite. When she was asked why she tried to kill Governor Trepov. Her reply was very interesting for the modern world terrorist perception. She said, "I am a terrorist not a killer." She did not regret trying assassinating him (Graaf and Schmid, 2016: 60-62). Because terrorism meant that it was an idealist idea at the first wave of terrorism. They could achieve their goal by using it in the political system for the political good. Narodnaya Volya and the others also enjoyed considerable sympathies among the middle class in general (Laqueur, 1999: 17-18). After 1970s hijacking plane and bombing in crowded area terror action, terrorism and terrorist began to earn bad reputation which ordinary citizens currently have hated.

A new phase of terrorism began to emerge after the USSR's Afghanistan occupation. The Cold War was ended by the collapse of the USSR. As a result, the new left wave started to diminish during the 1980s with the end of the Cold War.

Fourth Wave of Terrorism

We have been in the fourth wave of terrorism, which is an era of religiously motivated terrorism. Although it is a religious agenda, it is the most important factor distinguishing itself from the other waves. They are motivated by political and territorial goals and not only by religious goals.

Although Western states identify the fourth wave with Islamic extremism or jihadist terrorism, according to Rapoport, it is a global phenomenon. It includes extremist Christian, Jewish, Sikh, and Buddhist terrorist groups (Radil and Castan Pinos, p.5) Three major events were the starter of the fourth wave. One of them was establishing a religious state in Iran after abdicating the Shah. Others were the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by radical Islamists.

The fourth wave terrorist group's ideology is different from other waves. They pursue an ideological victory over non-believers. In this period of time, the number of terrorist groups has declined while their power has increased. Suicide bombings and bombings are the most important attack types of fourth wave

terror groups. Owing to the attacks in the urban areas, the casualties of terror victims have escalated. The hierarchical structure of the fourth wave of terror groups has become less centralised. Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, DAESH and Boko Haram are the most recognised terrorist groups of the fourth wave. Rapoport predicted in their article that the Fourth Wave would disappear by 2025 (Chiangi, 2021: 11–29). It seems to be unrealistic for now.

Table 1

Rapoport's Four Waves of Terrorism

Target identity Primary strategy	Focus	Developed basic terrorism strategies and rationales	Precipitant	Special Characteristics
Anarchists 1870–1910 s	Elite assassinations and bank robberies	Primarily European states	Failure/slowness of political reform	Developed basic terrorism strategies and rationales
Nationalist 1920s–1960s	Guerrilla attacks on the police and military	European empires	Post-1919 delegitimization of the empire	Increased international support (UN and diasporas)
New Left/Marxist 1960s–1990s	Hijackings, kidnappings, and assassinations	Governments in general; increasing focus on the US	Viet Cong successes	Increased international training, cooperation, and sponsorship
Religious 1970s–2020s	Suicide bombings	U.S., Israel, and secular regimes with Muslim populations	Iranian Revolution, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan	Casualty escalation and decrease in the number of terrorist groups

Source Rosenfeld, Jean E., 2010, p.16

The Fifth Wave of Terrorism

There have been a lot of articles and books about what the fifth wave of terrorism may be in the future. It is a very complex question. Jeffrey Kaplan's "New Tribalism" (Kaplan, 2020). Anthony Celso's "Jihadist Terror Groups," (Celso, 2015: 249-268) Jeffrey D. Simon's "Technological Wave of Terrorism" (Simon, 2010, 44-65) and Vincent A. Auger's "Right-Wing Terror" (Auger, 2020, 86–97) approaches are the most respectful study about the future of the fifth wave of terrorism in security studies literature. Jeffrey Kaplan argued that the fifth wave emerged in Africa with the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda as its exemplar. He suggested that the fifth wave would be composed of ethnic utopians who tried to remake their societies like the Khmer Rouge, who tried to establish a rural classless society in Cambodia. Moreover, it may arrive earlier than expected (Kaplan, 2020: 12-24). Anthony Celso argued that the fifth wave of terrorism is indeed happening now as jihadist terror. He argued that terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and ISIS will be examples of the fifth wave (Celso, 2015: 249-268). Jeffrey Simon emphasised that fifth wave will not resemble its four predecessors. There will not be any hegemony of ideology among terrorists. Technology and lone operators will be the defining characteristics of the fifth wave. The internet gives easy access to information about targets and types of weapons. Vincent A. Auger's far-right group-identity politics approach has had a powerful stance since Norway and New Zealand terrorist attacks occurred by far-right lone wolf terrorists (Auger, 2020: 86-97). However, the religion wave has continued.

Although there has not been a solid theory for the fifth wave of terrorism, the consensus trends of the fifth wave were published in academic articles. Most of the similarities in these studies are about the methods of terrorism and the environment of terrorism.

There is a correlation between globalisation and the increase in terrorist attacks. Most scholars are agreed that globalisation will affect the fifth wave of terrorism like the fourth wave. Globalisation will be a significant factor for the fifth wave of terrorism (Martinez, 2016: 2). Moreover, the internet-based technology developments will affect the new wave of terrorism. New artificial intelligence-based technologies such as facial recognition, social media, and computers have made it harder for terrorists to operate in urban areas, whereas some opportunities have occurred for terrorist groups. Social media has been used as a terrorist weapon aimed at recruiting persuasions. Terrorists maintain communication with followers in distant areas using social media. Moreover, finding new militants on the Internet will be easier than in the past for terror organisations in future. Cyber terrorism is efficiently used by terrorist groups. As a result, cyber security will be more important for nation states in the future. Cyber-terrorism is dangerous for national security.

The nation states are more focused on the terrorist groups compared with the past. For this reason, the fourth wave's terror groups had network structures and a smooth hierarchy. However, the fifth wave will be different from the religious wave because of lone operator dominance.[1] Lone operators can learn about weapons, targets, and techniques by using the Internet. Lone operators have the advantage of flexible working without hierarchical leadership. They can attack at their will without any order or evidence. It is very difficult to catch them before attacking. As a result, lone operator terrorism may be the most important feature of fifth wave terrorism. It is necessary to add that suicidal attacks, vehicular bombs, and improvised explosives will continue to be a popular tactic among terrorist groups (Walls, 2017: 59-60, 81-83).

Modern terrorism has governed new characteristics that make it more violent and tacticaler than before. Many terrorist organisations have become deadlier than their predecessors. Because of the recent technological developments, terrorists could attack more effectively than in the past. Having access to more sophisticated weaponry and the advances in communication technology are the most significant realities of modern terrorism. Hence, in the future, obtaining nuclear and biological weapons by terrorist groups may be increased. It will be a big concern for the international community (Martinez, 2016: 1).

Poverty in third world countries makes societies much more vulnerable to conflict. The poor war-torn environment pushes failed state citizens to immigrate to the developed nation states. This process may be the key case of the fifth terror wave. Although failed states are hotbeds of terrorist groups in some studies, all of the failed states are not directly associated with being breeding grounds and bases for terrorist groups except Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia (Underhill, 2015: 31-33). However, it must be emphasised that the increasing numbers of failed states give suitable spaces for them. It will continue in the future (Parker and Sitter, 2016: 212).

Conclusion

Currently, the information has been more important than before and the importance of information will increase in the future. Most of the information is easily accessible by using the Internet in the globalised world.

While nearly 5.1 billion people (63% of the world's population) are using the Internet, according to the United Nations, social media use has increased dramatically over the past decade and is now a major source of information. The number of social network worldwide users is expected to reach 3.02 billion monthly active social media users by 2022 .

[1] Lone operator terrorists were responsible for 22% of terrorist-related deaths in the OECD in 2015.

We are today amid information, data, and communication revolution that is influencing all aspects of life, including the dynamics of global terrorism. Terrorist group leaders have chosen to send their message using Twitter, which is a social media channel. Terrorist groups have sent any attacking videos to the target community by using Facebook, which is another social media channel. They have found their militias on Instagram, which is another social media channel. They have learned how to make a bomb from YouTube, which is another social media channel. Development of social media facilitated terrorist group activities that were too hard to accomplish before. The development and accessibility of social media platforms such as Twitter (X), Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Reddit has helped terrorists expand their reach to a wide range of audiences around the world. According to one study, about 90% of terrorist activities online are conducted via social media platforms, while 76% of U.K. terrorists engage in the social media. As a result, after the internet and social media era have dominated the information world, it has become a crucial tool for terrorist groups.

Everything can change faster than the past and can lose its attractiveness rapidly in globalised world and the international community. Some hot topics just live one hour or one day nowadays. This means that communication and relationships between actors accelerated, widened and deepened, owing to the development of the internet and social media. As a result, I argue that a single type of terrorist ideology or any terror groups will not dominate the world because of the internet and social media development. Because they will not find enough space and enough time in social media and the international community's agenda like previous waves' forty years. If they can find space and time, it will not be enough for domination or hegemony in the fifth wave. Consequently, if the fifth wave arrives, it will not be named as a wave like the previous ones.

However, terrorism is a global threat that has no borders, identity, nationality, or religion. First, the failure of defining and describing terrorism from a global perspective and not providing unity against terrorism in the international arena has been a cause of the acceleration of terrorism waves. If the international community intends to solve the terrorism problems, there must be a common understanding of what is meant by terrorism. There has not been any authority that commands and controls nation states against terror and terrorism. The lack of interconnectedness in the world has given hope for terrorist organisations. This problem has encouraged future terrorists and terrorism. But it can be solved by an authority that has the power over the nation states. This authority's name should be United Nations.

The United Nations made an important resolution of prisoners of war, human rights, etc. But it could not do in terrorism subject. This means that focusing on a common understanding of terrorism to foster international cooperation has been the main problem. It should be solved by cooperation for global security. After solving the cooperation problems among the nation states, there may not be a fifth wave of terrorism in the future.

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Research Article

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The Rwandan Genocide: A Humanitarian Catastrophe in the Pages of History

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Abstract The 1994 Rwandan Genocide remains one of the most shocking humanitarian catastrophes in modern history. In just 100 days, nearly one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were brutally murdered in a systematic campaign of violence. This study explores the historical background, causes, and execution of the genocide as well as the international community's response, legal processes, and national reconciliation efforts. By applying theoretical frameworks from social psychology, international relations, and transitional justice, the article hypothesises that the genocide was a modern, state-engineered political project, enabled by elite orchestration, dehumanising propaganda, and a profound failure of international responsibility. The study adopts a comparative case methodology with discourse analysis and aims to contribute to the understanding of the mechanisms behind mass atrocities and strategies for their prevention.

Keywords Rwandan Genocide · Ethnic Violence · Dehumanisation · International Failure · Transitional Justice · Group Psychology

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The Rwandan Genocide: A Humanitarian Catastrophe in the Pages of History

Genocide represents one of the most devastating breakdowns of human societies—a violent rupture in the moral and ethical codes that sustain civilisation. When people are persecuted solely for their ethnic, national, racial, or religious identity, it not only signifies a violation of rights but also a collapse of collective humanity. The 20th century, while marked by scientific and political progress, also witnessed horrifying genocides such as the Holocaust, the Cambodian genocide, and the Bosnian massacre.

Among these, the 1994 Rwandan Genocide stands out for its rapidity, brutality, and the inaction of the global community. This article hypothesises that **the genocide was not the result of ancient ethnic hatred but a modern political project carefully orchestrated by the Hutu elite, facilitated through mass propaganda, bureaucratic organisation, and the deliberate paralysis of international mechanisms.**

To test this hypothesis, the study applies theories from social psychology (Milgram, Staub, Arendt), transitional justice, and conflict resolution, using a qualitative comparative method.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This research employs a **qualitative comparative case study methodology**, supported by **a discourse analysis** of both primary and secondary sources. This study incorporates theoretical models from social psychology (obedience to authority, dehumanisation), genocide studies, and transitional justice literature.

The theoretical frameworks include:

- **Stanley Milgram's obedience theory**
- **Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" concept**
- **Herbert Kelman's dehumanisation model**
- **Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner)**

Data are drawn from

- UN reports and resolutions,
- First-hand accounts (e.g., General Dallaire's memoirs),
- ICTR documents,
- Media transcripts from RTLM radio
- Secondary analyses from leading genocide scholars

This triangulated approach allows for a layered understanding of how individual psychology, state institutions, and international actors intersected during the genocide.

Summary

1994 Ruanda Soykırımı, modern tarihin en trajik ve dehşet verici olaylarından biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Sadece 100 gün içinde yaklaşık 800.000 Tutsi ve ılımlı Hutu, sistematik bir şiddet kampanyasında vahşice katledilmiştir. Bu makale, soykırımın tarihsel arka planını, nedenlerini ve uygulanış biçimini, ayrıca uluslararası toplumun tepkisini incelemektedir. Ayrıca bu suçlara karşı alınan hukuki önlemleri ve ulusal

uzlaşıya yönelik çabaları da ele almaktadır. Tarihsel, politik, sosyolojik ve ekonomik açılardan yapılan analizlerle, gelecekte benzer vahşetlerin önlenmesine yardımcı olabilecek hayati dersler ortaya konulmaktadır.

Introduction

Genocide represents one of the most devastating breakdowns of human societies—a violent rupture in the moral and ethical codes that sustain civilisation. When people are persecuted and targeted solely because of their ethnic, national, racial, or religious identity, it signifies not only a violation of rights but also a collapse of collective humanity. Although the 20th century is often associated with advancements in science, politics, and international cooperation, it also bore witness to atrocities that revealed the fragility of the modern order. The Holocaust stands as a terrifying example of how state structures can be turned into instruments of extermination. Similarly, the killing of Bosnians during the final phase of the Yugoslavia reflected how political instability, fear, and ethnonationalism can lead societies towards collective violence. In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge's revolutionary agenda culminated in a mass purge that eradicated roughly a quarter of the population, illustrating the destructive consequences of ideological extremism.

Among these catastrophic episodes, the 1994 Rwandan Genocide stands out due to both its ferocity and the global community's failure to intervene. Within just 100 days, approximately 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were brutally murdered—many by people they had once known personally. This mass violence unfolded with alarming speed and was often carried out with rudimentary weapons, such as machetes and clubs. Local media, especially radio broadcasts, played a central role in inciting hatred and organising attacks, while state actors coordinated much of the violence. Peacekeeping forces on the ground lacked both the authority and the capacity to prevent the slaughter, rendering the United Nations ineffective during one of the century's worst humanitarian crises (Melvern, 2006).

The roots of the Rwandan tragedy can be traced back to the colonial era, during which the European powers imposed rigid ethnic classifications that institutionalised inequality. Under the Belgian administration, Tutsis were favoured over Hutus, deepening social cleavages and fuelling resentment. After independence in 1962, these divisions became embedded in national politics, giving rise to cycles of discrimination, retaliation, and political exclusion (Des Forges, 1999). By the early 1990s, escalating tensions had left the country on the brink of collapse, and the assassination of President Habyarimana in April 1994 became the trigger for widespread violence.

The legacy of the Rwandan Genocide serves as a grim reminder that the collapse of social and moral order can occur with alarming rapidity. It also emphasises the need for the international community to respond not only with diplomatic rhetoric but also with timely and decisive action rooted in the protection of human dignity.

Between April and July 1994, in only 100 days, nearly 800,000 to 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed during the Rwandan Genocide (Gourevitch, 1998). What made this genocide different from others was the way it was carried out. Unlike other genocides that often relied on military operations or industrial methods, most of the killings in Rwanda were done using simple tools such as machetes and clubs. The violence was not only between strangers—neighbours, friends, and even family members turned against one another. This was not a sudden outbreak of hate, but the result of years of political manipulation, ethnic propaganda, and deep historical tensions (Straus, 2006; Mamdani, 2001).

One of the most tragic aspects of the Rwandan Genocide was the failure of the international community to stop it. Even though intelligence agencies, NGOs, and diplomats warned about the risk of mass violence,

world leaders hesitated to take action. Many governments avoided using the term “genocide” so they would not be legally required to intervene under the 1948 Genocide Convention (Power, 2002). The UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), led by General Roméo Dallaire, was unable to respond effectively due to limited resources and political restrictions (Dallaire, 2004).

This lack of international response allowed the killings to continue. It also raised serious questions about global responsibility and the effectiveness of international law. Beyond the loss of lives, the genocide caused deep social, political, and economic damage in Rwanda. Entire communities were wiped out, and millions of people were displaced (Prunier, 1995). After the genocide, Rwanda had to rebuild its society, deal with widespread trauma, and work towards justice and reconciliation (Clark, 2010).

The Rwandan experience has forced not only the country itself, but the whole world, to think again about human rights, international intervention, and justice after the conflict (Melvern, 2006). This study aims to examine the genocide from historical, political, sociological, and legal perspectives. It will look at how colonial rule contributed to ethnic division, how political messaging encouraged violence, and how international institutions failed to act. It will also evaluate Rwanda’s post-genocide justice efforts, especially the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the community-based Gacaca courts. By understanding the causes of this tragedy, we may help prevent similar events in the future.

