Genocide: Intent, Motivation and Types

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Genocide is a complicated social, political and psychological phenomenon. Findings by a number of scholars show that all types of genocides are interdependent and cannot appear in pure types alone. This paper argues that the loser psychology is one major factor for developing a genocidal intent in society. Society, facing harsh realities, feels defeated and abandoned by international community and begins to look for ways out of psychological morass. Extremist passions and movements become prevalent in such societies which finally take people to insane beliefs which are based on the need to take revenge on others, to prove their superiority, to the illusion that they have found the solution for their problems: to kill others, to eliminate them from society. The paper also shows that the ultimate end of such a genocidal intent is the achievement of happiness. The capacity of society to provide its members with their wants (security, food, psychological recovery, etc) will make them happy, the failure to do so will spread gloomy environment over society. People’s desire to recover from major loses and immediately achieve happiness confuses them and leads them to false calculations, which, unfortunately, easily nest in the minds of members of society, sparking an “us-them” split the in society, which would take them to genocidal intentions.

Key words: genocide, loser psychology, happiness, international community

1. Introduction

The 20th century was an era of gains and losses. Despite overarching technological advancements, the world faced horrific world wars and local conflicts, ideological wars and collapses of empires, ethnic conflicts and economic crises, etc. However, from my point of view, the 20th century’s gloomy picture encapsulates the most horrific crime of humanity - genocide. The twentieth century was an age of murder, but it is; more precisely, an age of politically sanctioned mass murder, of collective, premeditated death intended to serve the ends of the state. It is an age of genocide in which 60 million men, women and children, coming from many different races, religions, ethnic groups, nationalities and social classes, and living in many different countries, on most of the continents of the earth, have had their lives taken because the state thought this desirable (Smith, 1999: 3).

That is why it is a must to gauge the genocide phenomenon, its roots and different types. First I am trying to delineate genocide, give my own definition of this concept. Then I try to analyze the
studies of prominent experts in genocide studies such as Roger W. Smith’s writings on genocide and genocidal intent, Scott Straus’s findings on Rwandan Genocide, Alexander Laban Hinton’s work on the genocide in Cambodia, etc. I am trying to contribute to their analyses by my own proposals and put forward my own terms for the types of genocides such as anti-pluralism.

Then I posit that the Armenian Genocide (also called the Great Crime or Medz Yeghern in Armenian) paved the way for other genocides in the 20th and 21st centuries. Other infamous perpetrators of the 20th century drew excellent lessons from the Armenian Genocide and then applied those against their victims. The ignorance of Armenian victims and the forgetfulness of the Armenian Genocide had horrific consequences. That is why I am trying to convince that the role of international community is extremely important in the prevention of such crimes from happening again. Then I conclude the article in positive tone by stating that globalizing world will become safe and secure in the near future and we will never worry about genocidal hazards.

2. Genocide: Intent and motivation

Genocide is the greatest sin that human beings have committed. It is a horrible decadence of the human soul. Unfortunately though, we are witnessing genocides even in our era, the 21st century (Darfur, Sudan). It is a must to puzzle out sociopolitical circumstances that cause genocides and label preventive mechanisms against that havoc. The role of international community in that endeavor is of great significance because, as the 20th century proves, the absence of punitive measures against perpetrators, the ignorance of victims and forgetfulness of such a crime pave the way for genocides to happen again. The horrific history of negligence of the Armenian Genocide is a rare glimpse into the catastrophe of the Second World War. Even the greatest perpetrator, Adolf Hitler, speaks about the ignorance of the Armenians by international community:

“I have issued the command - and I’ll have anybody who utters but one word of criticism executed by a firing squad - that our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly, I have placed my death-head formations in readiness for the present only in the East - with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space (Lebensraum) which we need. Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians? (22 August, 1939).”

Hitler’s speech excellently proves the Nazi leader’s confidence before committing such a crime. Though there are examples of mass violence directed against identifiable groups dating back to antiquity, “genocide” as a term and a concept has a quite recent origin. Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer who fled Poland after the German invasion in 1939, coined the word and introduced it in 1944 (Lemkin, 1944: 79). He derived it from the Greek for tribe or nation (geno-) and the Latin for killing (-cide). By “genocide,” Lemkin meant “a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves (Lemkin, 1944: 79)”.

In no small part due to the efforts of Lemkin himself, his new word soon gained currency (Power, 2002: 30-85). It was mentioned in the 1945 Nuremberg indictment as a description of war crimes committed by the defendants being tried before the International Military Tribunal. In December 1946, the General Assembly of the newly created United Nations adopted a resolution that described genocide as “a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups” that “shocks the conscience of mankind” and “affirm[ed]” that genocide is “crime under international law (The Crime of Genocide, UN General Assembly Resolution 96(I), 11 December 1946: 188–89)”. That resolution also set in motion the process that resulted in the adoption of the United Nations Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG) on 9 December 1948 (Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 9 December 1948: 78 UNTS 277). Article 2 of that convention gives a definition to genocide: In the


present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

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

The Convention puts forward the importance of intent as an underpinning factor for the concept of genocide. Actually, it derives from the Convention that even there is a possibility to commit a genocidal act without killing anybody; in this case a perpetrator has an intention to do so but he fails in his commitment because of the lack of force, preventive measures and the like. Thus, intent is a substantive element for genocide phenomenon. Here we come to the crux of the intent-motivation dilemma. We should take into account that intent is not the same as motivation. A perpetrator has an intention to destroy a group whereas that intention can be motivated by greed, power, revenge, ideological beliefs, etc. A spread of these motivations in society develops the very intent. In other words, intent is constant (to destroy a victim group) while motivations vary (covetousness, retaliation, ideology, etc.). Different motivations unite in intent and give birth to genocide. Motivations are the rationales of intent. I further my discussion on the genocidal intent and motivations below.