Historical Background: Colonial Legacy and Ethnic Division

The roots of the Rwandan Genocide go back to long-standing ethnic tensions that were made worse and formalised during the colonial period. Before European colonisation, Rwandan society was not sharply divided by ethnicity. Instead, it was shaped more by economic roles and social status. Most Hutus worked as farmers, while Tutsis, who often owned cattle, held more wealth and political influence (Mamdani, 2001). These identities were flexible: a successful Hutu could be considered a Tutsi, while a Tutsi who lost wealth might be seen as a Hutu (Newbury, 1988).

This flexible system changed drastically when the Germans arrived in the late 19th century, and later when Belgium took control. Both colonial powers believed that Tutsis were superior to Hutus based on physical traits such as height and skin tone. They used the Tutsis as local rulers, creating a racial hierarchy that excluded the Hutus from power and opportunity (Des Forges, 1999; Gourevitch, 1998).

When Belgium officially took over Rwanda in 1916, they deepened this divide. In 1933, they introduced identity cards that labelled every person as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa. This policy ended the fluid social mobility of earlier times (Prunier, 1995). Tutsis were given access to better education, government jobs, and land, while Hutus were excluded and marginalised (Chrétien, 2003).

However, things changed again in the mid-20th century, when many African countries began to seek independence. Belgium, sensing the political shift, switched its support from the Tutsi elites to the Hutu majority (Mamdani, 2001). This change led to the 1959 Hutu Revolution. Thousands of Tutsis were killed, and tens of thousands were forced to flee to neighbouring countries (Melvern, 2006). When Rwanda became independent in 1962, the Hutus took power and began to enforce discriminatory policies against the Tutsis (Straus, 2006).

In the years following independence, Rwanda’s Hutu-led governments continued to exclude the Tutsis from political power, public services, and economic life. This long-term marginalisation caused deep frustration among the Tutsi communities, especially those living in exile. Many of them had fled during earlier waves of violence, including the 1959 revolution. Over time, this group became increasingly organised and determined

to return to their homeland. Out of these exiled communities, the RPF was formed—a group that would later play a key role in the events leading up to the 1994 genocide (Prunier, 1995).

The foundations of this genocide were laid by two major historical forces. First, the colonial period created artificial ethnic divisions, turning flexible social categories into rigid, racial identities. Second, the post-independence policies of exclusion and discrimination deepened those divisions. For decades, Tutsis were labelled as enemies of the state, and their rights were systematically denied.

By the early 1990s, the tension had reached a breaking point. Years of unresolved grievances, social injustice, and ethnic propaganda erupted into widespread violence. The genocide that followed targeted not only the Tutsis but also the moderate Hutus who opposed the extremist government. Rwanda's experience shows how colonial manipulation and long-standing political exclusion can together lead to devastating consequences. This is a powerful reminder that identity-based politics and historical injustice, if left unaddressed, can fuel cycles of mass violence and instability.

The Road to Genocide: Political Turmoil and the Spark of Conflict

In the early 1990s, Rwanda was on the verge of collapse. The country was struggling with an economic crisis, deep-rooted ethnic tensions, and growing political instability. For decades, repeated violence, ethnic discrimination, and state-led killings had created strong feelings of fear and hatred between the Hutu-led government and the excluded Tutsi minority (Mamdani, 2001). The situation worsened during the 1980s when coffee prices—the country's main source of income—fell sharply. This economic downturn caused high unemployment, growing poverty, and rising frustration among the population (Uvin, 1998; Prunier, 1995).

Amid this climate of uncertainty, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)—a group formed by Tutsi exiles who had fled earlier violence—launched a military attack against the Rwandan government in October 1990 (Des Forges, 1999). Their goal was to remove President Juvénal Habyarimana's regime and to secure the right of return for Tutsi refugees who had been living abroad for decades (Melvern, 2006). The government, however, resisted this challenge with support from France and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). This led to a prolonged civil war that lasted until the genocide erupted in 1994 (Gourevitch, 1998).

The growing instability, mixed with years of social division and economic collapse, laid the groundwork for radical ideologies to gain power. What followed was not simply the result of ancient ethnic hatred, but a carefully constructed political process that used fear and historical wounds to justify mass violence.

The Arusha Accords: A Fragile Peace

To end the ongoing civil war, peace talks were held between the Rwandan government and the RPF. These negotiations led to the signing of the Arusha Accords in August 1993 (Straus, 2006). The agreement aimed to create a power-sharing government between the Hutus and Tutsis, declare a ceasefire, and integrate RPF fighters into the national army (Dallaire, 2004). The international community welcomed the deal as a step towards peace. However, extremist Hutu groups saw it as a threat to their political dominance (Melvern, 2006).

Members of President Juvénal Habyarimana's ruling party, the MRND (National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development), along with ultra-nationalist groups like the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR), strongly opposed the Accords (Des Forges, 1999). They believed the agreement would give the Tutsis back political and military power. These hardliners had been preparing for years to launch mass violence, and they viewed the peace process as the perfect cover for their final plan (Chrétien, 2003).

Even before the genocide began, radical elements within the government were developing detailed plans to eliminate the Tutsi population. These plans were supported by years of anti-Tutsi propaganda. The ideology known as “Hutu Power” portrayed Tutsis as enemies of the state and called for their destruction. Hate speech was widely spread through Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), a government-backed broadcaster. On RTLM, Tutsis were regularly called “inyenzi” (cockroaches) and listeners were encouraged to kill them (Gourevitch, 1998).

During this time, death lists were created, militias were trained, and hundreds of thousands of machetes were imported and distributed to government-aligned groups (Melvern, 2006). In this way, preparations for genocide were made under the false promise of peace.

The Assassination of Habyarimana and the Start of the Genocide

On April 6, 1994, a plane carrying Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana was shot down as it approached the Kigali airport. The crash killed both Habyarimana and the President of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira. To this day, it is unclear who was responsible for the attack, but the consequences were immediate and devastating (Des Forges, 1999).

Within hours of the crash, roadblocks were set up across Kigali, and the killings began. Tutsi civilians, as well as moderate Hutus who supported peace or opposed the ruling party, were targeted. The president’s assassination gave radical Hutu leaders the excuse they had been waiting for to launch a planned campaign of mass murder (Melvern, 2006).

Although the crash was officially framed as a national tragedy, extremist elements in the government and military used it to justify their pre-arranged plans. The Interahamwe militias—closely tied to the ruling MRND party—were activated. With lists of names in hand, they went door to door, killing Tutsis and political opponents (Gourevitch, 1998). These militias, supported by members of the national army and local officials, were brutal and efficient. The killings spread quickly from Kigali to the countryside.

What happened was not a spontaneous outbreak of violence. It was a well-organised effort, prepared over many months. Weapons had already been distributed, death lists were written, and hate propaganda had prepared the public to accept the killings. The downing of the plane simply triggered the execution of a carefully designed plan for genocide (Straus, 2006).

In just a few weeks, the international community realised that mass violence was unfolding—but by then, tens of thousands had already been killed.

The Mobilisation of Genocide: The Role of Extremist Hutu Leaders

Just hours after the assassination of President Habyarimana, extremist Hutu leaders, military officers, and members of the presidential guard activated a pre-existing plan to eliminate the Tutsi population (Dallaire, 2004). Factions loyal to the "Hutu Power" ideology quickly took control of the interim government and launched a nationwide campaign of organised killings (Gourevitch, 1998). Roadblocks were set up across Rwanda, where armed militias and government forces checked identity cards and executed Tutsis and moderate Hutus on the spot (Des Forges, 1999).

The primary actors behind the massacres were the youth militias of the ruling MRND party and the extremist CDR: the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi. These groups were trained, armed, and directed by state officials and military commanders (Straus, 2006). The violence was not random—it was systematic,

coordinated, and brutally efficient. Massacres occurred in homes, schools, hospitals, and even churches, where many Tutsis had sought refuge (Melvern, 2006).

Women and girls were subjected to widespread sexual violence. Many were gang-raped by militias and soldiers, with some deliberately infected with HIV/AIDS—a method described by human rights experts as a form of biological warfare (Nowrojee, 2005).

Despite clear evidence of the scale of the killings, the international community remained largely silent. World leaders refused to intervene, even as reports from Rwanda showed the extent of the violence (Power, 2002). Rather than strengthening peacekeeping operations, the United Nations, the United States, and European countries withdrew most of their personnel, leaving civilians unprotected (Dallaire, 2004).

By July 1994, when the RPF captured Kigali and brought the genocide to an end, an estimated 800,000 to one million people had been killed (Prunier, 1995). This genocide remains one of the darkest chapters in human history and represents a profound failure of international diplomacy and humanitarian responsibility.

Psychological and Sociological Factors in Genocide

Genocide is not only a mass killing—it is also a socially constructed process that enables ordinary individuals to participate in extreme acts of violence. The psychological and sociological mechanisms behind this transformation include deep-seated prejudices, state-sponsored propaganda, group conformity, obedience to authority, and the systematic dehumanisation of the targeted group (Staub, 1989). These elements create an environment where violence becomes normalised and even justified in the minds of the perpetrators.

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide is a chilling example of how individual psychology, collective identity, and ideological indoctrination can combine to turn neighbours, friends, and even family members into executioners. Many Rwandans were influenced by years of anti-Tutsi propaganda, which portrayed the Tutsi minority as subhuman and dangerous enemies of the state. Constant exposure to this narrative made it easier for individuals to rationalise or even embrace violence (Mamdani, 2001).

Social pressures also played a powerful role. Participation in violence was often driven by fear of punishment, a desire for social acceptance, or opportunistic motivations such as looting and land seizure. In tightly knit communities, refusing to join in the killings could result in accusations of betrayal or even death. These dynamics highlight how genocide is not simply the result of hatred, but a complex interaction of psychological conditioning, political manipulation, and communal coercion.

Understanding these factors is crucial for preventing future atrocities. It reveals how vulnerable societies can be to ideologies of exclusion and violence, and underscores the importance of education, social resilience, and early intervention in times of rising ethnic or political tension.

Dehumanisation and the Role of Propaganda

One of the most powerful psychological tools that enabled the Rwandan Genocide was the systematic dehumanisation of the Tutsi population. In the years leading up to 1994, extremist Hutu leaders promoted a false narrative portraying Tutsis as foreigners and threats to the nation's survival (Des Forges, 1999). State-controlled media, particularly *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM), played a central role in spreading this message. Tutsis were routinely referred to as "cockroaches" (*inyenzi*) or "snakes"—terms that framed their extermination as not only justified but also necessary (Gourevitch, 1998).

Research in social psychology confirms that dehumanisation is a critical step in enabling genocide. When a group is described using animalistic or disease-related language, moral boundaries are weakened. Perpetrators can commit horrific acts without guilt or empathy because they no longer see their victims as humans (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989; Staub, 2011).

In a small Rwandan village, people were at first unsure about hurting their Tutsi neighbours. However, as local militia leaders (Interahamwe) kept saying that "Tutsis are dangerous traitors," the community slowly began to accept this idea. After several meetings and conversations, the group's thinking became more extreme. What started as "maybe we should report them" turned into "we must kill them all." This is an example of *group polarisation*, where people in a group start with moderate opinions but move to extreme positions after group discussions (Myers & Lamm, 1976).

A young man didn't want to join the killings. But all of his friends had already joined the militia and told him he would be punished if he did not help. Feeling scared and pressured, he decided to help them find people hiding in the village, even though he knew it was wrong. Later, he said, "Everyone was doing it. I had no choice."
This shows *conformity*, where a person changes their behaviour to match the group, even if they disagree inside. This idea comes from the classic studies by Solomon Asch (1956).

A Hutu farmer hid his childhood friend, a Tutsi, in his home. One day, the militia came and said anyone who hid the Tutsis would be killed along with their whole family. The man was afraid for his wife and children. In the end, he told the militia about the hidden friend. Many years later, he said, "I still feel guilty, but I had to protect my children."
This is a *moral dilemma*—a very difficult choice between doing what is right and protecting loved ones. According to Kohlberg (1981), this kind of situation shows how people struggle between different levels of moral reasoning.

This pattern was not unique to Rwanda. During the Holocaust, Jews were described as rats and vermin; in Cambodia, enemies of the Khmer Rouge were labelled as parasites (Hinton, 2005). These examples show how language and imagery can be weaponized to destroy empathy and justify mass killing.

Understanding the role of propaganda and dehumanisation helps explain how ordinary citizens can become involved in systematic violence. It also highlights the need to challenge hate speech and ideological manipulation before they translate into real-world atrocities.

Social Identity Theory and Group Polarisation

Another key psychological factor in the context of genocide is the social identity theory, which explains how people define themselves based on group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In Rwanda, the ethnic divisions imposed during the colonial period gradually became rigid social categories, increasing hostility between the Hutu and Tutsi communities (Mamdani, 2001).

Psychologists suggest that when one group (such as the Hutu majority) perceives another group (such as the Tutsi minority) as a threat to its existence, aggressive actions can become justified or even encouraged (Staub, 2011). In Rwanda, decades of political propaganda reinforced the belief that the Tutsis were plotting to regain control of the country. This fear was used to portray their elimination as an act of "self-defence" (Melvern, 2006).

In addition, the psychological phenomenon known as group polarisation also played a major role. This occurs when people adopt more extreme positions when they are part of a group than they would on their own (Myers & Lamm, 1976). As the killings began, growing social pressure to participate in the genocide pushed many individuals into violence. Even those who were initially hesitant joined in—whether due to fear, coercion, or a desire to gain social approval (Fujii, 2009).

Understanding how social identity and group dynamics contribute to collective violence is essential for designing early-warning systems and interventions that address not only political tensions but also the psychological vulnerabilities that can lead to mass atrocities.

Obedience to Authority and the Banality of Evil

Stanley Milgram's (1963) famous experiments showed how ordinary people can follow orders from authority figures, even when those orders cause harm to others. In Rwanda, local leaders, government officials, and military officers gave direct orders to citizens to kill their neighbours, coworkers, and even family members (Dallaire, 2004). In a culture where obeying political and military leaders was strongly expected and where people feared punishment, thousands joined the genocide—even if they felt it was wrong (Straus, 2006).

Hannah Arendt's idea of the *banality of evil*, based on her analysis of Adolf Eichmann, shows that mass killings can be committed not only by fanatics or sadists but also by ordinary people who do not think critically about their actions. These people follow orders, obey rules, and avoid personal responsibility (Arendt, 1963).

In the case of the **1994 Rwandan Genocide**, Arendt's concept can be applied to different local actors:

- **Village Chiefs:** Many village leaders helped organise lists of Tutsi families and shared them with the militias. They were not ideological leaders, but local officials who saw themselves simply as following the government's orders (Dallaire, 2004).
- **Militia Leaders (Interahamwe):** Some militia leaders were motivated by ethnic hatred, but many acted because of peer pressure, fear, or for personal benefit such as land, status, or protection. They became part of the violence not by deep belief, but by following what became "normal" in their environment (Straus, 2006).
- **Radio Broadcasters (RTLM):** This radio station encouraged violence with hate speech. But after the genocide, many broadcasters said they were just doing their jobs—just like Eichmann said during his trial (Des Forges, 1999).

These people were not monsters. They were ordinary individuals who played their roles in a violent system without thinking deeply about what they were doing. Their actions—writing lists, speaking on the radio, organising local meetings—show how terrible things can happen when normal people stop thinking critically and blindly obey a system.

Fear and the Need for Self-Protection

While ideology and propaganda motivated many, fear was also a major reason why ordinary Hutus joined the killings. In many cases, those who refused to join the violence were called traitors and were themselves attacked or killed by extremist militias (Fujii, 2009). Some people did not hate Tutsis, but they feared for their lives and the safety of their families (Straus, 2006).

There were also economic reasons. The Hutu civilians were promised the property, land, and money of the Tutsis they killed. This made the violence even more attractive for people struggling with poverty (Uvin, 1998).

Psychological trauma and post-genocide guilt

For many who took part in the genocide, the emotional impact was deep. Those forced or pressured to kill lived with strong feelings of guilt, shame, and emotional breakdown (Hinton, 2005). Some had to kill friends or relatives and suffered serious mental conflicts afterward.

For survivors, the trauma was just as severe. Many experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and deep sadness. Families and communities were torn apart by grief, fear, and mistrust (Staub, 2011).

After the genocide, Rwanda tried to rebuild through reconciliation efforts. The local courts known as Gacaca helped people share the truth, accept responsibility, and return to society. However, these processes were emotionally difficult. Survivors had to face the people who had killed their loved ones, and this made forgiveness and healing much harder (Clark, 2010).

Understanding Genocide Psychology to Prevent Future Crimes

Understanding the psychology and social forces behind genocide is essential for preventing future mass killings. Rwanda shows how propaganda, group identity, obedience to authority, and fear can push ordinary people to commit shocking violence.

To prevent similar events, societies must take the following key steps:

- Promote education that supports critical thinking and tolerance,
- respond early to signs of extremist ideas, and
- Strengthen global legal systems that hold people accountable for crimes.

Unless we clearly understand how genocide happens, the world risks facing these horrors again (Staub, 2011).

Economic Consequences of the Genocide

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide caused not only deep human suffering but also a massive economic collapse. Mass killings, forced displacement, and the destruction of infrastructure led to the shutdown of key industries and nearly stopped the country's economic activity (Uvin, 1998). With many workers killed, roads and utilities destroyed, and farming disrupted, poverty increased and food became scarce (Prunier, 1995).

Despite these severe problems, Rwanda later made a remarkable economic recovery. Through reconciliation-based development plans, structural reforms, and new governance strategies, the country began to rebuild. Today, Rwanda is seen as one of Africa's fastest-growing economies. This success is often linked to the determination and cooperation of its people (World Bank, 2022).

Immediate Economic Impact: Collapse of Key Sectors

During the genocide, the economy almost stopped. Factories were closed, farms were abandoned, and transportation systems no longer worked. Agriculture, which supported over 90% of the population, was hit hardest. Many farmers were killed or fled, and the land was left unused (Uvin, 1998). Roads, bridges, power

lines, and water systems were damaged or destroyed, making it hard to continue any economic activity (World Bank, 2000).

The financial sector also collapsed. Most banks shut down, and foreign investors left due to political chaos. The national currency lost value, inflation increased, and the government could no longer pay salaries or support public services. International donors also paused or reduced their aid while waiting to see how the situation would unfold (Holtzman et al., 1996; Ansoms, 2011).

Loss of Human Capital and Long-Term Development

Beyond physical destruction, one of the most damaging effects was the loss of human capital. In just 100 days, Rwanda lost around 10% of its population. Many of those killed were teachers, doctors, engineers, business leaders, and public servants—people who played key roles in the economy (Straus, 2006; Verwimp, 2003).

It is also estimated that about 400,000 children were left orphaned. This had a strong negative effect on Rwanda's long-term development potential (Human Rights Watch, 1996). Many women who survived were victims of sexual violence, which caused physical and mental trauma, making it difficult for them to work or continue with a normal life (Nowrojee, 2005).

The refugee crisis also hurt the economy. Millions fled to neighbouring countries, creating one of Africa's biggest refugee movements (UNHCR, 1995). When they returned after the genocide, Rwanda faced serious problems with housing, employment, and access to basic services (Prunier, 1995).

Post-Genocide Economic Reforms: The Path to Recovery

Despite the deep economic destruction caused by the genocide, Rwanda managed to launch one of the most ambitious rebuilding efforts in recent history. Under the leadership of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and President Paul Kagame, the government introduced strong economic reforms focused on reconciliation, political stability, and sustainable growth (Ansoms, 2011).

One of the key parts of this recovery was investment in agriculture. Since most Rwandans depended on farming, the government prioritised land reform, rural development, and modern farming techniques (World Bank, 2022). Programmes aimed at increasing food production, improving irrigation, and boosting exports helped stabilise the economy and lifted millions out of extreme poverty (IMF, 2019).

Another major factor in the recovery was support for private sector investment. The government created business-friendly policies, reduced bureaucracy, and offered incentives to attract foreign investors. This helped revive industries such as tourism, manufacturing, and technology (Holtzman et al., 1996). Investment in roads, electricity, and the internet also made Rwanda more attractive for business (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Tourism and Economic Diversification: A Model for Africa

Rwanda used its natural beauty and biodiversity to build a strong tourism sector. Thanks to investments in ecotourism and wildlife conservation, the country has become a popular destination for international tourists (Spenceley et al., 2017). Volcanoes National Park, home to endangered mountain gorillas, has made Rwanda a world-famous travel destination. Tourism brought foreign income and created jobs for thousands of people (Munyaneza, 2019).

At the same time, Rwanda worked to diversify its economy beyond farming and tourism. The government invested in manufacturing, services, and financial technology (IMF, 2019). It also attracted international businesses, hosted global conferences, and built strong trade partnerships. Today, Rwanda is considered one of East Africa's emerging economies (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Lessons from Rwanda's Economic Transformation

Rwanda's recovery offers important lessons for other countries rebuilding after the conflict. Even though the genocide left the nation in ruins, good leadership and long-term planning helped rebuild the economy:

- Political Stability and Reconciliation: Peace and shared governance create the foundation for recovery (Clark, 2010).
- Investment in Human Capital: Rwanda focused on education, job skills, and youth empowerment to rebuild its workforce (Verwimp, 2003).
- Infrastructure and Technology: Modern roads, electricity, and digital services support long-term growth (Anyanwu & Erhijakpor, 2010).
- Anti-Corruption Policies: The government enforced strong measures to reduce corruption, improve trust, and attract investors (Transparency International, 2022).

Although Rwanda still faces challenges such as unemployment, inequality, and reliance on foreign aid, its progress shows that post-conflict recovery is possible with smart and committed leadership (IMF, 2019).

International Response: Silence and Inaction

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide is seen as one of the biggest failures of the international community. Political interests, bureaucracy, and hesitation stopped world leaders from taking action, even when clear warnings were given. Despite intelligence reports, diplomatic messages, and witness accounts, leaders from the United Nations, the United States, and European countries did not take steps to prevent the killing of nearly one million people (Dallaire, 2004).

Even when the genocide was reported by the global media and confirmed by satellite images, international leaders delayed and debated. In the end, they chose not to intervene. The failure of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), the reluctance of Western powers, and the overall lack of political will showed that the problem was not a lack of resources but a lack of commitment (Melvern, 2006).

Early Warnings Ignored

The UN and other global actors were warned about the coming genocide months in advance. In January 1994, UNAMIR Commander General Roméo Dallaire sent a secret telegram, later known as the "Genocide Fax," to the UN Headquarters in New York. He clearly stated that the extremist Hutus were planning mass killings, collecting weapons, and training militias (Dallaire, 2004; Des Forges, 1999).

Dallaire asked for permission to stop the weapons and prevent the violence. However, the UN refused, saying it must respect Rwanda's national sovereignty and stay within its limited peacekeeping mandate (Barnett, 2002). This delay gave extremists time to act without any serious opposition (Melvern, 2006).

UNAMIR's Weak Mandate

UNAMIR was created by the UN Security Council in October 1993 through Resolution 872. Its job was to observe the peace agreement between the Rwandan government and the RPF (Jones, 2007). However, it had no real authority or capacity to stop violence.

When the genocide began in April 1994, UNAMIR had only about 2,500 lightly armed peacekeepers—far too few to stop the mass killings (Dallaire, 2004). As the violence increased, the UN actually reduced the force to just 270 soldiers. This left Rwanda at the mercy of the killers (Power, 2002).

Although General Dallaire and his team tried hard to protect civilians, their efforts were limited by the lack of equipment, troops, and legal authority (Des Forges, 1999). At the same time, NATO was willing to intervene in places such as Bosnia and Kosovo, which showed a painful double standard (Gourevitch, 1998).

The Role of the U.S. and Western Countries

During the genocide, the United States under President Bill Clinton remained largely passive (Power, 2002). The death of US soldiers in Somalia in 1993 made the Clinton administration very cautious about another mission in Africa (Barnett, 2002).

In press briefings, U.S. officials avoided using the word "genocide." They used vague terms such as "acts of genocide" to avoid legal obligations under the 1948 Genocide Convention (Power, 2002; Kuperman, 2001).

Meanwhile, France continued to support the Hutu-led government. In June 1994, it launched "Operation Turquoise," claiming it was a humanitarian mission. However, this also helped many genocide suspects escape to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) (Prunier, 1995).

Moral Failure and Late Realisations

By July 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Paul Kagame, had taken control of the capital, Kigali. The genocide had already claimed around 800,000 to 1 million lives (Straus, 2006).

After the genocide, the UN and Western governments faced harsh criticism. Kofi Annan, who later became the UN Secretary-General, admitted that the UN had failed in Rwanda (Annan, 1999). In 1998, President Bill Clinton visited Rwanda and admitted the U.S. inaction but did not offer a full apology (Power, 2002).

The Rwandan Genocide demonstrated the importance of early intervention in stopping mass killings. However, later tragedies in Sudan (Darfur), Myanmar (Rohingya), and Syria raise serious questions about whether the world truly learned from Rwanda (Straus, 2006).

Lessons from Rwanda: Strengthening Global Responses to Genocide

The failure to stop the 1994 Rwandan Genocide sparked major discussions about how the world can better prevent such mass killings. Some key lessons are as follows:

- Early Warning Systems: Intelligence agencies and international organisations must act quickly and firmly when signs of genocide appear (Jones, 2007).
- Stronger Peacekeeping Mandates: Future peace missions need enough troops, equipment, and the authority to intervene if violence breaks out (Dallaire, 2004).
- Avoiding Political Delays: Governments should not hesitate to use the word *"genocide" when* mass violence is occurring. Hiding behind legal language weakens action and delays help (Power, 2002).

- Accountability: Countries that fail to respond to genocide must take responsibility. Human rights should come before political interests (Melvern, 2006).

As Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General, once said, what happened in Rwanda was "a unique failure" in UN history. The world cannot afford to repeat that mistake.

Conclusion: Preventing Future Genocides

The Rwandan Genocide was one of the most shocking events of modern history. It showed how ethnic hatred, political extremism, and global silence can combine to cause mass death. In just 100 days, about one million people were killed. The international community failed to act in time and was often stuck in debates and bureaucracy (Staub, 2011).

This genocide left deep scars on Rwandan society. It affected everything—economy, politics, society, and national identity. However, Rwanda began a long recovery process focused on justice and reconciliation. Through the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and local *Gacaca* courts, many perpetrators were judged, and efforts towards national unity began (Clark, 2010).

At the global level, the genocide proved how important early action, strong legal systems, and political courage are (Barnett, 2002). However, recent tragedies in Sudan, Myanmar, and Syria suggest that the world has still not fully learned from Rwanda (Straus, 2006).

To prevent future genocides, the international community must:

- Take Early Warnings Seriously: Genocide is often the result of years of hate speech and division. These signs must not be ignored (Mamdani, 2001).
- Improve Response Systems: The UN and regional organisations should be reformed to act quickly, even when politics are complicated (Dallaire, 2004).
- Fight Hate Speech: As in Rwanda with the RTLM radio, hate speech often comes before violence. In today's digital world, this threat is even greater (Melvern, 2006).
- Balance Justice and Healing: Punishment is not enough. There must also be truth-telling and efforts to bring communities back together (Clark, 2010).
- Promote education and historical awareness: The causes and effects of genocide should be taught to future generations to prevent denial and forgetting (Schabas, 2006).

Rwanda's journey over the last 30 years offers hope. But real healing requires constant work, honesty, and building a shared national identity.

Table 1

Comparison of Genocide Prevention Mechanisms

Criteria/Genocide	Rwanda (1994)	Bosnia (1992–1995)	Cambodia (1975–1979)	Holocaust (1939–1945)
Early Warning Signs	UN peacekeepers warned the UN, but no action is taken.	Many reports of violence were ignored for years.	Refugees and mass graves were visible, but there was no strong response.	Anti-Jewish laws and violence were clear signs.
International Response	The UN and other countries were too late and too weak.	NATO only acted after years of killings.	No real international help; only Vietnam stopped it.	No action during the war; focus was on military victory.

Criteria/Genocide	Rwanda (1994)	Bosnia (1992–1995)	Cambodia (1975–1979)	Holocaust (1939–1945)
Legal Tools Available	The Genocide Convention existed, but was not used.	Convention ignored, no punishment at the time.	Convention was ignored due to Cold War politics.	No legal term for genocide existed during the war.
UN's Role	The UN had peacekeepers but gave them no power.	UN troops failed to protect civilians in safe zones.	The UN was not involved; the major powers stayed silent.	The UN did not exist yet; the League of Nations failed to act.
Regional Powers' Actions	Neighbouring countries stayed silent.	Serbia supported the attackers; others stayed quiet.	Only Vietnam acted by invading Cambodia.	Some local governments helped the Nazis or stayed silent.
Media and Civil Society	The media came late; the world saw the killings too late.	Some media reports existed, but they did not stop the genocide.	The government blocked all news; the world knew little.	Few knew or cared until after the war.
Political Context	Post–Cold War confusion delayed the global reaction.	The European war made action harder; politics blocked it.	The Cold War made the West avoid action against Cambodia.	The World War II focus was the military; Jews were not a priority.
Lessons Learned	Led to "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) in 2005.	Showed the need for a stronger international justice system.	Led to later debates on humanitarian intervention.	Helped create human rights law and war crime tribunals.

Summary Points

- In **Rwanda**, the genocide could have been stopped early. A UN commander warned the world, but no one listened.
- In **Bosnia**, the UN and Europe did not protect civilians even when they promised to.
- In **Cambodia**, the world powers stayed quiet. Only **Vietnam** stopped the genocide by invading.
- During the **Holocaust**, there was no strong international system. The genocide happened while the world fought a big war.

The phrase "Never Again" should not just be a dream. It must be a call for action, policy, and responsibility. The world failed in Rwanda in 1994. To ensure that never happens again, every person, institution, and country must do their part.

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Reimagining the Post-War City: Symbolic Landscape Transformation and Reconciliation in Brčko District

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Abstract

In the aftermath of a violent conflict, the pursuit of reconciliation is both a moral imperative and a complex political challenge. This paper explores the mechanisms through which post-conflict societies attempt to rebuild social cohesion, address historical injustices, and foster sustainable peace.

This article examines the strategies introduced by the international community in Brčko District between 1999 and 2012 to foster reconciliation, along with the local reactions and interpretations of these efforts.Grounded in field research conducted in the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina—a unique multi-ethnic and administratively autonomous region—the paper offers a case study of reconciliation and war memorialisation efforts in a post-Dayton framework.

The Brčko experience illustrates the tensions between imposed political solutions and locally-driven healing processes, highlighting both the potential and fragility of co-existence in deeply divided societies. It shows that despite international efforts to create a neutral environment, local communities felt alienated from the success narrative and remained deeply divided. Ultimately, the paper argues that meaningful reconciliation requires inclusive dialogue, long-term commitment, and an honest reckoning with the past—recognising that healing is as much a political process as it is a personal and communal one.

Keywords Conflict · Reconciliation · Peacebuilding · Bosnia and Herzegovina · Memorial

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Reimagining the Post-War City: Symbolic Landscape Transformation and Reconciliation in Brčko District

Reconciliation in post-conflict societies is a critical step towards sustainable peace and national healing. It involves acknowledging past atrocities, fostering dialogue between former adversaries, and building trust in institutions that may have been complicit in the violence. Effective reconciliation helps to break the cycles of hatred and retaliation by promoting justice, truth-telling, and forgiveness. It also lays the groundwork for inclusive governance, economic recovery, and social cohesion, allowing citizens to rebuild their lives in an environment of mutual respect.

However, the process of reconciliation is fraught with challenges. Deep-seated trauma, lingering resentment, and the desire for revenge can hinder efforts to create an open and honest dialogue. Often, there is a tension between the pursuit of justice and the need for stability—prosecuting perpetrators may alienate powerful groups, while ignoring past crimes risks perpetuating a culture of impunity. Moreover, rebuilding trust in public institutions and ensuring equitable representation for all groups requires time, resources, and political will, which are often in short supply in post-conflict settings.

This article focuses on understanding the complex, nuanced, and unpredictable process of reconciliation in post-conflict societies. It draws on data collected over several months of field research in Brčko District, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first field research was conducted as part of wider research on peacebuilding in Brčko District in 2017 (May to October) and additional research was done in 2023 (June to August). The interviews included local political officials, NGO representatives, religious leaders, and citizens of various ethnic backgrounds. Interviews were conducted in local languages and used open-ended questions that allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences and perceptions. This agreed with the bottom-up approach, which revealed additional insights and a more comprehensive understanding of local perspectives.

With the history of ethnic cleansing, concentration camps and war crimes followed by the establishment of a multi-ethnic system of governance under international supervision, Brčko represents a valuable case study for understanding the multi-layered process of reconciliation in divided societies.

The establishment of Brčko District emerged from the failure to resolve its status during the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement negotiations due to its strategic position and geopolitical importance. Control over Brčko was highly contested, particularly by Republika Srpska, as it provided a vital territorial link between its eastern and western regions. Its proximity to both Croatian and Serbian borders and the fact that it hosted the biggest river port in this region placed additional strategic value. To prevent renewed conflict, the matter was deferred to international arbitration, resulting in a 1999 ruling that created Brčko District as a self-governing, neutral territory under the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina but outside the jurisdiction of either entity. The decision placed the District under direct international supervision, led by an appointed Supervisor with a mandate to build a multi-ethnic administration and maintain peace and stability.

Under international oversight, Brčko District developed inclusive, multi-ethnic institutions, including an integrated police force, unified administration, and a single judicial system. Special emphasis was placed on education, leading to the establishment of multi-ethnic schools where students from all communities could study under a shared curriculum—an uncommon achievement in post-war Bosnia. The district also became notable for its successful return of displaced persons and refugees, with thousands of families reclaiming

their pre-war homes and rebuilding their lives. These advancements made Brčko were demonstrated as a rare success story and a testing ground for post-conflict reconciliation, offering valuable lessons on coexistence, institutional integration, and the potential of international engagement in divided societies.