There is a series of different definitions on genocide concept. Bauman has something unique on offer: ‘Influenced by modern conceptions of inferior and superior races or exploited and exploiting classes, coupled with a proclivity for powerful, centralized, bureaucratic states to conceive of grand projects of social engineering and their capacity to implement such policies, modern states have the potential to become genocidal “gardener states.” For the gardener state, genocide is not a policy of destruction but a grand project of construction. Recalling Arendt’s totalitarian everything-is-possible thesis, Bauman argues that the gardener state seeks to construct new social, economic, demographic, or political orders as a landscaper plants and tends a garden. Just as gardens inevitably grow weeds that do not belong in a meticulously designed garden, so do new racial, national, or revolutionary systems contain human beings which do not belong in the new order. As weeds are pulled by a gardener to maintain the intended design and composition of the garden, groups of human beings who do not belong to the new order must be exterminated by the gardener state (Bauman, 1989: 66-76). For Alvarez, genocide is a form of “state criminality” that is underpinned by two “constructs of belief”, sovereignty and nationalism (Alvarez, 2001: 57, 59). The vast majority of authors use similar categories for the definition of genocide.

Therefore, I would put forward my own definition on genocide phenomenon. From my point of view, genocide is the intent to eliminate or is the elimination of a victimized national, ethnical, racial or religious group within society (or societies) motivated by perpetrator group’s “highest” insular sociopolitical goals, planned and labeled by the perpetrator group’s sociopolitical elite, performed by special forces (army, militia, police, etc.) that the perpetrator group’s elite have at their disposal and by the perpetrator group itself in the form of direct participation in massacres or in the form of inaction during such a calamity. Here the elimination can mean both physical death of victim group’s members (i.e. killing members of the group) and aforementioned acts stated in the 2nd article of the above-stated UN Convention on Genocide (see above), that’s to say elimination is the ultimate end of the action, the means can be different. If we suppose that the perpetrator group’s (P) goal is to achieve happiness (H) and the group labels happiness within the confines of its members while rejecting any coexistence with the victim group (V) within the confines of the same society (S), we can see that P equates to H:

\[ H = S-V, \]
while \( P = S-V \) as well, so is \( H = S-V = P, \Rightarrow H = P \).

This equation \( H = S-V = P \) is the key driving force for genocidal intent, as the perpetrator equates its happiness to the society comprised of perpetrator’s members, excluding victim group.

In other words, we can call this equation \( H = S-V = P \) just genocidal intent. This genocidal intent develops gradually in society which takes them [society] to a massive destruction (psychological and physical). People simply become blind and construct their ideal society based on the absence and withdrawal of their own neighbors from their lives. The reasons for the formation and further
development of such intent can differ: they may depend on sociopolitical challenging circumstances, such as wars, economic crises and the lack of food, loser psychology (in a war, for instance) and the like. Since circumstances differ and sometimes it is difficult to gauge the sociopolitical motives and changes in particular place where a genocidal act occurred, it is extremely difficult to point out certain reasons and sort out certain types of genocides.

3. Types of genocide: The Armenian Genocide as a “good” precedent

It is evident that genocide is a broader concept, which involves social, political, psychological, economic, and ethnic features in it that is why to give its typology is a difficult undertaking. Furthermore, all genocides happen in complicated conditions which are difficult to gauge, and sometimes take us to misleading points because of the lack of information and evidences. Despite of the aforementioned complications, many authors suggest various types of genocides. I will try to prove that such types can hardly be distinguished in particular genocides and that all such types or some of them can be found in all genocides or in some of them. It is even difficult to differentiate motivations of single individuals for committing genocidal crimes and participating in massacres. For example, Roger W. Smith, a prominent expert in the field, posits that the pure types of genocide are institutional, retributive, utilitarian, monopolistic and ideological (Smith, 1999: 5).

I would argue that most genocides that occurred during the 20th century encompasses all the above-mentioned types except institutional one (Smith says the same). I would therefore stress that institutional genocide is a difficult concept to delineate as it can be truly explained as a horrible war tactic. As Smith notes there, the massacre of men, the enslavement of women and children, and, often, the razing of the countryside, were universal aspects of conquest; genocide was embedded in the very notion of warfare. As such, no explicit decision had to be made to commit genocide - it had become routinized. In part, institutional genocide was motivated by the desire to create terror, to display one’s power and to remove the possibility of future retaliation. Smith continues that institutional genocide was also due to a failure of political imagination: genocide was a substitute for politics (Smith, 1999: 6). If there was no politics, there were no highest insular sociopolitical goals. There was no genocidal intent. This is the very confusing point of this puzzle. Moreover, it derives from Smith’s words that the USA committed genocide in August 1945 when US forces used nuclear bombs against Japan. But the USA did not intend to eliminate Japanese people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki; this was a unique warfare tactic to defeat Japan and to force Japanese militaristic elite to capitulate. That is why unlike Smith I would eschew the term “institutional genocide” instead preferring the term “devastation”.

Retributive genocide can not occur as a pure type of genocide, but desire for revenge is found in any genocide. Smith argues that retribution may play a role in all genocide, but it does so mainly as a rationalization: it is a way of blaming the victim and that as a principal motive in genocide; retribution is rare (Smith, 1999: 5). Actually, this commonly accepted division between “what they are” and “what they have done” is difficult to puzzle out. If they exist (they are), then they do something-they exist, they live. Moreover, there is no example of any genocide where the massacre of an ethnical, national, racial or religious group was motivated by only “what they are” philosophy. The victim (V) must have done something (must have been in “uneasy” coexistence with perpetrator (P)). Moreover, in order to dehumanize the victim, perpetrator can propagate a false image of the victim as an enemy, spreading rumors of betrayals by the victim, mentioning about the victim’s economic wealth and so forth. So, if the victim has a wealth, has a good business, he (V) does something (bad), that is why it is a misleading task to differentiate between those two philosophies. One thing is obvious: all these will finally take to dehumanization. As Israel Charny states, dehumanization is the act of redefining the victims of genocide as “not being part of the human species (Charny, 1982: 207)”. For example, during the World War I Turkish population was blinded by its leaders that Armenians were rich, educated, were spies of Europe, were the reason for Ottoman Empire’s sufferings, that Armenians were helping Russian armies and the like which finally took Turkish society to the station of moral decadence. Armenian Genocide is an excellent proof of how “what they have done” philosophy takes the perpetrator to the stage of “what they are” and it is a vindication of impracticability of those philosophies as single entities.

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4 Actually, this is an infamous factor for developing a genocidal intent in defeated societies.

I would argue that utility is one of key driving forces for ordinary individuals in the perpetrator’s group. Those ordinary men, who are taking part in atrocities, can be easily motivated by greed rather than by ideology/nationalism, retribution or a takeover of power. This covetousness was prevalent during the Armenian Genocide, Rwandan Genocide, etc. The basic proposition contained in utilitarian genocide is that some must die so that others can live well (Smith, 1999: 7). Utilitarian genocide’s roots are found in the sixteenth century and thereafter when colonial domination and exploitation of indigenous people in the Americas, Australia, Tasmania, parts of Africa and elsewhere became pronounced. It has continued in the twentieth century, especially in Latin America, where Indians have been subjected to genocidal attacks in the name of progress and development. Apart from the more sadistic aspects of this kind of destruction, the object has been Indian land - for the timber it contains, the minerals that can be extracted and the cattle it can feed - and, at the turn of the nineteenth century, Indian labor to harvest, under conditions of forced labor, the sap of the rubber tree (Smith, 1999: 7). There are a lot of examples of such a motivation for mass killings. A couple of extracts from Straus’s interviews with some Hutu perpetrators in prisons who explain why they killed Tutsi people during the genocide in Rwanda.

a) What was the goal? Exterminate the Tutsis. And then what do people get? It was said that if the Tutsis were exterminated, then the Hutus would occupy their land (Rul-rengeri).
b) How does one explain to oneself the killing of women and children? If the women and children remained, they could claim the goods that had been looted (Kigali) (Straus, 2006: 164).

The Armenian Genocide is not an exception. A vast volume of archives is a rare glimpse into the key rationale of ordinary Kurdish and Turkish gangs who killed Armenians and looted their property and belongings. The same applies to the era of Balkan wars. One source excellently points out that the gangs participated in public plundering and the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress, Ottoman Empire) encouraged it in order to spark (motivate) the participation of gangs in plundering and atrocities: “The internal policy that [the CUP] wanted to put into effect was to plunder the property of the Christians with the aim of enriching the Muslims. At the same time, two different political considerations were merged. It was not merely the seizure and plundering of their property, it was the policy of thinning out the concentrations of Greeks and it was even described as such. In the name of this policy of thinning out...the first order was [performed] by volunteer armed gangs (fedai ceteler) created through the government’s special connivance in order to throw the Greeks out of the country. After publicly plundering all of their property and goods in the villages, on the streets, they would be sent packing to Greece under the watchful eye of the police or gendarmes, who did not prevent this and sometimes even participated. Afterward they plundered the permanent and movable property and possessions. Now and for whatever reason, this annihilation operation began in Edirne, and, not limiting itself to Edirne, then started to be implemented in a broader manner” (MMZC, Devre 3, içtima Senesi 5: 287, cited in Akçam, 2004: 59-157). It derives from this source of information that the gangs were not interested in politics and national values and were motivated by greed. Hitler also gives a huge significance to the land issue. Space, in his [Hitler] thinking, always referred to agriculturally usable land; the word is regularly employed in connection with the raising of food for the support of the population living on it. Hitler had no confidence in the possibility of increasing food production from available land. The struggle for existence in which the races of the world engaged, the basic element of life on earth, was fundamentally a struggle for space. In this struggle the stronger won, took the space, proliferated on that space, and then fought for additional space. Racial vitality and spatial expansion were directly related (Weinberg, 1995: 34). This interdependence between racial superiority and land issue also vindicates that all types of genocides, i.e. ideological and utilitarian in this particular example, are exercised by perpetrators to attract different sectors and groups of their own population to participate in atrocities. One can be interested in nationalistic values, another one can be motivated by greed, the third one may want to take revenge and so forth.

Monopolistic genocides are often characterized as the struggle for power. However, there is a close connection between monopolistic passion and anti-pluralism, the perpetrator group’s desire to get rid of the victim group: H=S-V=P. Here the perpetrator group struggles not only for the monopolization of power, but also for the “monopolization of the society” as well. All this will finally take to “us-them” split in plural societies. That is why monopolistic genocides come to life on the basis of anti-pluralism. Actually, the 20th century’s genocides occurred in plural societies. Leo Kuper

6 Please note that Edirne’s original, Greek name is Adrianopolis.
labeled “plural societies” as the “structural base for genocide (Kuper, 1981: 57)”. Plural society is the very battlefield for the struggle for power as power can mean security for different ethnic, national, racial and religious groups within plural society. It is apparent that one must first seize power and then commit genocide. Smith even goes further and argues that whatever the shape of the regime, the most frequent source of genocide in the twentieth century has been the struggle for the monopolization of power (Smith, 1999: 7). Rummel argues, according to what he calls the “power principle,” that the more power a government has, the more it can act arbitrarily according to the whims and desires of the elite, and the more it will make war on others and murder its foreign and domestic subjects. The more constrained the power of governments, the less it will be aggressive towards others (Rummel, 1994: 1-2). Monopolizing power will let the “powerful” group implement its sociopolitical goals for the achievement of happiness (H). This axiom applies to the Armenian Genocide and other genocides as well. For example, in the summer of 1910, the disillusioned CUP leaders met and accepted the fact that the program which they had undertaken to unite the Empire’s various nationalities was now bankrupt. What they had learned in this brief period was that “[t]he spread of nationalism among the subject peoples of the Empire,... ended forever the ‘Ottomanist’ dream of the free, equal and peaceful association of peoples in a common loyalty to the dynastic sovereign of a multi-national, multi-denominational empire (Lewis, 218, cited in Akçam, 2004: 59-157)”. This archival material vindicates that besides being motivated by the monopolization of power, CUP leaders accepted a plan of monopolizing the Ottoman society and getting rid of victims (V). Moreover, “on July 21, 1910, the second anniversary of the Young Turk Revolution, the CUP organ Tanin carried a sort of state of the union address by the CUP to the nation at large. It gave a general assessment of the policies of the previous two years and officially declared their policy of Ottomanism to be bankrupt. Furthermore, the CUP confessed that its measures to bring about the union of the different communities had failed, owing to the excessive zeal it had shown in the first two years of constitutional rule. It now recognized the opposition of the ethnic communities to Ottomanism and would therefore leave them alone. The Committee [that is, the CUP] would continue to pursue the cause of unity in a different way, namely by concentrating all its energy of the material and educational development of the Empire, hoping thereby to unite all the elements through a community of interests (Ahmad, 84, cited in Akçam, 2004: 59-157). CUP elite were convinced that it was impossible to achieve happiness (H) in a plural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, as the insular nationalistic passions of minorities (Armenians, Greeks, etc.) were the hindrances to the development of the empire and the latter would finally collapse. And since it was accepted among the Muslim population of the empire that Christians were rich and educated, those (Christians) were considered as challengers to power and moreover had close ties with European Christian states, the empire’s exploiters. This is one of the reasons for which CUP leaders accepted the horrible plan to homogenize Anatolia and rejected any idea of coexistence, let alone the possibility to share state power with Christians. They wanted to get rid of Armenians, Greeks, etc. The Greek Prime Minister Venizelos claimed at the Paris Peace Conference that 300.000 Greeks had been annihilated and that another 450.000 had escaped to Greece (Avcıoğlu, 1986: 1138, cited in Akçam, 2004: 146). Monopolistic passions and anti-pluralism thus became rampant trends in Ottoman society during the CUP government.