This article examines the strategies introduced by the international community in Brčko District between 1999 and 2012 to foster reconciliation, along with the local reactions and interpretations of these efforts. It begins by outlining the background of the conflict and ethnic cleansing in Brčko to provide context for the challenges faced by the international community in promoting reconciliation. It then examines the transformation of the symbolic landscape—such as the renaming of streets and the introduction of script equality—as well as efforts in memorialisation, monument construction, and the promotion of Brčko District's unique character. In conclusion, the field research presented in this article reveals that, despite a widespread narrative of successful reconciliation, actual progress has been limited. Many citizens felt disconnected from the policies and alienated by the supervisory regime. Reconciliation was often perceived as imposed and artificial—mathematical and rigid in nature—failing to acknowledge individual experiences and traumas. The lack of reflection on the war period was locally interpreted as the internationally fostered culture of collective amnesia that denied the communities the opportunity to face the past and acknowledge their suffering. The recurring expression of feeling trapped in a farce where nothing was genuine indicates the level of citizens' detachment from the story of successful reconciliation.

War in Brčko and the Establishment of the District

For most of its history, Brčko was richly multiethnic and the demographics generally reflected the distribution of peoples in the region—Croats, Serbs, Muslims, Roma, Jews, and others. The last population census prior to the dissolution of Yugoslavia showed that the town's population of over 87 thousand inhabitants comprised of 44% Muslims, 21% Serbs, 25% Croats and 10% Others (Statisticki godisnjak Jugoslavije 1991).

Following the referendum in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the subsequent declaration of independence in March 1992, hostilities erupted with Serb forces blowing up the vehicular and railway bridges in Brčko. Between 70 and 100 civilians died while crossing the bridge (Balkan Insight 2015). The destruction of the bridge was the first act of violence that shattered any remaining hope that conflict in Brčko could be avoided.

In the weeks and months that followed, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), locally mobilised Serbs, and Serbian paramilitary groups carried out ethnic cleansing against non-Serbs living in the area (Farrand, 2011, p. 2). Non-Serb populations were rounded up and expelled or killed, and houses and places of worship were destroyed in order to deter any possible hopes of return (Perry, 2006, p. 3) Thousands more were rounded up in collection centres or imprisoned in concentration camps, with the systematic killing of mostly Muslim detainees predominantly taking place at or near the Laser Bus Company, the Brčko police station, and Luka camp (Farrand, 2011, p. 2). In the Final Report of the United Nations Commission of Experts, published in May 1994, 28 camps were identified throughout the Brčko municipality (United Nations 1994, par. 86, cited in Farrand 2011).

The most notorious concentration and extermination camp in Brčko was located in the town's port facilities Luka. The first prisoners were taken there on May 7, 1992, and the available documents show that the camp was closed down two months later on 9 July 1992. During this period, civilians (including women and children) were systematically tortured, raped and murdered. Two men, Goran Jelisić who referred to himself as the "Serbian Adolf" and Ranko Česić, were tried and sentenced for crimes against humanity by

the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at the Hague for their part in the atrocities in the Luka camp. The eyewitness and the surviving prisoner of the Luka camp report:

> *"I remember it was Sunday, May 10. They came and brought lamb meat and alcohol with them. They ate and drank for the whole day. They entered the port hangar twice. The first time, they started counting us from one to three and took number one and three out; the second time, they took number three. Everyone that was taken out was murdered. Then they would choose two people to move the corpse and murder them afterward. Then they would choose two more and this circle of killing continued for three nights straight. Those were the bloodiest nights in Luka. They killed hundreds of people then." (Mestrovic-Kuka 2015, author's own translation).*

Primary and secondary mass graves have been found in various locations in Brčko (the first one being in the compound of the meat factory Bimeks and the largest secondary mass grave discovered in 2006 in the village of Gorice, holding the remains of 277 victims). The mass grave that hides the highest number of remains is the River Sava, considering that the Luka camp was located at the riverbank, providing a quick and easy solution to removing the corpses.

Mass rapes of girls and women aged 13 to 60 were also reported in the Luka camp but also in other locations throughout the city (most notably, the restaurant Westfalia and the hotel Galeb) (Muratović-Kuka 2015; Farrand 2011). The Helsinki Watch report (1993) estimates that few hundreds of women were raped in Westfalia alone.

The atrocities against the citizens were followed by the destruction of all Islamic objects, including three city mosques (Dželedid mosque known as the White Mosque, Hadži-Pašina mosque, and Atik mosque) and eight mosques in the surrounding villages. All other buildings related to Islamic education and Islamic cultural institutions were also destroyed, including the complete destruction of the Archives of the Islamic Community. One respondent, a Bosniak woman who remained hiding in her flat in the city centre, described the destruction of the town's mosques:

> *'It was 17 August 1992. It took 40 minutes to blow up and destroy all three town mosques. Within a few days, they cleaned up the area, planted grass over it and used it as a parking place. It was as if no mosque was ever there. (Bosniak, 68)*

Brčko was being ethnically 'cleansed' not only of its inhabitants but also of its past, and this process included the removal of all symbols and traces of Muslim heritage. The streets were renamed to celebrate the Serbian national heroes, signs were changed to Cyrillic script and monuments were erected to Četnik leaders such as Draža Mihailović. The official Serb terminology for taking over the city was "a liberation," and this rhetoric is still used and inscribed into a massive concrete monument in the city centre built to commemorate "the Serb liberators of Brčko".

A couple of months into the war, the town and its surrounding areas were completely taken by Serb forces and the non-Serb population was pushed to surrounding villages where they remained until the end of the war. As non-Serbs fled or were forced out, Serbs from other parts of the country resettled in Brčko. These demographic changes meant that by the end of the war, the formerly diverse population was now 97,5 percent Serb. (ICG, 2003, p. 3)

Following three years of intense conflict, the international community exerted strong pressure to end the war in Bosnia. The Dayton Agreement, signed in December 1995, formally ended the war and divided the country into two entities. However, due to Brčko's strategic importance and the scale of ethnic cleansing in the area, its status remained unresolved during the Dayton negotiations. The matter was referred to international arbitration and was settled nearly four years later, when Brčko was designated as a semi-independent condominium under international supervision. It was decided that a district would be established—one that would belong equally to all ethnic groups, featuring multiethnic institutions, an inclusive education system, and shared public spaces, where all citizens would feel a sense of equal belonging. This was a unique experiment in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, where, unlike other cities that remained divided —with minimal communication between ethnic groups, the "two schools under one roof" system, and low rates of refugee return—Brčko aimed to foster integration and coexistence.

Reconciliation in Brčko District

The concept of reconciliation finds its roots in various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, law, religious studies, and theology. Some authors argue that reconciliation was first "rooted in biblical texts and ancient languages" (Philpott, 2006, p. 11), and that this religious discourse of forgiveness and remorse was later combined with more secular notions of justice and human rights and applied in concrete international interventions.

While reconciliation has been relatively under-investigated in international relations, recent years have seen a growing number of studies attempting to define and theoretically capture its role and significance in the peace process. Reconciliation has been variously defined as "closure plus healing" (Galtung, 1998, p. 64), as "mutually conciliatory accommodation between former antagonists" (Long & Brecke, 2003, p. 1), and as "the former belligerents accepting each other not only diplomatically, but also psychologically" (Kelman, 1999, p. 198).

The understanding of reconciliation can be broadly divided into two main categories. The first is normative, which focuses on moral aspects such as truth-telling, empathy, forgiveness, and the emotional healing of communities. The second approach is political and represents a more pragmatic view of reconciliation as a process of rebuilding and strengthening a stable and peaceful political community. What is common to both approaches is the view of reconciliation as a process involving multiple parties, whose relationships and perceptions of the 'Other' can be transformed. The success of transforming these social relations is directly linked to the likelihood of achieving sustainable peace.

In the aftermath of the conflict, Brčko District adopted a range of reconciliation mechanisms under the guidance of international supervision, aimed at rebuilding trust among its ethnically divided communities. One of the key approaches was the institutional integration of governance structures, ensuring equal representation of Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs in public administration, the judiciary, and law enforcement. The establishment of a unified, multi-ethnic police force and civil service played a crucial role in promoting fairness and reducing ethnic bias in public life. These institutions operated under strict anti-discrimination policies, supported by continuous training and monitoring from the Office of Brčko Supervisor, fostering a sense of shared ownership and accountability across ethnic lines.

Education reform was another vital reconciliation mechanism. Brčko became the first area in Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement a unified school system, with a single curriculum designed to reflect inclusivity and mutual respect. Students from all ethnic backgrounds attended the same schools, helping to reduce

prejudice and foster interethnic understanding from a young age. The District also supported the return of displaced persons and refugees through property restitution, housing reconstruction, and community reintegration programmes, facilitating the physical and social return of pre-war residents. Public awareness campaigns, interethnic dialogue initiatives, and support for civil society organisations further strengthened local reconciliation efforts. Together, these measures positioned Brčko District as a rare example of practical and institutionalised reconciliation in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The establishment of the District by international actors—against the will of local actors—had the explicit goal of creating a 'neutral' territory, free from ethnonational affiliations, where citizens would identify primarily as residents of the District rather than as members of ethnonational groups. The emphasis on consensus and civic identity, rooted in a liberal democratic political framework, was expected to gradually erode divisions and facilitate reconciliation. Despite the fact that these reforms were initiated and promoted unilaterally by the Supervisor—and often met with resistance from local actors—there was a consistent effort to portray them as locally driven and inspired by a collective desire to live together. Marking the anniversary of the District's establishment in 2009, former Supervisor Raffi Gregorian stated that Brčko's success depended *"first and foremost on the efforts of the people of Brčko, who decided to live together, and in peace"* (Gregorian, 2009).

To declare reconciliation a success entails the assumption that reconciliation is an endpoint and not a process but also that we have an idea of what a reconciled community looks like. It assumes that there is a linear movement and progression from pre-conflict to conflict and to reconciliation. An alternative view would be to define reconciliation as a continuous process of redefining mutual relations that is never complete or explicit. By declaring peacebuilding in Brčko a success, it is clear that reconciliation was defined as a point that could be identified and achieved.

In Brčko District, reconciliation was approached in rigid, mathematical terms. Schools and public institutions were integrated in proportions reflective of ethnonational populations, with little regard for the deeper, more complex dimensions of the process or the insecurity surrounding it. In the long run, this approach undermined the possibility of citizens developing a genuine multicultural civic identity, instead making them feel insecure about their future in the District.

Likewise, the post-conflict strategy adopted in Brčko emphasised 'forgetting' and actively avoided public discussion of war crimes, victims, or the punishment of perpetrators. In some ways, confronting the trauma of conflict became taboo, and silence about the war evolved into an accepted social norm. Citizens were expected to accept the authority of the supervisory regime, which promoted a hybrid unity (Jeffrey, 2004, p. 148). However, their own experiences and perceptions often failed to align with the international narrative, creating a dissonance that led them to attach varying meanings to their everyday interactions.

Politics of Healing: Symbols and Meanings

The international effort to integrate ethnonational communities and make people think in terms of Brčko District was seen as a crucial aspect of successful reconciliation. While the early peacebuilding efforts were dominated by the reconstruction of homes and infrastructure, the Supervisor soon acknowledged the need to transform the symbolic landscape in a way that would reflect the District's new multi-ethnic character. In order to fully promote the neutrality of the district, it was necessary to address the issue of symbols and monuments and establish the appropriate and acceptable ways of commemorating the past. The Final

Award briefly addressed this issue by declaring the political and ethnic neutrality of the symbols in the District:

"The District Assembly shall determine all symbols for the District, provided that all such symbols shall be politically and ethnically neutral and subject to the approval of the Supervisor. There shall be no specific flag for the District, but the flag of one entity will not be flown without the other being on essentially equal terms. Both the Latin and Cyrillic letters will be used on essentially equal terms for all official purposes." (Final Award, paragraph 11 in OHR, 2000a: 286)

The first step was to rename the streets in a way that would reflect Brčko's post-conflict demographics and the neutral character of the new regime. For example, the former Bulevar Draže Mihailovića was renamed to Bulevar Mira (Boulevard of Peace) and the main square was renamed Youth Square (Trg Mladosti). The street plates were written both in Latin and Cyrillic scripts and designed in the blue and yellow colours of the Bosnian flag. The goal behind renaming the streets was two-fold: first, to abolish particular nationalist myths and second to stimulate a collective identity for Brčko. This was a unique effort within post-conflict Bosnia considering that other cities encouraged symbols that evoked collective memory and strengthened group identity.

Jeffrey (2004) identifies three categories of names chosen for the renaming strategy. The first were those intended to inspire a general multi-ethnic reconciliation (peace, youth, etc.). The second group of names was designed to neutralise international intervention and connect Brčko to other regions (Dejtonska, Sarajevska, Mostarska). The third and the largest group of names are those invoking the shared Yugoslav past and individuals that enjoyed universal popularity (Nikola Tesla, Ivo Andric, etc.) The naming strategy did not only refer to renaming the streets but also the schools in the district. It was decided to remove the names of prominent national figures and only use numbers ("First primary school," "Second primary school" etc.).

While there was no open opposition to this move, citizens continued to feel little connection to the new names and in daily communication mostly used the names from the pre-war period. For example, any mention of "Fifth primary school" would be followed by immediate "Do you mean Đuro Pucar Stari school or Jelenka Voćkić, which one is fifth?" Another common reaction to the new names was that of mockery:

> *"Brčko became sort of an imaginary place… I mean just look at our street names, boulevard of peace, youth square…it's like some hippie place where everything is about peace, love, flowers… […] in reality most people would rather name their kids' school or the street where they live after some nationalist leader or war criminal. " (Bosniak, 29)*

Media reports published after the announcement of the new street names revealed the sense of discontent and petty disagreements over the number and the length of streets attributed to individual ethnic communities. For example, the Serbs argued that Croats, as the least populous community in the District, were significantly over-represented in the number of streets carrying the names of prominent Croatian figures. They also argued that Croats and Bosniaks gained' central and long streets while Serbs were only granted much shorter, side streets (Politika 2007).

The naming strategy avoided any reference to the 1992-95 conflict in an attempt to guide the public consciousness away from remembering the events such as "ethnic cleansing" or "concentration camps." The lack of memorialisation of the conflict led the people to feel increasingly frustrated with what is sometimes labelled as internationally encouraged collective amnesia. The failure of the Supervisor to address these

issues caused frustration as there was an increasing need to acknowledge war crimes as a prerequisite to reconciliation and healthy inter-ethnic relations. One respondent described reconciliation as intangible and impossible to achieve without facing past crimes:

"In all honesty, reconciliation is such an abstract term, light years away from where I stand." Maybe I can consider reconciliation once they discover my father's remaining bones because so far, they've found only two, in two separate mass graves." (Bosniak, 32).

Another respondent described the international reconciliation strategies in Brčko as too naive and incapable of addressing the underlying issues:

"They don't understand the level of destruction that happened here. It's not just the physical destruction of buildings or the loss of lives; it's the destruction of the very social fabric that used to bond us together, the destruction of trust and brotherhood that we truly felt. If some foreign power came and attacked us, the war would not leave such deep scars and we would recover much faster. But being attacked by your own colleagues, your neighbours, sometimes even family members is a whole other level of betrayal". (Bosniak, 56).

Another important issue that arises from this discussion is the paradoxical existence and absence of war memorialisation in Brčko with the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) acting as a substitute for a broader "truth commission" (Jeffrey 2004). Rather than contributing to establishing facts and recognised truths and incorporating them into Brčko's symbolic landscape, the ICTY merely investigated and convicted two individuals (Goran Jelisić and Ranko Češić) for crimes committed in Brčko and sentenced them to prison in faraway locations. This resulted in relativisation of war crimes and provided the ground for creating a fractured symbolic landscape that allowed each community to claim the victim status. This was reflected in the attitudes expressed by Brčko residents:

'Today, we are afraid to talk about what happened in Brčko because the truth may offend someone. On the other hand, being silent means denying ourselves the opportunity to move on." (Bosniak, 37).

In opposition to international policies that discouraged public discussions about the conflict, war crimes and concentration camps, local actors formed various associations whose aims were to commemorate the civilian victims of war. Over the past couple of years, organisations such as the 'Association of Bosniak civilian victims of war', 'The Missing persons association," and the 'Association of the concentration camp detainees' organised various activities to express their objection to the absence of meaningful reflection on the war period.

Every year, May marks the anniversary of the destruction of the Sava bridge and the beginning of the war crimes in Brčko, including the opening of the notorious Luka camp. The citizens place flowers on the bridge, organise peaceful 'remembrance walks," and exhibit photos of the murdered civilians along the main pedestrian area.

Another step towards commemorating the war crimes was placing the memorial board and the opening of the memorial room inside the Luka camp as part of the broader initiative of the former detainees to memorialise the war crimes. The memorial board is placed right next to the board commemorating the

crimes committed in the same place during the Second World War. The representatives of the 'Association of the concentration camp detainees' stated that, even though the memorial room was open to the public, it was mostly foreign tourists who paid an occasional visit. It was their impression that no Serbs ever came to visit the memorial room.

Local Serb organisations also commemorate crimes against Serbs and display photos of people murdered by Bosniak forces in the nearby village of Bukvik. While these local initiatives might be perceived as a step towards reaching closure and starting the community healing process, the fact that civilian victim organisations are ethnically divided and only commemorate 'their' victims indicates low levels of recognition of mutual suffering. The 'Others' are always portrayed as aggressors and perpetrators of war crimes and therefore denied the status of victims.