The desire for power and anti-pluralism were prevalent in other genocides of the twentieth century as well. As Hinton points out, “an analogous process of manufacturing difference may be seen in most modern genocides, including the one that took place in Cambodia. The “Who are ‘We’?” speech, for example, was broadcast by Phnom Penh domestic radio in April 1978, as the Khmer Rouge purges were in full swing and border tensions with Vietnam were escalating. Like other Khmer Rouge documents, this speech attempts to manufacture difference by crystallizing the “clear line” between “us and the enemy.” The broadcast differentiates “us” and the “enemy” in terms of “political, ideological, organizational, sentimental and traditional views and politics.” Friends and enemies are distinguished by political consciousness, or the degree to which a person is “mindful” of the party “line” and “standpoint.” Group traits follow from this premise. “Enemy” groups, ranging from imperialist lackeys to the “feudal-capitalist/landowning class,” are those having a strong “private stand.”(Hinton, 2005: 213). Similar monopolistic and anti-pluralistic features can be found in the genocide that took place in former Yugoslavia both during the Second World War and after the collapse of the socialist block. Here perpetrators were simultaneously struggling for the “monopolization of power and monopolization of society.” Dulić points out that “after the invasion and dis-
membremment of Yugoslavia in April 1941, Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH). The NDH was headed by the Poglavnik (Leader) Ante Pavelić and the Fascist Ustasha organization, but there were several nationally exclusive political and military organizations that fought for supremacy within its borders. Besides the Ustashe and their Ustasha Corps, these were the regular Croatian Home Guard, the German Wehrmacht, the Second Army of the Italian occupation forces, and the Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland (Jugoslovenska vojska u otdžbini, JVUO) under Dragoljub “Draža” Mihajlović (better known as one of several Chetnik organizations). Although there was considerable mistrust between the Italians and the Ustashe on the one hand, and between the Germans and the JVUO on the other, these collective actors eventually joined forces in order to destroy the People’s Liberation Movement (Dulić, 2006: 259). All the combating groups were struggling for controlling the state power and for getting rid of other groups.

Dulić continues that “the motives for committing mass killings in Yugoslavia ranged from primarily military objectives of acquiring control over an occupied territory in order to exploit its resources, to ideologically motivated killings and deportations that aimed at ethnically purifying territories exclusively claimed by an ethnic group (Dulić, 2006: 259)”. Ethnically purify territories means to get rid of other groups, in other words, monopolize society. Therefore this also shows how difficult it is to sort out certain types of genocides. The monopolistic passions and antipluralistic currents strengthened after the collapse of the socialist block. M.A. Hoare gives the gloomy picture of the former Yugoslavia in 1990s: “The second period of genocidal crime occurred in the 1990s, as Yugoslavia went through its break-up. The instances of genocide or related crimes included: the persecution, mass killings and expulsions of Croatian civilians in Croatia by the reconstituted Yugoslav People’s Army (Jugoslovenska narodna armija, JNA) and Serb paramilitary forces, during their assault on Croatia in 1991-1992; the systematic persecution, mass killings and expulsion of Bosnian civilians (Croats, Muslims and non-nationalist Serbs), by the JNA, Army of the Serb Republic and Serb paramilitary forces during their assault on Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992-1995 (alone of all the war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, some of these war crimes have been ruled by the international courts to have been genocidal); the persecution, killing and expulsion, involving some large-scale massacres, of Muslim civilians by Croatian and Bosnian Croat forces, during their own assault on Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992-1994; the persecution and killing of Serb and Croat civilians by Bosnian army forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during their counteroffensives of 1992-1995; the widespread killings of Serb civilians by Croatian forces in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina during their final counteroffensives in the summer and fall of 1995; the systematic mass killing and expulsion of Albanian civilians by regular Serbian police and military forces in Kosovo during their campaign against the Kosovo Liberation Army (Ushtria Çlirimore e Kosovës, UÇK) and the Kosovo civilian population in 1998–1999, which were escalated following the NATO intervention in 1999; and the large-scale reprisals against Serb civilians by the UÇK and Albanian civilians in Kosovo (Hoare, 2010: 1199).” The former Yugoslav societal groups were struggling for power and for societal purification. They labeled their happiness without giving place to others in their lives.

Struggle for power and antipluralism in plural societies also “visited” Africa. To understand how important it was for Africans to keep power and how “difficult” it was for them to leave their “powerful” posts, just a couple of reminiscences of African history. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where one-party and no-party states remained the norm throughout the 1980s, political liberalization has been widespread. Although progress has been less consistent (and usually less deep) than in much of Latin America, relatively open multiparty elections are becoming common. In March 1991, Benin’s Nicéphore Soglo became the first candidate in the history of mainland Africa to defeat an incumbent president in a democratic election.

Even more dramatic was the November 1991
defeat of Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia’s president for the first twenty-five years of its independence (Donnelly, 1997: 14). Similar struggle for power, but with horrible results, occurred in Rwanda, commonly known as a plural society. However S. Straus argues that there was no old historical hatred between tribes in Rwanda. He points out: “First, tribe is the wrong register for describing Rwanda’s ethnic categories. Rwanda has three commonly recognized ethnic groups - Hutus, Tutsis, and Twas. Many debate the exact proportion of each, but the Hutus comprised 84-90 percent of Rwanda’s population before the genocide, Tutsis were 9-15 percent and Twas were 1 percent (Straus, 2006: 19)”. “Hutus and Tutsis speak the same language (Kinyarwanda) they belong to the same clans; they live in the same regions and, in most areas, the same neighborhoods; they have the same cultural practices and myths; and they have the same religions. Many also intermarry (Straus, 2006: 20)”. It derives from Straus’s piece of work that these tribes could hardly fight each other because of anti-pluralism only. They must be motivated by greed, monopolistic passions, retribution, etc. Straus continues: “The principles of the Hutu Revolution guided official policy, which meant that Hutus dominated the government and military, often to the exclusion of Tutsis. Rwanda’s first president, Grégoire Kayibanda, who ruled from 1962 to 1973, was more discriminatory towards Tutsis than his successor. Under Kayibanda, there was a series of anti-Tutsi massacres in the early 1960s and in 1973. Rwanda’s second president, Juvénal Habyarimana, who ruled from 1973 to 1994, diminished anti-Tutsi discrimination. Even so, Habyarimana maintained strong limits on Tutsi advancement through a system of regional and ethnic quotas (Straus, 2006: 23)”. Here we see the struggle for power and the exclusion of Tutsis from important posts in the government. Straus’s interviews with Hutu perpetrators (in prisons, after the genocide) vindicate that the power was of great significance for Rwandans and that their leader (president) was indivisible part of their lives and significance for Rwandans and that their leader (the genocide) vindicate that the power was of great importance.

When Habyarimana was killed, people said, “It’s over. Since they killed Habyarimana, now all the Hutus will be killed (Gitarama)”. With Habyarimana’s death, I thought that Tutsis were the enemy… Why? Because, during the war, when the Inkotanyi attacked, they only killed Hutus. Before Habyarimana died, did you think that Tutsis were the enemy? With the 1990 war, I began to think that Tutsis were the enemy because during this period I saw that Hutus were killed. This idea stayed in my head until the period when Habyarimana died. Could you have killed a Tutsi before the death of the president? No. Even if Tutsis were the enemy? No. Why not? With the war, I’ve heard that [Fred] Rwigema [the former RPF leader] wanted to take power and we did not think all Tutsis were enemies, but with the death of Habyarimana, we thought that we would be killed next. Why? With the attack [before 1994], the elders said that they [the RPF] might bring back the monarchy but when the Inkotanyi spoke, you saw they wanted to take power, not bring back monarchy. Because of this, I had no conflict with my Tutsi neighbors, but all the same the idea was in my head with the beginning of the war. But with the death of Habyarimana, we saw they were the enemy…. We were truly affected. There was even calm. Nothing was heard on the hills. Everyone was affected. Describe your mood. I saw that my parents and my neighbors had no peace. They asked themselves, “The Tutsis will take power, where will we go?” (Ruhengeri) (Straus, 2006: 156).

Respondents claim that President Habyarimana guaranteed their safety as the head of state, and they describe an affectionate relationship to the president. Habyarimana was their “father” or “parent”. Perpetrators identified with the president as their own; he seemed to symbolize Hutus (Straus, 2006: 156). Nearly two-thirds of the respondents claimed that the president’s assassination was the most important cause of the genocide. They gave other reasons, such as elites, “desire for power” and evil “satanic” forces, but the president’s death is the top reason the respondents gave for the genocide (Straus, 2006: 157). Both the interviews and Straus’s conclusions show that the vast majority of Hutus killed Tutsis for the fear of losing power and being killed. Habyarimana was the psychological base for their daily lives. They felt unsafe after he had been assassinated.

Ideological genocides encompass all the aforementioned types either, but here I would underpin the idea of loser psychology. The shadow of the ideological genocide nests in defeated societies which hitherto were powerful but now are neglected and exploited. The veracity of this argument rests on the experience of history, such as the German fiasco in the World War I, Ottoman Empire’s defeats by European states, Russian
Empire and Balkan states, Cambodia’s invasion by the Vietnamese, the exploitation by “capitalists,” and the like. In order to cope with difficult times, people in such societies look for ideologies and support insane ideas, which sometimes simply lead society to schizophrenia. For example, in an article Gökalp wrote in 1911 for the Yeni Hayat journal, he claimed that “the ‘super’ men imagined by the German philosopher Nietzsche are the Turks. They are the new men [who appear] every century (asir). Therefore, new life will spring forth from Turkishness, which is the source of all of their youthfulness (Ulken, 1992: 310, cited in Akçam, 2004: 138).” This is a vindication of degradation of the Ottoman society which felt neglected and was waiting for a messianic change. Another example of blindness and arrogance of some members of society who accept things as they want: “Even though the Turks performed the earliest and greatest services to world civilization through their language, science and arts, there have been efforts - behind which lie a variety of purposes - to forget all of these civilized contributions and to unjustly show them as idle and insignificant in the view of history.”

Namık Kemal argued that “we can reach an understanding if the Christians desire our domination. It is very natural, because since we have not allowed them into the government, they could not possess the right to complain about it (Kuntay, 1949: 186, cited in Akçam, 2004: 75).” And Kemal established this idea on a clearly racial basis: “Because there is both a swirl of populations and abilities within the Ottoman collective, the Turks, who possess excellence and virtues and qualities such as ‘breadth of comprehension’ (vus’at-i havsala), ‘sobriety’ (itidal-i dem), ‘patience and calm-headedness’ (tahammul ve sukunet), take pride of place (Karal, 296, cited in Akçam, 2004: 75).” This also tries to prove the superiority of Turks, which is why “their dominance over Christians is natural”. Or “the Muslims did not want equality with the Christians because they felt the latter undeserving of the highest social positions that had been their private domain (Akçam, 2004: 81).” Here Christians are called undeserving human beings. Yusuf Akçura wrote that “Muslims, and especially the Ottoman Turks, did not want to mingle and socialize with the Christians. Because their 600-year domination would legally come to an end, and thereby they would fall to a level of equality with the raya (protected subject peoples), whom they have grown accustomed to seeing as under their domination.