Transforming the Symbolic Landscape: Monuments and Collective Memory

Monuments are an important part of national history and heritage that often represent the focal point of collective identity. They serve not only as reminders of past events but also of particular versions of those events, and in some cases, they represent materialisation of national myths. In this sense, a monument is an object that links the past with the present and is inscribed in the individual and collective memory. This type of monument is, by definition, neither neutral nor objective and openly serves political, national or religious ideologies.

The issue of memorialisation in Brčko District remains a contentious and symbolically charged element of post-conflict reconciliation. The presence of the 1996 monument "Serb Liberation of Brčko," commemorating Serb military victory, became a central obstacle to interethnic reconciliation due to its perceived glorification of wartime aggression. While the monument served as a cultural and political rallying point for the Serb community, it simultaneously provoked demands from Bosniak and Croat groups for the construction of their own commemorative sites.

In response to the impasse, the international supervisor, Raffi Gregorian, issued the 2009 Supervisory Order on Monuments. This directive legalised the existing Serb monument and mandated the construction of three new memorials: two honouring fallen soldiers of the ARBiH and HVO, and one dedicated to civilian victims of the conflict. The order emphasised the promotion of peace, tolerance, and multiethnic equality by situating the monuments within proximity in the city centre, symbolising co-existence amid past divisions. It also stipulated that all memorials should maintain political, national, ethnic, and religious neutrality. Despite this, the initiative paradoxically attempted to equate the commemoration of ethnonational military actors and their victims, thereby reflecting a complex effort to navigate competing narratives of victimhood and responsibility within the District.

While the Supervisor's intention was to grant each community a sense of contentment, the Order had the opposite effect and increased the frustration:

> *"So, they want to have three monuments—to all those different 'liberators' of Brčko and to all those victims that were killed during the 'liberation'. It's such a paradox—all those soldiers were actually liberating Brčko from each other." (Bosniak 54)*

The monuments also have the task of testifying about the past and the meaning behind the monuments in the District can be found in their relation towards each other. The relation between the monument to the

Serb liberators of Brčko, the Croat defenders of Brčko and the Bosniak martyrs is that of negation, exclusion and contradiction. Achieving the military goal of either of these groups would mean the destruction and annihilation of other communities. Furthermore, the fact that the monument to civilian victims should contain no ethnic, national or religious references is an addition to the deliberate falsification of history. In an interview for the media, a local sociologist expressed his frustration and the long-lasting effects of such a decision:

"The fact is that the goal of the Serb liberators of Brčko was to liberate the city from all the non-Serb populations. Because of this liberating campaign, we obtained civilian victims. And these are the facts that they are trying to hide [...] the international community in Brčko is encouraging the strategy of forgetting the past and more importantly, forgetting the truth" (Pasalic, 2010).

According to his view, such a construct will gradually lead to distortion of facts and shape the ways that monuments will be interpreted in the future. He gives another example of what he labels 'falsification of history' in the case of the memorial board to 277 civilian victims discovered in the mass grave in Gorice. The site of the mass grave was marked and the memorial board stated:

> *"This is the place of Gorice, Brčko where in November 2006, a mass grave was discovered containing the skeleton remains of 277 Bosniaks and Croats killed during the 1992-1995 war."*

Stating that the victims found in the mass grave were 'Bosniaks and Croats killed during the war' hides the fact that the skeleton remains belonged to unarmed civilians, including women and children and therefore was not the result of conflict between armed groups, as suggested, but the result of ethnic cleansing. Pasalic (2010) warns that such distortion of historical facts would lead to the amnesty of war crimes and continue the vicious circle of hate and revenge. Encouraging such narratives shifts the District further away from reconciliation and neutrality and strengthens the sense of injustice and alienation from the image of an integrated multi-ethnic society.

It took 14 years to build the monument to civilian victims of war due to local opposition and requests to inscribe the names of the victims on the monument. The local discussions and opposition were ended by the Supervisor's single-handed decision to build a monument without any names or ethnic and religious symbols. The moment was built in the shape of a single tear and revealed in February 2023.

The lack of common memorial sites in the post-conflict period indicates a deeper problem—the absence of shared historical truths. The lack of reference to war crimes and the specific type of memorialisation has only served to create more divisions and the perception that the idea of a neutral district is based on falsehood and denial.

This discourse has been reproduced through international intervention that opted for encouraging collective amnesia rather than establishing objective facts about the conflict. Such an approach contributed to fracturing historical interpretations and reinforcing nationalist narratives. Some respondents expressed a negative view of neutrality of Brčko District and the ban on ethnic and religious symbols:

> *"I think making the public sphere neutral is a good thing... the goal is to make everyone feel safe and comfortable." But I'm not sure that these changes would have the desired effect because people feel like they are being denied their history and their identity. Furthermore, this makes them more extreme in their views." (Serb 42).*

According to these views, the neutrality that is forced on the citizens has the effect of reinforcing their focus on ethnic identities. This is in line with recent studies that have suggested that the identity-building component of the liberal peacebuilding model might have unintended negative effects on the sense of security of ethno-national communities recovering from conflict. (Kostic, 2007, p. 16) Confronted with a threat to their national identity, communities may be compelled to strengthen their ethno-national identities to fend off threats. The defence of ethnic identity in one group can trigger threat perceptions in others, increase tensions and ultimately lead to violence. In this sense, the strength of ethnic polarisation in Brčko District can be understood as an unintended consequence of the international peacebuilders' efforts to promote neutrality and reconciliation.

An example of such a strategy implemented in Brčko with the intention of promoting the District's uniqueness and its multi-ethnic character was organisation of public celebrations of the anniversary of Brčko District's establishment. The "Brčko District Day" (March 8) was announced as a public holiday in the district and marked with various cultural and sport activities as well as big concerts at the main square. Each year, the District Assembly approves the budget for organising these activities and invites famous regional bands and singers while maintaining the informal rule that all ethnonational groups are somewhat equally represented. This initiative aimed at bringing Brčko citizens together and instilling in them a sense of pride for being part of the Brčko community, regardless of their differences.

The citizens, however, expressed no emotional attachment to the district and felt that there was no much reason to celebrate. There seems to be no genuine praise for the District among its citizens, and the celebrations are perceived as phoney and insincere.

The District's 'Multi-Kulti' İdentity: Divided We Stand

While the international emphasis on establishing the District as a neutral and multi-ethnic environment was portrayed as the ultimate goal of peacebuilding, gradually leading to reconciliation, the local actors repeatedly expressed the negative view of forced integration and multi-ethnicity. The District is often described as the 'multi-kulti capital of the country'. 'Multi-kulti' (short for multi-culture) is a term often used to mock the forced demands for the multi-ethnic environment at all levels of society in the District. It is very common to ridicule the idea of 'multi-kulti', and this was well reflected in the case of the arrest of two burglars who operated together, one Serb and one Bosniak. The local media reported about this case and labelled the couple as "Multi-kulti Bonnie and Clyde," saying that this was yet another example of the District's success—it achieved such levels of integration that Serbs and Bosniaks cooperated even in crime and robbed Serb and Bosniak houses equally.

The term reveals the local interpretation of internationally imposed ethnic quotas but also reflects on what is perceived as forced reconciliation:

> *'There is nothing genuine in this city." The District is like a stage set by outsiders, and we are here to pretend and play our roles. We all smile when we are around each other, but I'm scared of what will happen once the curtain is down and no one is interested in watching our play". (Bosniak 40)*

The word that was repeatedly used in the context of international actors was 'dušebrižnici' which can be translated as 'soul saviours'. The term is used as a sarcastic reference to what is perceived as arrogance and unwanted interference on the side of external actors that claimed to know the only true path to peace (heaven). Many respondents expressed the sense of humiliation and frustration with the international

actors' approach that was perceived as 'reinventing the wheel'—promoting the same idea of 'brotherhood and unity' but without acknowledging their war traumas or allowing them to reach some degree of closure and healing. This is well illustrated in the following statements:

> *"What they are trying to build here is something that already existed before the war." It is like they are reinventing the wheel because different communities in Brčko lived together in peace long before the peacebuilding operations started" (Bosniak, 40).*

Despite two decades of considerable international efforts to integrate public spaces and encourage everyday communication between the communities, the District remains divided and public spaces are informally segregated. Outside observers and occasional visitors might not be able to recognise the divisions or notice any visible war scars. The buildings in the city centre have been restored, and the pedestrian areas are green with many cafes and gardens around. The atmosphere is rather calm and relaxed, resembling any other small, peaceful town. A brief conversation with Brčko residents, however, depicts a different image and reveals divisions that might otherwise go unnoticed. While public institutions impose ethnic quotas and therefore create a multi-ethnic environment, the private sphere remains divided. Cultural and sport activities, cafes, and other spheres of citizens' everyday life continue to be dominated by ethnic narratives and estrangement:

> *"The city is divided. The cafes are informally divided. Officially, no one is banned from going to any cafe, but everyone knows where Serbs go out, which places are for Bosniaks, etc. "Reconciliation happened only on paper, it did not reach people's minds." (Bosniak, 26).*
>
> *"I accept that we live in the same city and that we have to communicate but I will never invite them to my house." (Bosniak, 20)*

All three communities in Brčko District adopted opposing narratives about the past and used them to justify the negative attitude towards the external regulation of the peacebuilding process. The local agency in shaping the peace process is apparent not only in open protests and rejection of international policies but also in the way local actors choose to interact with their neighbours, places, and ceremonies they visit, and therefore shape the sense of (not) belonging.

Conclusion

In recent years, scholars have come to recognise reconciliation as an important dimension of peacebuilding. The goal of reconciliation is to pursue changing identity, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour gradually leading to more cooperative relations. The underlying assumption is that inter-group communication, shared memory and open discussion are essential for achieving sustainable peace and preventing further conflict.

Reconciliation in Brčko District is often portrayed as a goal that has already been successfully achieved —a cherry on top that reaffirms the extent of international peacebuilding success. However, the fieldwork presented challenges to this narrative, suggesting that the portrayal of reconciliation as a completed process fails to reflect the realities of the District's citizens. International interventions that sought to alter the symbolic landscape—such as renaming streets and removing ethnic symbols—do not, in themselves, signify genuine reconciliation. The policy of neutrality, coupled with a 'collective amnesia' fostered by external

actors, obscures any meaningful engagement with the past or the validation of diverse identities and experiences. Brčko's outward appearance of ethnic neutrality does not equate to true reconciliation; rather, it masks the persistent divisions within the community.

This case study offers valuable insights into the nature of reconciliation in post-conflict societies and highlights the need to reexamine the dominant approaches. It emphasises the importance of fostering locally driven, citizen-based initiatives. Justice and open dialogue about war crimes, trauma, victims, and perpetrators are essential for achieving closure and initiating genuine healing. No external intervention or imposed policy can cause meaningful reconciliation without active local engagement. Effective reconciliation policies must be context-specific and rooted in local engagement, as no externally imposed solution can yield meaningful results without the active involvement of the communities it seeks to heal.

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Research Article

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The Use of Education as a Control Mechanism in the Process of Colonialism and Slavery: A Study on the Views of Alexis de Tocqueville

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Abstract This study examines how education was used as a control mechanism in the processes of colonialism and slavery within the framework of Alexis de Tocqueville's views. The research was conducted through document analysis and analysed on the basis of Tocqueville's works and the literature on the subject. Colonialism functioned not only as a means of economic and political domination but also as a mechanism of cultural transformation and ideological domination through education. While evaluating France's educational policies in Algeria, Tocqueville stated that education was used to assimilate colonial peoples in line with Western values and to legitimise colonial rule. However, the fact that these policies were not adopted by the local population and the discriminatory nature of the education system reveal that education was part of the strategy to ensure the continuity of the colonial order. Tocqueville also discussed the economic and social effects of the abolition of slavery but emphasised the limited ability of freed slaves to adapt to social life through education. In this context, the study shows that education in the processes of colonialism and slavery was not only a tool for the transfer of knowledge but also functioned as a mechanism of sovereignty that ensured social control and reinforced existing power relations.

Keywords Alexis de Tocqueville · colonialism · slavery · education · control mechanism · cultural sovereignty

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The Use of Education as a Control Mechanism in the Process of Colonialism and Slavery: A Study on the Views of Alexis de Tocqueville

Throughout history, colonialism and slavery have been among the phenomena that have shaped social structures not only with their economic and political dimensions but also with their cultural and educational processes. The problem of colonialism has been portrayed as *"bringing civilisation"* to the *"other"* by Western classical historians until yesterday (Luraghi, 2024). In these processes, education has functioned not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as an element that reinforces the control mechanism of the dominant powers. Indeed, through education systems, colonial administrations and slave owners aimed to both maintain social order and reproduce power relations. In this process, the colonialists saw education as the main tool of social engineering and used it to support the claim that European colonialism was a civilising enterprise. In colonial schools, Western ideas were so ingrained in students that they began to reject their own culture. Colonial rule, which lasted until the 1960s, left lasting effects on Africa's politics, economy and culture. After independence, the cultural superiority and influence of the West continued to be decisive in education policies (Aydoğan & Fidan, 2023).

The important 19th-century French thinker Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) made important studies on democracy, colonialism, equality and political systems (Özçelik, 2021). His views offer a valuable perspective to understand how education was used as a tool of sovereignty in the colonial process. Tocqueville, especially in his observations on France's colonial rule in Algeria, is noteworthy for understanding the impact of education on colonial peoples and how the European ruling class directed this process (Tocqueville, 2016).

Colonialism and slavery stand out as two of the most enduring and influential socio-economic and political structures in human history. Closely linked, they have profoundly shaped global dynamics since the 15th century. Bishop Las Casas attributes the deaths of millions of people during the colonial era to unrestrained greed, the lust for gold, the ambition to accumulate wealth rapidly and the pursuit of undeserved power (Mütercimler, 2023). This system evolved through various stages of European colonial hegemony from roughly 1500 to 1960 (Osterhammel & Jansen, 2023). Thus, between the 15th and 18th centuries, European powers expanded their reach through geographical exploration and established colonial structures in newly occupied territories.

With the Industrial Revolution (1750-1850), European countries increased their colonial activities to meet their need for raw materials and markets. With the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), European states divided the African continent among themselves. While England completely conquered India, France became influential in Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia). In the first half of the 20th century, the colonial domination of North America and Japan spread over large areas. Considering the very different development of the early colonies in the Americas, Asia and Africa, it is necessary to assess the impact of colonialism from different perspectives. After World Wars I and II, as European states weakened, colonies in Asia and Africa began independence movements. Many countries, such as India (1947), Algeria (1962), and Ghana (1957), gained independence (Stora, 2004). Today, influence over independent states continues through economic, political and cultural control (Osterhammel & Jansen, 2023; Luraghi, 2024; Gençoğlu, 2024).

Slavery refers to the forced labour of individuals, buying and selling them as property and depriving them of basic rights. The history of slavery spans a wide period of time, from ancient civilisations to the modern era. In fact, slavery is mentioned in the earliest written records of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians

and other ancient peoples (Lewis, 2017). Later, in the 19th century, a serious opposition to slavery emerged. Britain (1807) banned the Atlantic slave trade in this century. The USA (1865) abolished slavery after the American Civil War (13th Amendment to the Constitution) (Güzel Köşker, 2017).

Colonialism and slavery are seen as two phenomena that have profoundly affected global balances throughout history. Alexis de Tocqueville left an important legacy to people interested in this field today with his writings on colonialism and slavery as a result of his observations and experience in his own time (De Tocqueville, 2016). Today, the economic and social legacy of these structures is still felt. In particular, it is stated that the effects of imperialism continue with the economic and political difficulties faced by independent states after colonialism (Türkyılmaz, 2017; Zeybek, 2013).

Literature Review

How education functions as a control mechanism in the context of Alexis de Tocqueville's work on colonialism and slavery is among the topics of interest for the author (Tocqueville, 2016). It is shaped around the problematic of how education systems are constructed to ensure the continuity of hegemonic structures, especially in colonial and enslavement processes, and how this process reinforces social inequalities. Therefore, one of the main justifications of the study is that understanding the ideological structures constructed through education in the historical process has the opportunity to better analyse today's global education policies and inequalities.

In the context of colonialism and slavery, Alexis de Tocqueville made remarkable statements on how he evaluated education as a tool of social control. Especially in the context of 19th-century colonial practices, Tocqueville's approach points to the establishment of a mechanism of domination not only at the administrative and military level but also at the cultural and pedagogical level. As is evident in Tocqueville's writings on Algeria (*Travaux sur l'Algérie*), the educational system was placed at the centre of the strategy to subjugate the indigenous population in the name of *"civilisation"*. Indeed, in his 1847 report, Tocqueville positions education as an ideological tool, stating that "the school is as powerful an instrument as the army to demonstrate the superiority of European civilisation and to make the natives loyal to French rule" (Tocqueville, 1847). It is clear from these explanations that the French colonisation of Algeria was not merely political domination and economic exploitation only, but more importantly an inclusive annexation which aimed at suppressing the indigenous people's culture and values (Senouci Meberbeche, 2016).

There are also various studies in the literature that critically evaluate Tocqueville's views. Césaire (2005), in his work Speech on Colonialism, evaluates Tocqueville's thought as one of the intellectual foundations of cultural assimilation policies carried out under the name of *"civilising mission"*. Asad (2008), on the other hand, discusses the colonial mind's secularised understanding of education in the context of the exclusion and control of indigenous knowledge systems and the role Tocqueville played in the ideological justification of this process. In education and colonialism, Altbach and Kelly (2000) provide a comprehensive analysis of the function of the education system within the colonial structure and offer a framework that indirectly supports Tocqueville's views. The authors explain this process by stating that "Colonial administrations used education not only to transmit knowledge but also to shape the worldview of the colonised and to internalise their inferior status" (Altbach & Kelly, 2000, p. 45; Çağla, 2007; Connolley & Hausstätter, 2009; Charbonneau, 2016; Tandoğan, 2020). In recent literature, studies focusing on Tocqueville's approaches to the relationship between education and colonialism have been increasing. Researchers such as Büyükgümüş (2017), Ülger (2018) and Akbaş (2022) evaluate Tocqueville's views in a historical context and read his educational policies

as a part of not only France's internal modernisation process but also its search for external domination. Soumana (2023), Maskan (2024) and Gençoğlu (2024) interpret Tocqueville's educational model for colonial peoples as a tool for the systematic imposition of Western values.

According to some other studies, Alexis de Tocqueville saw education as a strategic tool to ensure the continuity of French colonial rule in Algeria, aiming to assimilate the indigenous population into French culture; accordingly, educational institutions were positioned as both ideological and structural control mechanisms. Tocqueville's conception of education was considered as part of a process of disciplining colonial peoples legitimised by the discourse of 'civilising' them; in this context, education was not only a means of transmitting knowledge but also a means of cultural domination and establishing political order (Merrouche, 2007; Pitts, 2005; Hannoum, 2001; Gannett, 2002).

Ultimately in Tocqueville's literature, education in the process of colonialism and slavery stands out as an ideological apparatus structured to ensure not only individual development but also the continuity of the colonial order (Mirkiyayi, 2024). In this context, his thoughts should be considered not only as a political theorist but also as an intellectual who contributed to cultural developments. In this context, as can be understood from the literature, he drew attention to the exploitation of education through various examples from Native Americans to minorities in the Soviet Union and practices in Africa. Therefore, it reveals that during colonialism and slavery, education was used not only as a tool for social progress but also as a mechanism of domination (Altbach & Kelly, 2000). Based on De Tocqueville's views, examining the effects of Western educational policies on colonial societies can help us understand the relationship between education and power in more depth (Tocqueville, 2016; Tocqueville, 2022). Therefore, in the light of Tocqueville's observations, it is considered important to analyse how colonial education policies were shaped, through which instruments they were sustained and what consequences they led to. Thus, it is aimed at presenting a striking picture of how the element of education has historically been used as an ideological tool. In line with these explanations, the focus of the study is to reveal the role of education as a control mechanism in the context of Alexis de Tocqueville's work on colonisation and slavery.

Methodology

Research Design

This research is a historical study based on document analysis designed within the framework of a qualitative research approach. This type of research aims to contribute to the process of making sense of the present by examining past events, periods and ideas. Alexis de Tocqueville's thoughts on the concepts of education, colonialism and slavery were analysed in a historical context, taking into account the political, social and cultural conditions of his time.

Data Collection

The document analysis method was used to collect the data. The data of the study were obtained based on the works titled "*On Democracy*" and *"On Colonialism and Slavery"*. These sources are the primary written documents reflecting Tocqueville's world of thought and were accepted as the basic documents of the research. In this context, the concepts of slavery and colonialism and direct or indirect statements about education in Tocqueville's works were systematically scanned, and the relevant sections were determined.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed by the descriptive analysis method. Within the scope of the research, the statements in Tocqueville's works were identified, classified under the existing conceptual categories and interpreted within the framework of these categories. Inferences were made about how education was positioned as an ideological control tool, especially in the context of colonial and slavery systems.

Scientific Reliability and Credibility

In order to ensure the scientific reliability and credibility of the research, several methods were used together. First of all, the data obtained from primary sources were supported by direct quotations, and care was taken to ensure that the interpretations were faithful to the text. Tocqueville's ideas were discussed in their historical context, and anachronistic interpretations were avoided. In addition, a systematic reading process based on themes was followed in order to avoid researcher bias in data analysis. The reliability of the research was tried to be increased by making the findings clearly visible in the source texts and associating the interpretations with direct quotations.

Findings

In this chapter, the findings on the role of education in the process of colonialism and slavery in Alexis de Tocqueville's works are presented and interpreted.

Colonialism and Education According to Alexis de Tocqueville

Alexis de Tocqueville made extensive studies on colonialism and slavery and wrote important articles on these issues. He did not only base his opinions on theoretical discussions but also grounded them on observations and research he conducted on the spot. In particular, his reports on France's colonial policies in Algeria and his observations on the institution of slavery during his trip to the United States allowed him to support his critical perspective on these issues with concrete data. Tocqueville's findings provide important information on both the structural functioning of colonial rule and the social, political, and economic effects of the slavery system. In this context, Tocqueville's own works were consulted in order to examine the question of the extent to which the education component was used as a control mechanism in the processes of colonialism and slavery. In these texts, Tocqueville stated that education was not only a tool that encouraged individual development but also a strategic element that shaped social structures and reproduced power relations. Indeed, his evaluations provide important clues to understand how educational institutions functioned as ideological tools under colonial rule. Tocqueville made the following remarkable statements in his own work on the subject:

> *"Tocqueville believed that knowledge of the history and society of the conquered territories was essential for a smooth and successful colonisation. This is evident in his private correspondence, reports and speeches. According to him, the success of the British in India was due to the fact that they had such knowledge. For this reason, Tocqueville thought that the French should establish a school like the British Haileybury College"* (Tocqueville, 2016).

The role Alexis de Tocqueville attributes to education in the context of colonial administrations reflects his views on colonialism and administrative processes. Tocqueville argues that a successful colonial administration requires not only military and economic power but also knowledge of the local people's history,

culture, and social structure. In this context, Tocqueville associates the success of the British rule in India with the fact that their rulers had this kind of knowledge and states that the French also needed a similar education system. Tocqueville's ideas reveal that education in colonialism was seen not only as a means of keeping the indigenous population under control but also as a means of making rulers competent. As a matter of fact, Haileybury College in England, as an institution that trained bureaucrats for the East India Company, educated administrators on the language, law and social structure of India. Tocqueville's suggestion of a similar institution for France shows that education was considered as a strategic tool for the continuity of colonial rule. In this framework, education not only conveys knowledge but also functions to reinforce and legitimise colonial ideology.

> *"Tocqueville thinks that if France surrenders completely, it should educate the Algerians and transform them into a more European and higher society. In this way the glory of the nation would be enhanced by the fact that it would take a lower society and raise it to a higher level by fathering it"* (Tocqueville, 2016).

Alexis de Tocqueville's understanding of education for Algerians reflects a paternalistic approach that coincides with the colonial ideology of the period. According to him, France should not only use military force to consolidate its sovereignty over Algeria but also educate the local population and transform them into a more *"civilised"* society. This perspective is based on an orientalist framework that assumes the superiority of Western civilisation and considers colonised peoples as "*backward*".

In Tocqueville's terms, education is seen not only as a means of transmitting knowledge but also as a tool for the cultural transformation of the colonised population and legitimising French domination. His idea that France should assume the role of *"father"* and raise Algerians to a higher level is directly linked to the discourse of colonialism's civilising mission. This approach is understood as the necessity of assimilation through education and keeping the colonial peoples under control by incorporating them into French culture. As a result, Tocqueville's education policy was designed as both an ideological and practical tool to ensure the permanence of colonial rule. He made the following remarkable statements in his work:

> *"Just as the British assigned their most respected scholars to the training of colonial officials, the French should do the same. In fact, given that the first Orientalist school was founded in France, we can say that the French were aware of this. However, in the second half of the weak 18th century and in the first quarter of the 19th century, amidst the turmoil of the revolution, the French were late in building a system similar to that of the British. Tocqueville seeks the harmony that the British created between the orientalist and the colonial official"* (Tocqueville, 2016, p. 49).

These statements of Alexis de Tocqueville clearly reveal his views on how education should be used as a strategic tool in colonial administration. According to him, in order to succeed in colonial administration, the British assigned the most respected scholars and orientalists to train colonial officials, thus developing a more effective mechanism of communication and control between the rulers and the people of the region. Tocqueville argues that France should have built a similar academic and administrative system, but the political instability of the late 18th-century and the French Revolution delayed this process. In this context, Tocqueville's ideas are based on the idea that colonial administrators should be trained not only with military and administrative skills but also with a thorough knowledge of the language, culture and social structure of the peoples of the region. Citing the example of the British Orientalist-colonial official

alignment, he emphasises that France should institutionalise the production of Orientalist knowledge in order to be more effective in colonial administration. This understanding shows that education is not only a means of individual learning and development but also a mechanism of power and domination in the context of colonialism.

As a result of his travels in Algeria, Alexis de Tocqueville provides interesting information about the existing education system of the period under the guidance of France. For example, he included the following observations in his book:

> *"Tocqueville mentions a school converted from an old Janissary castle."The school has about 150 students, 30 of whom are boarders and pay a fee of 600 francs, while day students receive free education. Arabic is compulsory, and there are two types of education: one based on classical Latin and Greek and the other a four-year system adapted to the needs of the country. Most of the students are the children of civil servants and come from Europe. The principal complains of not being able to compete with affordable religious schools. There are no Arab students at the school, and there are plans to offer scholarships, though they are viewed with scepticism. The library contains Arabic manuscripts, mostly from Constantine. He also met a talented Arabic teacher, a student of M. de Sacy"* (Tocqueville, 2016, p. 102).

Alexis de Tocqueville's observations reveal how the education system was shaped in the context of colonialism and the main objectives of this system. The transformation of the school from an old Janissary castle reflects the colonial administration's strategy of transforming existing local structures to build institutions in line with its own governance approach. While the compulsory Arabic language course in the education system aimed to understand and manage the local population, the presence of classical education based on Latin and Greek is an indication of the colonial pedagogical understanding that emphasised the superiority of Western civilisation.

The absence of Arab students in the school and the suspicion of the scholarship scheme indicate that the colonial education system restricted access to education for the local population and adopted a discriminatory approach rather than assimilation. The principal's complaint about not being able to compete with affordable religious schools reveals that the local population preferred their own educational institutions and resisted the French educational model. The fact that the Arabic manuscripts in the library were taken from Constantine shows how the local intellectual heritage was reclaimed and incorporated into the Western knowledge system in the process of colonial knowledge production. In conclusion, Tocqueville's observations clearly demonstrate the use of the education system as a means of knowledge production, control and cultural domination by the colonial administration.

Slavery and Education according to Alexis de Tocqueville

Alexis de Tocqueville made important observations on slavery in 19th-century European thought. In his comprehensive studies on democracy, he also examined the slavery policies of various states of the period and remarkably evaluated the relationship between slavery and colonialism. He also mentioned the following remarkable information about the role of education in this process.

> *"When a slave is freed, he will become a better worker. As the English discovered, a man is "more active when he works for wages; more eager for the commodities of civilisation if he has the means of obtaining*

them; more obedient to the law if it is beneficial to him; more open to learning as soon as he sees the benefit of education; more settled when he has a home; more persevering in his customs if he is allowed to enjoy the pleasures of the family" (Tocqueville, 2000, p. 214).

These statements by Alexis de Tocqueville present a remarkable view of the transition from slavery to freedom for colonial administrations. According to him, the emancipation of slaves should be seen not only as a humanitarian or moral necessity but also as a means of creating a more economically and socially efficient system. Drawing on the experience of the British, Tocqueville argues that individuals who work for wages are more productive, participate more willingly in the process of civilisation and become more committed to the legal system.

In this context, people's education is positioned as a fundamental tool for a more functional acceptance of the individual into society. Education is thought to strengthen the individual's place in the social order, encourage obedience to the law and accelerate the process of civilisation. However, this approach is based on a paternalistic understanding that sees education as a tool to increase the stability of colonial rule and economic efficiency rather than individual development. Tocqueville's perspective shows that emancipated slaves were treated not only as subjects of rights but also as individuals who needed to be transformed into a more controlled and efficient workforce within the colonial order. He also stated that when individuals experience the benefits of education at personal and social levels, their attitude towards learning changes positively and they become more open to learning processes. This is because education is thought to strengthen the individual's place in the social order, encourage obedience to laws and accelerate the civilisation process. Considered in this context, he made the following statements in his work:

"The European's own son is excluded from the school where his son goes to be educated. In theatres, even if he pays in gold, he cannot buy a seat next to the one who owns it, and in hospitals he is separated from him. The Black man is allowed to invoke the same God as the white man, but not at the same altar. They have their own priests and their own churches" (Tocqueville, 2016, s. 355).

Tocqueville sees the abolition of slavery as a necessary step for Europe to maintain its imperial dominance rather than the idea of universal equality. This perspective shows that abolitionism was shaped on the basis of political and economic pragmatism rather than humanitarian or ethical grounds. According to him, slavery could constitute an obstacle for colonial administrations at a certain stage, and therefore its abolition should be a strategic decision for the continuity of the colonial system.

On the other hand, his statements on the education and social position of Blacks clearly reveal the understanding of racial discrimination of the period. Tocqueville emphasises that even though they were legally emancipated, blacks were not considered equal to whites in social and cultural spheres. The continued discrimination in access to education and social institutions shows that the abolition of slavery did not bring real social equality for Blacks. Tocqueville's findings reveal that the education system was used in colonial societies not only as a means of transmitting knowledge but also as a tool to reinforce social hierarchy and ensure the continuity of colonial ideology.

"Let me talk, for example, about the freedom to teach. Isn't it madness to bring the privileges of the University of France there while we talk of doing nothing less than extraordinary things in Africa? Are we not at the same time surrendering our appetite for simplification and assimilation to the utmost limits

and at the same time surrendering to an unbridled appetite for innovation? If there is only one place on the planet where education should be left free, it is certainly Algeria, where such needs are far more varied and dynamic than we feel in France" (Tocqueville, 2000, p. 160).

These statements of Alexis de Tocqueville reflect his views on how education policies should be shaped in the context of colonialism. According to him, it is not appropriate to directly transfer the centralised and rigid academic system in France to Algeria because the educational needs of the colonial territories are more dynamic and diverse and require a flexibility specific to the conditions of the region. Tocqueville argues that the education system here should be left freer, noting that the direct application of the French university model could be seen as an attempt to *"assimilate"* and *"emulate",* but that this could lead to an excessive and disproportionate desire for transformation.

Tocqueville's approach shows that education policies were considered not only as a cultural and pedagogical issue but also as a tool to maintain the stability and dominance of the colonial administration. In this context, education is constructed as a "civilising mission", but at the same time, a model with flexibility is proposed, considering that an overly centralised system may be incompatible with the social realities of the region. He even makes the following striking statements about this in his own work:

"The societies in Africa are not an uncivilised society, but a civilisation of late understanding and incomplete development. They have within themselves a considerable number of foundations for charity or for the needs of general education. Everywhere we have laid our hands on these sources of income, partly diverting them from their former purpose; we have reduced the number of charitable institutions; we have left their schools to their own devices and dismantled some educational institutions. In our hands the light of knowledge has been extinguished; we have made these societies more miserable, more disordered, more ignorant and more barbaric than they were before they knew us" (Tocqueville, 2000, p. 215).

These thoughts of Alexis de Tocqueville show that he critically evaluated the results of the French administration's intervention in education and similar institutions. According to him, African society is not fully "uncivilised", but a civilisation that has not completed its development. In this context, Tocqueville states that these societies had their own educational and charitable institutions, but the French colonial administration caused the decline of knowledge and education in the region by confiscating or rendering these institutions dysfunctional.

Tocqueville argues that during French rule in Africa, the French disrupted the natural development of these structures in order to control education and similar institutions. The dismantling of schools and educational institutions and the dysfunctionalisation of local societies and jurists led to the breakdown of social order by driving society further into ignorance.

In this context, Tocqueville's critique shows that the educational policies of the colonial administration should be evaluated not only in terms of their assimilation or Westernisation goals but also in terms of how they affected local social structures. Rather than being a means of development and progress, the educational system is treated here as a mechanism to consolidate the power of the colonial administration and to control local societies. Tocqueville also made a comparison with slavery in his work. His thoughts on slavery are as follows:

> *"The necessary evils which slavery produced among ancient peoples were almost identical with those which it produces among moderns, but the consequences of these evils are different. In ancient times the slave, belonging to the same race as his master, was often superior to him in education and enlightenment. Only liberty separated them, and once liberty was granted, they mingled easily"* (Tocqueville, 2000, p. 353).

Alexis de Tocqueville's explanations provide a comparative framework of how slavery has functioned in different societies in the historical context. According to him, although the institution of slavery in antiquity produced similar evils as slavery in modern times, the consequences were different. In ancient societies, slaves were often of the same ethnic origin as their masters and were often intellectually and culturally more advanced. This made it easier for slaves to integrate into society once they gained their freedom.