The earliest and most tangible result of this was that it would be necessary to take the raya into the bureaucracy and the army, over which the Turks had, until then, a monopoly. Expressed differently, it would be necessary to enter into a field of endeavor which was considered by aristocrats as comparatively less difficult and honorable, to embark upon industry and commerce: two areas to which they were not accustomed and which they held in contempt (Akçura, 28, cited in Akçam, 2004: 81).” All these sources try to prove that Turkish domination over Christians was a natural thing. That is the splitting mechanism of “us and them,” and everybody is aware of the hell that this “us and them” road takes a society to.

Hitler “does not lose the race”:

“According to Hitler’s doctrine, the history of mankind can be understood in terms of racial analysis, that is, in terms of the supposed racial components of different societies. The rise or fall of Rome can thus be understood as the products of the racial purity of early and the racial mixture of later Roman society. The political division of France in the age of the French Revolution reflects the division between the Romanic, that is, racially ‘Westic’ lower classes, and the Nordic descendants of the Franks who had unified and organized the country. The cultural accomplishments of civilizations are the product of their racial composition - the great artists of Renaissance times were all Nordics whose works reflect their own appearance, while the monstrosities of modern art only mirror the appearance of their creators. Botticelli must have been as slim as his famous Venus, Rubens must have been as corpulent as the figures he painted, and Picasso presumably had three eyes (Weinberg, 1995: 33).”

Such schizophrenic perceptions finally take the society to another major calamity.

Similar moral-psychological degradation is visible in the former Yugoslavia during the Second World War. The Ustashe occasionally referred to a degenerated “Serbian breed” that was incapable of productive work (Hrvatski narod, 19 July 1941), and Serbs were depicted as a mortal threat to the Croatian nation. Mainly, Ustasha propaganda emphasized something of a “clash of civilization” with the Serbian “dregs and garbage of the Balkans” (Hrvatski narod, 7 July 1941), who due to a
cultural tradition embedded in “Byzantinism” and Orthodox Christianity could never live in a common state with Croats.

Cambodian communists even went further and tried to change the language of daily communication. In Khmer language, within the family siblings refer and address one another based on age, with younger siblings called b’áun and elders bang. Many Cambodian parents begin to teach their infants to politely greet visitors and family elders even before the child can walk (Hinton, 2005: 188). However, the Khmer Rouge, impressed with communist ideology, intervened in this part of life as well. Seng, a Kompong Cham civil servant who was an “old person” during Democratic Kampuchea, recalled:

“The Khmer Rouge created a new order of life and a new morality that was based on the peasant class. For example, their style of dress didn’t have color; it was [modeled after] the plain black clothes that farmers wore when working in the fields. They also governed our speech and created new ways of talking. For example, city people used to say words like keng (‘sleep’), nhám (‘to eat’), and so forth. The Khmer Rouge replaced nhám with [the peasant class word] houp and keng with [the peasant class word] samrák. Everyone slept/rested (samrák) and ate houp, ‘big people’, ‘little people’ and those having rank (bon sakti). In addition, we learned that we were expected to boast about and praise the goodness of the Revolutionary Organization and Communist Party of Kampuchea. Angkar did things because it was clairvoyant, was alert and intelligent, had a brilliant party line, and [guided us with its] correct leadership. Thus the people had to speak [Angkar’s] language fluently. This was the way in which they controlled our consciousness (satiaramma) and minds (Hinton, 2005: 190).

Seng’s comments illustrate how the Khmer Rouge transformed linguistic registers in accordance with their communist ideology and exaltation of the peasant class (Hinton, 2005: 190). The changes were so visible in Cambodian society that even Pol Pot was sometimes referred to as “elder brother number one” (bang ti muoy) (Hinton, 2005: 190). They (Khmer Rouge) tried to control everything, an abnormal desire which would eventually lead the society to unbearable sickness. Another example on how this fake ideology intervenes in the lives of ordinary men and women in Cambodian society:

“If we stand on collectivism, even if some objective attracts us, we will have the time to consider. Having thought about it, we realize that we are about to slide into the private; we run back immediately to the collective... Therefore, we must hasten to stand on collectivism immediately. And do not stand on the dividing line. Stand deeply on collectivism. Get ourselves ready, immediately sit on collectivism’s chair. Scrutinize each problem. We must scrutinize ourselves; is there a stand on collectivism yet? Sometimes we say we are already standing on collectivism, but the result of solving the problem affects collectivism. There, this stand is not yet correct; our line of solving is not yet valid. We must reevaluate our-stand. Morality is the same. For example, if we are living with a woman. As time goes on, the material atmosphere leads to the development of sentiment. If we stand on the collective, we must manage the solution immediately. But if we just expand and strengthen the management, remaining attached to this woman; this is a strong private stand. A strong private stand by a certain point will have affected morality... And say that someone offered the private chair to us to sit in. No one gave it to us. Because the private chair is everywhere around us. We must look for the collective chair and grasp it tightly (Hinton, 2005: 196).

That loser psychology rests on reminiscences of history, good days in the past versus harsh reality of the present. Taner Akçam argues that “Turkish national identity arose as a natural reaction to continual humiliation (Akçam, 2004: 67)”. Turks, having vivid memories of the good past, now faced nasty present, which spurred the establishment of nationalistic passions as a weapon against own failures. Another author points out that

“while the Turks possessed a feeling of superiority [i.e. before the 19th century], they did not know they were Turks... The Turks began to understand that they were Turks only when they were totally engulfed with feelings of inferiority... Turkism means helplessness for the Turks... It is a forlorn and inescapable flight to understand that they were Turks only when they were totally engulfed with feelings of inferiority... Turkism means helplessness for the Turks... It is a forlorn and inescapable flight from a sense of inferiority (Kucuk, 23, cited in Akçam, 2004: 67)”.