Tocqueville implies that modern slavery has a different structure. In the 19th-century context, slaves, especially those of African origin, were deprived of education, and their social status was kept low, making it difficult for them to be fully integrated into society even if they were emancipated. At this point, education stands out as a key element. While slaves who had access to education in antiquity were able to adapt more easily once they gained freedom, the modern system of slavery restricted education, making post-emancipation adaptation more difficult.

In this framework, Tocqueville indirectly emphasises the impact of education on post-slavery social integration. Education is one of the main factors determining an individual's social status and mobility within society and was restricted for the continuation of the oppressive structure of modern slavery. Therefore, education policies show that slavery is not only a problem of physical freedom but also a tool that directly affects the processes of inclusion of individuals into society. Tocqueville's views on education in the context of colonialism and slavery were shaped as part of his broader political perspective. While his efforts to spread the French education system and assimilate the local population were particularly noteworthy, he also openly expressed the difficulties and doubts experienced in this process.

Conclusion

This study examines the use of education as a control mechanism during colonialism and slavery through the views of Alexis de Tocqueville. The results of the study show that education was used by the colonial powers not only as a means of transmitting knowledge but also as a mechanism of ideological and social control. While evaluating the education policies of the French colonial administration in Algeria, Tocqueville argued that education should be used as a tool of assimilation and suggested that the local population should be subjected to intensive education with Western values. However, the fact that these education policies were not adopted by the local population and that the education system contained a discriminatory structure showed that it was a strategy to ensure the continuity of the colonial order.

In addition, Tocqueville adopted a different approach to the adaptation of societies emerging from slavery to the socio-economic structure through education. He argued that emancipated slaves could become more economically productive, but he also stated that this adaptation was not really possible in an order where social segregation continued. In this context, the study demonstrated that education was an important tool used to ensure the continuity of the colonial order and that this process further reinforced social inequalities. This contradicts the colonial administration's claim of a "civilising mission" in the region and, on the contrary, points to a process that further disadvantaged the local population.

Discussion

In line with the results obtained, Alexis de Tocqueville's views that education can be used by the colonial administration as a tool for the ideological shaping and *"harmonisation"* of the local population into the social structure overlap with Fanon's (1961) assessment that colonial education systems essentially aim at cultural assimilation and psychological domination. In this context, the discourse that education functions as an ideological apparatus with the potential to reproduce inequalities in the maintenance of colonialism and post-slavery order has emerged. Tocqueville's analysis of colonialism makes clear why modern society needs an *"other"* and violence to legitimise itself. His contradictory views on colonialism and slavery do not stem from political indecision or philosophical contradiction, as is often claimed; on the contrary, it has been argued that his views are based on the theoretical framework of his analysis of modern society (Sunar, 2014). According to another study, the imposition of French educational norms on Algerians and the denial of Algerians' legitimate cultural identity through the control of language, curricula and teaching methods revealed colonial policy at its most destructive (Heggoy, 1973).

Fanon (1961) discusses the assimilationist effects of colonial education on indigenous peoples, while Freire (1970) emphasises that the use of education as an instrument of hegemonic power creates a structure that passivises consciousness. Tocqueville's views also support these theoretical approaches and reveal that colonial administrations used education as an ideological apparatus. According to Michel Foucault (1975), education systems function as structures that discipline individuals and reproduce power relations. On the other hand, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) emphasises that colonial education led to the mental colonisation of indigenous peoples, and in this process, Western values were substituted for indigenous knowledge systems. In this context, Tocqueville's view that "indigenous people should be educated and integrated into Western society" can be considered a hegemonic discourse in terms of critical postcolonial theory. Moreover, the theory of orientalism put forward by Said (1978) explains how colonial education played a role in the production and dissemination of Western thought. Tocqueville's views on the application of the French educational model to Algeria overlap with Said's orientalist approach. Martin Carnoy examines education not only as a means of individual or social development but also as a tool used by various systems to propagate dominant ideologies, produce relations of dependency, and institutionalise cultural domination (Carnoy, 1974).

Finally, the critiques of colonial domination and the ideological use of education by thinkers such as Memmi (1957) and Cesaire (2024) allow for a critical reading of Tocqueville's views. In his work "*The Souls of Black Folk",* W. E. B. Du Bois discussed how the social integration of post-slavery blacks could be achieved through education (Du Bois, 2022). In line with these conclusions and discussions, it is possible to make the following suggestions: Tocqueville's views on colonial education in Algeria can be discursively compared with the education policies of the British colonial administration in India, Kenya or South Africa. Within the framework of Tocqueville's views, how the colonial education systems treated girls or women can also be included in the discussion. In addition, an analysis of historical continuity can be made through current examples (for example, the secularist education debates in France), such as the inequalities in education that continue to this day in post-colonial societies and the dominance of Western-centred narratives in curricula.

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Research Article

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The Relationship of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Entity Republika Srpska to the United Nations Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica

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Abstract The adoption of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica on May 23, 2024, marks a pivotal moment in the international affirmation and protection of the truth about the genocide committed against Bosniaks in Srebrenica in July 1995. This paper explores the significance of the Resolution and critically examines its social, political, and legal implications, particularly in the context of ongoing denial and revisionist policies. It analyzes how the political elites of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian entity of Republika Srpska—whose political, military, and police structures were found guilty by both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for their role in the genocide—continue to act in ways that reflect a persistent commitment to genocide denial. The paper demonstrates that their reactions to the Resolution are a continuation of the same large-state political strategies that have historically sought to undermine acknowledgment of the genocide. By linking the Resolution to these ongoing revisionist practices, the study highlights both the challenges and the potential of international recognition as a tool against institutionalized genocide denial.

Keywords Genocide · Srebrenica · Serbia · Republika Srpska · Historical revisionism

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The Relationship of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Entity Republika Srpska to the United Nations Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica

This paper examines the reactions of the authorities of the Bosnian entity Republika Srpska (RS) and the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Srebrenica Genocide, adopted on 23 May 2024. The Resolution constitutes a key international instrument that affirms and safeguards the truth about the genocide committed against the Bosniaks of Srebrenica in July 1995. Its adoption carries significant political, social, and legal weight, particularly in the context of the persistent denial and revisionist policies that continue to prevail in the region.

The primary aim of this paper is to analyse how the political and institutional structures of RS and the Republic of Serbia—through systemic practices of genocide denial and historical revisionism—respond to this Resolution. These reactions are not isolated political incidents but rather a continuation of a long-term strategy that, from the end of the war to the present, has not abandoned its expansionist statehood objectives. Particular emphasis is placed on how these policies affect justice, reconciliation, and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The subsequent section, entitled *Historical Overview – From the Genocide in Srebrenica to the UN Resolution*, addresses the key events that preceded, accompanied, and culminated in the genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995. It provides a detailed account of the RS Army assault on Srebrenica and surrounding areas, the mass expulsion and concentration of refugees, the designation of Srebrenica as a "safe area" by the United Nations, and the military operations that led to the enclave's capture and the systematic killing of Bosniaks. This historical context serves as the foundation for understanding subsequent judicial rulings, the international recognition of genocide, and the ongoing practices of its denial by political structures in RS and Serbia.

The section *Denial of Genocide – The Final Stage of Genocide* and *Genocide denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina* sets out the conceptual framework based on the theory of genocide denial, which, according to Gregory H. Stanton's model, represents the final stage of the genocidal process. According to this theory, denial is not a separate phenomenon arising only after the crime but rather a continuous and systemic process accompanying it from its inception, persisting for decades after its commission. This theory has been confirmed in the case of the denial of the genocide in Bosnia. Denial encompasses the relativisation of evidence, the creation of alternative historical narratives, the rejection of judicial rulings, and the political instrumentalisation of victims. Through an analysis of the practices of the authorities of the Republic of Serbia and RS regarding the Srebrenica genocide, this paper demonstrates how institutionalised denial persists, representing a fundamental obstacle to confronting the past, achieving justice, and building sustainable peace.

The section *Genocide Denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Law and Practice* analyses the legal framework and practice concerning genocide denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with an emphasis on the ways in which the legislative and judicial systems respond to the public denial of genocide and the glorification of war criminals. Particular attention is devoted to the application of the 2021 Amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which prohibit the denial of genocide and war crimes, as well as the glorification of convicted war criminals—provisions that are, in practice, rarely applied consistently. The analysis addresses institutionalised mechanisms of genocide denial, including actions by the authorities of RS and Serbia, as

well as the slowness and inefficiency of prosecutorial bodies in pursuing such cases. A review of specific decisions issued by the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina between 2021 and 2024 illustrates how institutional denial and political support for revisionism perpetuate a sense of impunity, thereby undermining processes of dealing with the past, delivering justice, and fostering reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The methodological framework of this paper is based on an interdisciplinary approach that integrates historical analysis, legal interpretation, and comparative studies. The research draws upon both primary and secondary sources, including international and domestic judicial decisions, archival materials, reports from relevant institutions, and scholarly as well as expert literature.

Historical Overview – From the Genocide in Srebrenica to the United Nations Resolution

Since May 1992, Srebrenica and the surrounding area were under constant attacks by the RS Army and the Yugoslav Army. The attacks intensified at the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993, when, with the help of the Užice Corps of the Yugoslav Army, enclaves in eastern Bosnia — Kamenica, Cerska, and Konjević-Polje — were captured. As a result of the advancement of the aggressor forces and mass expulsions, thousands of Bosniak civilians from the surrounding areas sought shelter in Srebrenica, which temporarily accommodated more than 40,000 refugees. However, continuous attacks, artillery shelling, and mass killings of civilians marked life in this besieged town. The UN Security Council declared Srebrenica a "safe area" on April 16, 1993, by Resolution 819.

Nevertheless, despite its formal status, Serbian forces continued their assaults on Srebrenica, while the international community failed to provide effective protection. The mass atrocities and ongoing shelling exposed the United Nations' inability to guarantee the safety of the population within the so-called "safe areas."[1] The population within the Srebrenica enclave lived under conditions devoid of fundamental necessities, including insufficient medical supplies and pharmaceuticals, a lack of basic hygiene items, and only minimal food provisions. Hostile actions by the VRS forces persisted even after the enclave was granted the status of a "safe zone," while the humanitarian situation, although marginally improved, remained critically inadequate (ICTY, 2017, paras. 2330–2334). At the beginning of 1995, the Canadian battalion of UNPROFOR was replaced by two Dutch battalions (ICTY, 2016, paras. 4977–4978).

On March 8, 1995, Directive No. 7, signed by Radovan Karadžić, explicitly delineated the RS's strategic approach concerning the "safe zones" in eastern Bosnia. The directive, among other provisions, instructed the Drina Corps of the RS Army to promptly execute the complete physical separation of Srebrenica and Žepa. It further mandated the Corps to "systematically conduct planned and deliberate combat operations on a daily basis to create conditions of total insecurity, intolerable hardship, and a complete lack of prospects for the continued existence and survival of the inhabitants of Srebrenica and Žepa (ICTY, 1995)." In early July 1995, pursuant to Directives 7 and 7/1, the order was issued to: "Completely isolate and reduce the

[1] After the adoption of Resolution 824 on May 6, which extended the status of "safe area" to five additional towns—Žepa, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Goražde, and Bihać—alongside Srebrenica, the Agreement on the Demilitarization of Srebrenica and Žepa was signed on May 8. The agreement was signed by Sefer Halilović, Chief of the General Staff of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina Arm, and Ratko Mladić, Commander of the General Staff of the RS Army, with UNPROFOR representative Philippe Morillon acting as witness. ICTY, The Case against Radovan Karadžić, Exhibit no. D135, *Sporazum o demilitarizaciji Srebrenice i Žepe [*Agreement on the Demilitarization of Srebrenica and Žepa], 8. May 1993, 1-4; For more details on the demilitarization process, the surrender of weapons, and the control measures implemented by UNPROFOR forces, see: ICTY, *Trial Chamber Judgment against R. Karadžić*, Volume IV, par. 4973-4976; ICTY, *Trial Chamber Judgment against R. Mladić*, Volume III, par. 2341-2342.

enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa through a sudden assault, enhance the tactical positioning of forces in the depth of the zone, and establish conditions for the elimination of the enclaves." The RS Army operation, designated "Krivaja-95," commenced on July 6, with RS Army forces entering Srebrenica on July 11, 1995 (ICTY, 1995). The following day, July 11, by 4:00 PM, members of the Dutch UN Battalion evacuated the remaining 4,000 to 5,000 civilians from the UN base in Srebrenica to the base in Potočari (ICTY, 1995/1996). The RS Army captured Srebrenica, and Ratko Mladić declared before television cameras in Srebrenica: "Here we are on July 11, 1995, in Serbian Srebrenica. On the eve of another great Serbian holiday, we present this town to the Serbian people. And finally, the moment has come to take revenge on the Turks in this region after the rebellion against the dahijas." He then ordered the RS forces to advance toward Potočari (ICTY, 2017, para. 2410; ICTY, n.d.).

In the days following July 11, 1995, Bosniaks were, according to a predetermined plan, captured, taken away, and executed at previously identified locations, primarily within the municipalities of Zvornik and Bratunac. During the genocide in July 1995, at least 8,372 Bosniaks were killed, including 694 children. After Srebrenica fell, at the end of July, RS forces also took control of the "safe zone" of Žepa. Since 1996, 94 mass graves and 336 surface sites related to the genocide in and around Srebrenica in July 1995 have been discovered. Most of the victims' remains were found in multiple secondary and tertiary mass graves, which indicates the extent to which the perpetrators of the genocide sought to conceal the facts and the truth about the scale of the atrocities. Approximately 1,000 victims of the genocide are still being sought (Džananović, 2024). The crimes committed have been adjudicated before the ICTY, the International Court of Justice in The Hague, as well as before national courts, and have been recognized, among other charges, as genocide against the Bosniaks. To date, more than 50 individuals have been convicted by various courts for genocide and war crimes committed in Srebrenica, receiving sentences totaling over 700 years of imprisonment. The entire political and military leadership of the self-proclaimed RS has been tried and convicted before the ICTY or the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT).[2]

Additionally, judgments for genocide have been rendered by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[3]

The first verdict by the ICTY in which the crimes against Bosniaks in and around Srebrenica in July 1995 were characterized as genocide was against Radislav Krstić, a general of the RS Army (ICTY, 2001; ICTY, 2004).

The political and military leaders of the RS, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, were sentenced to life imprisonment and convicted of genocide against the Bosniaks (IRMCT, 2019; IRMCT, 2021). In the case against Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović, the heads of the Serbian State Security Service, before the ICTY and subsequently the IRMCT, the existence of a joint criminal enterprise within Bosnia and Herzegovina was established (Radio Slobodna Evropa, 2023).

The final judgment includes information concerning Trnovo and the execution of six Bosniak boys and men who were captured following the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995 (IRMCT, 2023, paras. 562–563). Some of the perpetrators have admitted responsibility for the crimes committed (ICTY, 1997; ICTY, 2003, paras. 2, 183; ICTY, 2006). The International Court of Justice has found Serbia partially responsible for failing to prevent the genocide committed against the Bosniak population in and around Srebrenica in July 1995, as well as for failing to prosecute and punish those responsible for these crimes (ICJ, 2007).

[2] For a more detailed insight into the proceedings, see: ICTY, Cases, https://www.icty.org/en/cases, accessed July 12, 2024; IRMCT, Cases, https://www.irmct.org/en/cases, accessed July 12, 2024.

[3] For a more detailed insight into the proceedings, see: Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Case Law, https://www.sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Practice, accessed January 12, 2024.

However, confronting the past and accepting international rulings remains a challenge for the political elites of the Republic of Serbia and the RS, which, through institutionalized mechanisms of denial, relativization, and revisionism, continue to destabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The adoption of the UN Resolution on the Srebrenica genocide, which declared July 11th as the International Day of Commemoration of the Genocide in Srebrenica (UN General Assembly, 2024), provoked strong political resistance precisely from these entities, revealing a deep continuity of genocide denial and the deliberate maintenance of a mythologized nationalist narrative.

Denial of Genocide – The Final Stage of Genocide

According to Gregory H. Stanton, "genocide is a process that unfolds through ten stages, which are predictable but not inevitable. At each stage, genocide can be prevented through appropriate measures. The process is not linear. Multiple stages can occur simultaneously. Naturally, the initial stages must precede the later ones, but all stages of genocide continue to manifest throughout the entire process" (Stanton, n.d.).

The ten stages of genocide outlined and elaborated by Stanton are: classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial. Stanton's work on the stages of genocide represents a significant contribution to the theoretical elaboration of genocide and a better understanding of its process. Among genocide scholars, his matrix has been widely adopted as the most comprehensive framework for dividing the stages of genocide.[4]

Denial is the final stage that persists throughout the execution of genocide and invariably follows it. It stands as one of the most reliable indicators of impending genocidal massacres. Perpetrators of genocide exhume mass graves, burn bodies, attempt to conceal evidence, and intimidate witnesses. They deny having committed any crimes and often blame the victims for what occurred. They obstruct investigations into the crimes and continue to govern until forcibly removed from power, after which they flee into exile. Abroad, they often remain unpunished, as was the case with Pol Pot or Idi Amin, unless apprehended and tried by a tribunal established for their prosecution. The appropriate response to denial is punishment by international or national courts, where evidence can be examined and perpetrators held accountable (Stanton, n.d.). Tribunals such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, or the International Court of Justice may not deter the worst genocidal perpetrators, but with sufficient political will to arrest and prosecute, some can be brought to justice (Stanton, n.d.).

Gregory Stanton's scholarly work on the stages of genocide constitutes a substantial contribution to the theoretical framework and deepens the understanding of the genocidal process. Among genocide theorists, his model of the sequential phases of genocide has been widely recognized as the most comprehensive and authoritative.

Genocide denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Three decades after the commencement of aggression and the perpetration of genocide against the Bosniak population, irredentist ambitions aimed at expanding territorial claims west of the Drina River

[4] Within the extensive preparations for the commission of genocide, every stage is carefully planned. If we agree with Stanton's division of the stages of genocide, it is clear that during the initial phases particular attention is given to denial as a stage that lasts the longest and receives significant focus both during the perpetration of the crimes and in the post-genocide period. Until 2012, Stanton presented the genocide process in eight stages, when he added two more stages: discrimination and persecution, while denial remained the final stage of genocide.

have persisted unabated. Furthermore, according to the theoretical framework delineating the stages of genocide, it is evident that the genocidal process in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been terminated and currently resides in its final stage — the stage of denial. This denial of genocide persists at the local, regional, and international levels.[5] The denial of the genocide committed in Srebrenica takes various forms, ranging from conspiracy theories to the outright rejection of facts established by international courts. One particularly widespread narrative claims that Srebrenica was "deliberately handed over" to the forces of the RS in order to provoke a NATO military intervention. However, the 1999 Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations clearly and unequivocally rejects such claims, emphasizing that no evidence was found to support them (UN-a 53/35, 1998). The core strategy of genocide denial in Srebrenica is grounded in the systematic relativization of the scale of the atrocity, the minimization of the number of Bosniak victims, and the simultaneous inflation of the number of Serb civilian casualties in the broader Srebrenica region. These revisionist narratives are not static; rather, they have evolved over time in response to judicially established facts and shifting political contexts. Following the admission of guilt by Dražen Erdemović—one of the direct perpetrators of mass executions during the genocide—before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), efforts emerged to discredit his testimony. These attempts framed his account as an "isolated and unreliable" statement, aiming to undermine its credibility as evidence of the systematic nature of the genocide (Herman, 2011, pp. 185–191; Čvikov, 2009, p. 6). Subsequently, once DNA identifications confirmed the identities of the victims, denialists began to challenge the validity of forensic methods (Herman, n.d., p. 280; Massey, n.d., p. 120).

Although the judgments of the ICTY and other courts unequivocally established that genocide had been committed, denial persisted institutionally through the authorities of RS and Serbia. The most blatant example was the "Report on Srebrenica" authored by Darko Trifunović, which the ICTY described as "one of the worst examples of revisionism (ICTY, 2004, para. 257)." It was only under international pressure that RS acknowledged the mass killings in Srebrenica in 2004, marking a period during which it appeared that the entity's institutions were finally moving in the right direction. However, that acknowledgment was later challenged and undermined by the current authorities of RS, led by Milorad Dodik (Documentation Centre of Republic of Srpska, n.d.). Numerous institutions were also involved in genocide denial, including the "Srebrenica Historical Project" (SHP), which, with financial support from RS, propagated conspiracy theories and sought to relativize the genocide (Kovačević, 2016). The SHP organized multiple international conferences aimed at promoting revisionist narratives. Numerous denialists propagated theories of the "manipulation of Srebrenica" and linked the genocide to Western "imperial interventionism."[6]

In 2019, the Government of RS established the so-called "Independent International Commission" with the stated purpose of investigating the suffering of all peoples in the Srebrenica region during the period from 1992 to 1995. The Commission's report represents a revisionist attempt to reinterpret the events in Srebrenica. Challenging the legally established genocide, the report asserts that Bosniaks from Srebrenica participated in attacks on Serbian villages and that among the deceased were many combatants killed in battle rather than victims of systematic executions (Independent International Commission on Srebrenica, 2020).

[5] For a more detailed analysis, see: Mulagić, Elvedin, *Negiranje genocida nad Bošnjacima [Denial of the genocide against the Bosniaks],* Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 2014.

[6] For more details, see: Jasmin Medić, Hikmet Karčić, Muamer Džananović, Elvedin Mulagić, *The Politics of Revisionism: Denial of Crimes and Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992–2025 (Research Study),* Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, Sarajevo, 2025.

The report, grounded in a politically motivated narrative, criticizes the ICTY's judicial decisions, accuses international organizations of bias, and relativizes the crimes committed by the RS Army. It places particular emphasis on crimes against Serbs during World War II, aiming to historically position Serbs as perpetual victims. Despite these efforts, Israeli historian Gideon Greif, the chairman of the Commission, later revised his views by acknowledging that over 8,000 Bosniaks were killed in July 1995 (Haaretz, 2022).

Simultaneously, the Srebrenica Memorial Center has recorded numerous instances of genocide denial in Serbia, Montenegro, and the RS entity. Between 2020 and 2024, more than 1,300 public acts of denial were documented. This denial includes statements made by the political leadership in both Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with notable deniers including the President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić, the Prime Minister of Serbia Ana Brnabić, and the President of RS Milorad Dodik. Among others, this group also includes the war criminal and politician Vojislav Šešelj, the then Serbian Minister of Defense Aleksandar Vulin, and numerous others (Hanson-Green, 2020; Cvjetićanin et al., 2021; Mehmedović et al., 2022; Džananović et al., 2023).

The media in Serbia and RS significantly contribute to genocide denial by uncritically broadcasting statements made by politicians and fostering revisionist narratives, including claims that place "NATO's responsibility" for the events in Srebrenica.

The Position of Serbia and Republika Srpska Regarding the Genocide Resolution

On May 23, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring July 11 as the International Day of Commemoration of the Genocide in Srebrenica. The resolution also condemns the denial of the genocide and the glorification of war criminals (UN General Assembly, 2024). The resolution was adopted with the support of 84 countries, while 19 voted against it and 68 abstained. This act by the United Nations represents a significant step in the international recognition of the genocide in Srebrenica, forming part of a broader process of acknowledging responsibility for the crimes committed during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BBC News, 2024).

The countries that voted against the resolution were: Antigua and Barbuda, Belarus, China, Comoros, Cuba, North Korea, Congo, Dominica, Eritrea, Eswatini, Grenada, Hungary, Mali, Nauru, Nicaragua, Russia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, and Syria. Among these, Russia and Hungary stood out as the most prominent supporters of Milorad Dodik and his political activities within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their decisions to back Dodik and his policies add an additional dimension to the international political dynamics surrounding the region. Hungary, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, openly supports Dodik, while the Russian authorities share a similar stance toward the RS leadership, having repeatedly demonstrated support for Dodik based on political and strategic motives that extend far beyond Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. Among the European countries that abstained were Slovakia, Greece, and Cyprus, while all other European nations, as well as the United States and Canada, supported the resolution.[7]

Various reports emerged regarding the extent of Serbia's lobbying efforts aimed at minimizing support for the resolution. For instance, the opposition to Aleksandar Vučić's regime in Serbia alleged that Honduras's abstention in the UN vote was a result of financial assistance provided to Serbia, claiming that Serbia paid USD 500,000 for the renovation of a hospital on the island of Roatán, Honduras. These allegations further complicate the situation and raise important questions about the influence of political lobbying on international decisions that ought to be grounded in justice, human rights, and international norms (Klix.ba, 2024).

[7] For more details, see: Jasmin Medić i dr, *The Politics of Revisionism,* 32-33.

The adoption of the Resolution was met with reactions in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the most vocal opponents being political leaders from Serbia and RS, led by Aleksandar Vučić and Milorad Dodik. Although the Resolution was passed at the UN, opponents argued that such a move could have serious political and territorial consequences for Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly concerning the survival of the RS entity. According to their claims, the adoption of the Resolution would signal an initiative to abolish RS, as well as potential demands for war reparations. Furthermore, media outlets in Serbia and RS spoke of the danger of labeling the Serbian people as genocidal, which, according to them, could jeopardize the future of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina—an assertion that has absolutely no basis in the substance of the Resolution.

Following the adoption of the Resolution, Milorad Dodik promptly declared that he would not accept its provisions, accusing the international community of bias. He even announced plans to propose the "separation" of RS from the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to restore the entity's sovereignty, a move that heightened political tensions further. Additionally, RS's Prime Minister Radovan Višković emphasized that this was not a secession but rather a "peaceful separation" from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, warning that if the international community continues to label the Serbian people as genocidal, coexistence within a common state would become impossible (RTS, 2024).

Although international courts and numerous scholarly studies have unequivocally established that the genocide in Srebrenica was committed in 1995, political leaders of Serbia and RS, along with many of their allies, continue to deny these facts. Aleksandar Vučić, the President of Serbia, has repeatedly reiterated positions that minimize the crimes committed in Srebrenica, and his defense of Milorad Dodik and his political stance further fuels an atmosphere of denial and political revanchism. Vučić has on multiple occasions claimed that the issue is one of political manipulation rather than genuine war crimes, attempting to diminish Serbia's responsibility for the events in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. Similarly, even after the adoption of the UN Resolution, Dodik has continued to assert that the international community has unjustly condemned the Serbian people and has declared that he will not submit to any international judgment based on "politics (interview with the BBC, 2024)."

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution clearly affirms the obligation to prevent, punish, and remember genocide, thereby strengthening international law and supporting the victims of genocide. Its adoption is of crucial importance as it:

- Confirms the final and binding court judgments regarding the genocide in Srebrenica;
- Condemns all forms of genocide denial and the glorification of convicted war criminals;
- Establishes July 11 as a date of collective remembrance at the global level.

The Resolution also serves a strong preventive function—its acceptance sends a message that the international community will not tolerate attempts at revisionism or minimization of the crimes committed.

Following the adoption of the resolution, the Declaration on the Protection of National and Political Rights and the Common Future of the Serbian People — known as the "All-Serbian Assembly" Declaration — was adopted in Belgrade on 8 June 2024.

This declaration represents a key milestone in the political and ideological shaping of relations between Serbia and the RS (Svesrpski sabor, 2024).

This declaration is not merely a political document but symbolizes an effort to institutionalize and expand the concept of the "Serbian World," which aims to create a unified space through cultural, educa-

tional, energy, and infrastructural integration of Serbian territories, with a particular emphasis on the centralization of authority and political actions beyond the framework of international norms that respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The declaration was adopted with the participation of the highest political, religious, and academic representatives from the Republic of Serbia and RS, including presidents and government members, members of the national assemblies of both entities, as well as senior representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church. This document sends a political message that the unification of policies and interests between Serbia and RS continues, with the goal of creating a homogeneous space that encompasses not only territorial and political connectivity but also cultural and identity cohesion of the Serbian people.

In practice, this implies the reduction of interstate borders and the strengthening of ties in education, culture, energy, and transportation, thereby creating a unified "Serbian space" in which RS, supported by Serbia, would not only achieve political stabilization but also economic consolidation through strategic projects.

One of the key sections of the Declaration addresses the denial and rejection of international justice concerning the genocide in Srebrenica. Specifically, the Declaration explicitly rejects the United Nations Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on May 23, 2024, which recognizes the genocide in Srebrenica and condemns its denial. Points 16 and 17 of the Declaration expressly state that the "All-Serbian Assembly" does not accept the UN Resolution, claiming it constitutes an attempt at collective blaming of the entire Serbian people, which is deemed unacceptable. The Declaration notes that while 84 countries voted in favor of the Resolution, 109 countries opposed or abstained, thereby calling into question the validity and legitimacy of international decisions implicating the Serbian people's responsibility for the genocide.

This position can be viewed as part of a broader attempt at political revisionism, which is not only focused on denying the genocide but also on reinterpreting historical facts, including presenting the events in Srebrenica from 1992 to 1995 in a different light. According to the Declaration, the "All-Serbian Assembly" welcomes the efforts of the Republic of Serbia and RS to clarify historical facts, emphasizing that these efforts are part of a process of restoring Serbian identity and dignity.

This approach leads to a continuous rewriting of history, suppressing not only the facts about the genocide but also the international rulings that have clearly established responsibility for the crimes committed in Srebrenica. Such an approach poses a serious challenge to achieving reconciliation and building stability in the Balkans, as it continues to deepen divisions and misunderstandings among the peoples.

In the context of this Declaration, the RS Memorial Center is being established as an institution intended to serve as a symbol of Serbian victims during the wars of the 1990s. This initiative is part of a broader effort to portray Serbs as victims of wartime atrocities while simultaneously minimizing responsibility for the crimes committed. The decision to establish the Memorial Center, expected to be implemented by 2025, demonstrates how the "Serbian World" policy aims to institutionalize a narrative of victimhood while suppressing the truth about the genocide and war crimes committed against other peoples, such as the Bosniaks.

The denial of the genocide in Srebrenica, beyond being a political issue, is also manifested in attempts to minimize or completely ignore the crimes committed against the victims, thereby denying them justice. This practice is most evident in the context of educational programs and public discourse, where there are frequent attempts to alter the narrative surrounding the events of July 1995, creating the impression

that the crimes were neither systematic nor motivated by ethnic hatred. Given the historical significance of Srebrenica, such revisionist attempts not only deny the true nature of the crimes but also show a profound disrespect towards the victims who endured unimaginable suffering.

Further activities aimed at politically linking RS with the institutional framework of the Republic of Serbia, such as those prescribed by the Declaration of the "All-Serbian Assembly," require serious consideration in the context of their impact on memory politics and confronting the past. The continued encouragement of genocide denial in Srebrenica and attempts to construct political narratives that minimize the significance of this genocide may have profound negative consequences on social stability, the reconciliation process, and Bosnia and Herzegovina's international relations.

In this light, it is essential to ensure that the Memorial Center and other institutions dealing with war crimes and genocide issues receive support for their activities, and that the international community continues to take concrete measures against genocide denial.

Genocide Denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Law and Practice

The decision by Valentin Inzko, then High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to enact the Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina in mid-2021—which, among other provisions, prohibited the denial of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, as well as the glorification of convicted war criminals—did not halt the continuation of these practices.[8]

The glorification of war criminals and the encouragement of genocide denial against Bosniaks constitute official policy among both the ruling authorities and the dominant segments of the opposition in the Republic of Serbia and the RS. These authorities clearly remain unwilling to accept the reality that small segments of Bosniak and Croat minorities still live in RS, which they consider part of their envisioned greater-state territory. Through their actions and rhetoric, they send the message that coexistence is unwanted and that they do not seek peacebuilding, but rather the continued dismantling of Bosnian society.

The disregard for decisions and positions of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ignoring of rulings by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, unconstitutional conduct, the undermining and denial of Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty, the glorification of convicted war criminals, genocide denial, and the celebration of the unconstitutional "January 9, 1992," are just some of the activities organized, implemented, and supported by political structures within RS, with the strong and decisive support of official Belgrade.

Despite legal provisions that criminalize genocide denial, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the relevant investigative bodies are frequently criticized for their slow and ineffective handling of such cases. This approach further reinforces a sense of impunity and allows the continuation of public denial of crimes, thereby undermining the process of confronting the past and achieving reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To date, only a few criminal proceedings have been initiated on the grounds of genocide denial. In order to supplement the detailed analysis of final prosecutorial decisions not to initiate investigations in such cases, this report also includes decisions issued after the publication of the *Report on Genocide Denial in Srebrenica* in 2023. Between July 2021 and August 2024, over 30 such decisions were issued, declining to pursue investigations for reported acts of genocide denial (Grebo, 2023).

[8] OHR, http://www.ohr.int/odluka-visokog-predstavnika-kojom-se-donosi-zakon-o-dopuni-kaznenogzakona-bosne-i-hercegovine/

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the political and institutional structures of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnian entity RS, more than three decades after the genocide in Srebrenica in 1995, continue to systematically deny the crime and engage in historical revisionism, even in the aftermath of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Srebrenica genocide. The rejection of the Resolution by these authorities, alongside a small number of UN member states, confirms that denial is not an isolated political stance, but rather a continuous state strategy aimed at undermining recognition of the genocide and obstructing justice for the victims.

The analysis of specific reactions shows that institutionalized practices—including political statements, the glorification of convicted war criminals, and the announced establishment of alternative "memorial centers" through the "All-Serbian Assembly"—function as long-term mechanisms of denial that directly impede reconciliation, justice, and lasting stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider Western Balkans region. The 2021 law against genocide denial and the glorification of war criminals, enacted by the decision of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, represents a historic legal milestone, yet its inconsistent implementation illustrates the persistence of revisionism within both political and cultural structures.

In conclusion, the responses of Serbia and RS to the UN Resolution underscore that the struggle against institutionalized genocide denial must rely on consistent legal enforcement, sustained international oversight, and education on historical truth. Addressing this institutionalized denial is crucial not only for honoring the victims and their families but also for advancing justice, reconciliation, and long-term stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider Western Balkans. This study clearly demonstrates that the recognition of the genocide and active resistance to revisionism remain central challenges and imperatives for the international community, legal institutions, and all defenders of human rights.

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