Their dominance over Christian states in Europe was now eliminated, their country hitherto being exploited, European states were intervening in the state’s domestic affairs and so forth.
Turkish society felt ignorance from the European and American side. In a bulletin dated 10 January 1917, for instance, which was issued with the goal of encouraging American participation in the war, the authors describe the Allied war aims thus:

“The Entente states are conscious that they have not fought for selfish aims. Above all...they are fighting in order to preserve truth and humanity. The war aims of the Entente principally and necessarily include...the rescue of fallen peoples from the bloody tyranny of the Turks and the eviction from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, which is totally foreign to European civilization (Avcıoğlu, 1981: 34, cited in Akçam, 2004: 71-72)”. 

Turkish society, thus, was considered foreign to European values, so it had to be withdrawn from the borders of Europe. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George always mentioned the Turks in a tone of disdain and loathing. In November 1914 he characterized them as “a cancer on humanity, a wound that has worked its way into the flesh of the earth that it has misruled”. He characterized a potential Turkish victory as “the torch of pillage, cruelty and murder...that would be carried from Asia to Europe.” Toward the end of the war, in a speech delivered on 29 June 1917, Lloyd George said that the Turks had turned Mesopotamia, the ancient cradle of civilization, into a wasteland, and Armenia into a graveyard, adding that the areas of this cradle of civilization “shall not be left to the incendiary and destructive brutality of the Turks (Avcıoğlu, 1981: 35-36, cited in Akçam, 2004: 72)”. Turks thought that they were ignored, they were afraid of retaliation. They were now fragile and would not be able to fight Allies. That is why they needed a reconstruction of their society. All these feelings spark the creation of nationalistic organizations which will implement nationalistic projects and prove their superiority over other groups in their society.

“The Turkish Strength [Society] is the straight and strong stream which springs forth and flows outward from Karakurum, and floods the whole world with its raging torrents. It is the unbroken sword. It will resurrect and reinvigorate the power of the Turk, which in its time left no stronghold standing, but which is today fallen and dispersed. It will cause the Turk to proudly raise his broad and pure countenance anew. It will cause his sharp, undaunted eye to shine again, his broad chest to thrust outward in pride. It shall be the custodian of the Asso-

This is a call for “wake up”, encouragement for revenge, “proof” of the superiority of the Turkish nation. Turkish nationalism ignored and forgot other nations in the Ottoman Empire and their contribution to the country’s economy. “In those days, meaning after 1278 (1861), when [the newspaper] Tasvir-i Efkâr began to be published, the obvious answer to the question of who constituted of the Ottoman nation was Turks (Akçura, 29, cited in Akçam, 2004: 74)”. The others in such a big multinational empire were simply excluded. Turkish nationalists tried to rationalize their insane actions.

“The question of the deportations was, as you know, an event which set the world in an uproar, and which caused us all to be perceived as murderers. Even before this was done, we knew that the Christian world would not stomach this, and would turn all their wrath and anger upon us because of it. [But] why have we attached the title of murderer to ourselves? Why have we gotten involved in such an immense and problematic cause (dava)? These things were done for the sole purpose of ensuring the future of our homeland, which we know is more beloved and sacred than our own lives”.12

This fake patriotism for them is the rationale for deportations and atrocities. The loser psychology played an enormous role in the emotional upheaval of the German society.

“More important, perhaps, was the psychological disorganization produced by defeat. Unaware of the real situation, the German people had seen their hopes tumble from the vision of victory to the reality of collapse in a few months of 1918. After the glory of a powerful state, after the immense sacrifices of war, their world had crashed down around them (Weinberg, 1995: 51)”. 

German people were disappointed with the harsh realities of their lives and started to look for the...

11 Words spoken by the Responsible Delegate (Murahapus-r Mes’ûr) of the Turkish Strength Society, Kuzzuoğlu Tahein Bey, and quoted in Zafer Toprak, 1985: 531, 533, cited in Akçam, 2004: 74.

messiah. The messiah came and constructed an “us-them” philosophy. “The most infamous instance of this lethal process of manufacturing difference occurred in Nazi Germany. Drawing on everything from archaeological evidence to theories of race, the Nazis divided the population into a hierarchy of bio-social types with the Aryan race at the top. Jews, in contrast, were placed at the bottom of the hierarchy and viewed as a dangerous source of contamination. The Nazis propagated a number of discriminatory policies against the Jews and other devalued groups. Concentration camps became the ultimate institution for manufacturing difference, as Jews were stripped of the last vestiges of their humanity (clothing, hair, names, free will), treated like animals (beaten, verbally abused, and made to perform dehumanizing acts), and forced to live in horrendous conditions that led to starvation, disease, stealing to survive, and death. By subjecting Jews to such circumstances the Nazis attempted to turn them into beings who were as Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda proclaimed, like “disease”, “bacilli”, “thieves”, “lice”, “sub-humans”, “parasites”, and “alien bodies” (Vann Nath, 1998: 107, cited in Hinton, 2005: 212). “And once such difference had been manufactured, genocide was made to seem like a justifiable ‘purification’ process necessary for the protection of the health of the German national body (Hinton, 2005: 212)”. This “us-them” philosophy took the German society to the stage of genocidal intent: H=S-V=P.

All the aforementioned examples illustrate the complicated nature of genocide. All types of genocides are interdependent and sometimes concomitant and genocide studies must be dealt with on case to case basis. I would argue here that the Armenian Genocide has all the above-mentioned genocidal characteristics. Turkish nationalism wanted to take revenge on the Armenians because from their point of view the Ottoman Empire was bedeviled by Armenians, by their ties with the Christian world, by their wealth and educated elite. Turkish gangs were motivated by greed and looted Armenian houses, churches and schools. Turkish elite (CUP) had monopolistic passions and did their best to get rid of Armenian presence. They could homogenize Anatolia; they could “solve” the Armenian Question. If we use the data on the Armenian population before the World War, we can find vindications of anti-pluralism and desire to get rid of Armenians. Turkish nationalism could deal with 2.100.000 Armenians in a “right way”, by sending them to the “hell.”

The 2.100.000 Armenians in 1912 were distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six provinces of Turkish Armenia</td>
<td>1.018.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripheral areas of the six provinces</td>
<td>145.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cilicia</td>
<td>407.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Anatolia and European Turkey</td>
<td>530.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The patriarchal statistics showed that in the core region, Armenians formed 38.9 percent of the population, with Turks 25.4 percent, and Kurds 16.3 percent. The Christian element, which also included Nestorians and Greeks, formed a plurality of 45.2 percent (Hovannisian, 1997: 235). Turks were also motivated by the superiority of Turkish nation and considered their power and dominance over Armenians (and Christians) natural. Those characteristics were then used by other perpetrators in the crimes of the 20th century, including Holocaust, genocides in the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Nigeria and the like. The Armenian Genocide was the “good” precedent for other horrors of the 20th century. The ignorance of the Armenian victims was the clue for other perpetrators to commit genocidal acts without being afraid of punitive measures.

4. Conclusion

I tried to give an explanation to genocide phenomenon in this short article. Historical evidences are useful to deepen knowledge on genocide phenomenon, to delineate its reasons and gauge the various types of that crime. I proposed my own definition of genocide concept, and tried to prove that all motivations for genocide (greed, retaliation, struggle for power, anti-pluralism, ideological constructions) are “motivated by happiness” as the ultimate end for their actions. CUP leaders constructed their happiness excluding Armenians and Christians from society, Nazi leaders labeled the German society without Jews, Cambodians envisaged their happy future in communist ideology and tried to get rid of “capitalists and foreign enemies”, people in former Yugoslavia thought of a happy society of their own excluding their neighbors, Rwandan Hutus “realized” that they would be happy and safe without Tutsis, etc. I tried to prove that the Armenian Genocide had all the above mentioned characteristics for genocidal types and thus became a precedent for other genocides of the 20th century. Last but not least,
punitive measures and the presence of the international community were given a great importance as the main hindrances to genocides. But today we are again facing similar problems, unfortunately.

Today’s conflicts in the Sudans, Syria and other hot regions of the world must be signals for the international community to take action and define preventive mechanisms and punitive measures in order to find ways out of political morass and prevent horrific havocs from happening again. Any perpetrator must be afraid of punishments by international community. International community should act as a unified body to make the perpetrator surrender and put a halt to crimes against humanity. This also applies to recognition of genocides, particularly the Armenian Genocide. Denial is the continuation of the genocide on psychological basis. Up until now Turkish government denies the fact of genocide, which itself is already a vindication of the absence of unity among the members of international community. The international relations sometimes are equated to anarchy. Some believed that Armenians cannot obtain justice so long as they lack a nation that can exert political pressure at an international level. This belief can apply to the life of savannah. Are we, the human-beings, living in a huge savannah either? Why do we witness genocide in Sudan in the 21st century? It is because of a lack of will. “The ghosts of Rwanda”, Eric Reeves concludes, “are stirring ominously in Darfur (Reeves, 13 November 2005)”, 13 What should the victims in Sudan do? Surrender? As Helen Fein points out, “the surrender of victims in genocidal situations does not avoid their mass murder but expedites it (Fein, 21, cited in Dulić, 2006: 259)”. That is why it is of great importance to act seriously, throw away insular passions and prevent horrific crimes. As Samantha Power has argued, politicians will act to stop mass killing when the political cost of inaction outweighs the risk of acting (Power, 2002: 510-511). But our world is so interdependent now that inaction truly costs more than false political calculus. Unpunished killings can be contagious and harm the very international community. I am happy that huge progress is being made now. On 2 July, UN member states began intense negotiations (though currently unsuccessful, but with hope) towards the world’s first Arms Trade Treaty, which will seek to establish the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons. Achieving a comprehensive, robust and effective treaty will require a delicate balancing act (Chatham House, 28 June 2012). This treaty will hinder perpetrators from buying weapons and will decrease the possibilities of genocides, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Though it is extremely difficult to bring this treaty into life, I do believe the states will take into account, under the pressures of globalizing world, the fact that the cost of peace and security outweighs the cost of profits from selling weapons. The 21st century will be the era of great changes, the way to a safer planet.

Further researches and proposals are necessary to enrich genocide studies and make them available to broader sectors of international society, i.e. students, academics, just interested people who want to make a step forward in prevention of genocides and who want a secure planet.

13 Unlike Rwanda (26,000 km² and 8 million people), Darfur covers a huge territory (450,000 km² and 3.5 to 4 million people).
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Hrvatski narod, 31 July 1941

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Further readings


Genocid: namjera, motivi i tipovi

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Genocid je komplicirani društveni, politički i psihološki fenomen. Niz istraživača je pokazao kako su tipovi genocida međusobno isprepleteni te se ne pojavljuju u čistim oblicima. Ovaj članak tvrdi kako je psihologija gubitnika jedan od glavnih faktora za razvoj genocidne namjere u društvu. Pritisnuto grubom stvarnošću, društvo se osjeća poraženim i odbačenim u međunarodnoj zajednici te traži načina za izrači iz psihološke kaljuže. Ekstremističke strasti i pokreti počinju prevladavati u takvim društvima što naposljetku ljudi dovodi do suludih uvjerenja koja se temelje na potrebi osvete nad drugima kako bi se potvrdila vlastita superiornost te na iluziji kako je pronađeno rješenje za sve probleme: ubiti druge te ih odstraniti iz društva. Članak također pokazuje kako je konačni cilj takve genocidne namjere postizanje sreće. Kapacitet društva da svojim članovima pruži zadovoljenje njihovih potreba (sigurnost, hrana, psihološki oporavak, itd.) učiniti će ljude sretnima, dok će neuspjehi proširiti tmurno ozračje u društvu. Želja ljudi za oporavkom od velikih poraza i trenutačnom postizanju sreće zbunjuje ih te dovodi do krivih procjena koje se, nažalost, lako ugnježđuju u mislima članova društva te potiču podjelu na „nas i njih” u društvu što potiče na genocidne namjere.

Ključne riječi: genocid, psihologija gubitnika, sreća, međunarodna zajednica