

This article was downloaded by: [Ondokuz Mayıs Universitesi]

On: 11 November 2014, At: 09:07

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Terrorism and Political Violence

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ftpv20>

Rethinking the Role of Ideology in Mass Atrocities

Jonathan Leader Maynard ^a

^a New College; and Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

Published online: 25 Feb 2014.

To cite this article: Jonathan Leader Maynard (2014) Rethinking the Role of Ideology in Mass Atrocities, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 26:5, 821-841, DOI: [10.1080/09546553.2013.796934](https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2013.796934)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2013.796934>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

Rethinking the Role of Ideology in Mass Atrocities

JONATHAN LEADER MAYNARD

New College; and Department of Politics and International Relations,
University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

There is a widespread sense amongst theorists of genocide and other violent atrocities that ideology matters. But in spite of this agreement all is not well with actual efforts to theorise ideology's role. Theoretical and empirical coverage has been uneven, and there has been little if any effort to incorporate theories and research from the actual specialist field of contemporary ideology studies. As a result, overarching theoretical accounts of the role ideology plays in violent atrocities remain limited and problematic. This article aims to encourage theorists to think about ideology in a more systematic and productive fashion by analysing four questions: (a) what do we mean by ideology?; (b) who, in cases of atrocity, might be relevantly affected by ideology?; (c) how do these people come to be influenced by atrocity-justifying ideologies?; and (d) how might ideology encourage these people to commit, or permit, mass violence? In discussing these four questions, I aim to clear up a number of misconceptions or vagaries that frequent current analyses of ideology in works on atrocity and political violence. I ultimately offer a suggestive account of six recurring "justificatory mechanisms" which collectively describe some of the common features of ideology's role across cases of mass atrocity.

Keywords atrocity, dehumanisation, genocide, ideology, justification, mass killing, mechanism, violence, virtue

In the study of genocide and other forms of mass atrocity there is a widespread sense that ideology matters. "Few scholars," observes Benjamin Valentino, "have failed to comment on the central role that ideology has played in some of the twentieth century's bloodiest mass killings."¹ In a recent theoretical survey, Scott Straus identifies ideology as one of the two most important factors (alongside armed conflict) emphasised in contemporary explanations of mass political violence,² and a wide range of atrocity-theorists have certainly given ideology, or related phenomena like "world-views" or "myths," a central role in their work.³ Such perspectives have been echoed in the policy-world, with intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations also making frequent reference to the role of ideological phenomena.⁴

But despite these sentiments, all is not well with efforts to theorise the role ideology plays in mass atrocities. Core concepts have typically been defined vaguely, if at all, and it is not clear that leading theorists actually share a common understanding of what ideology means, let alone how it relates to other closely implicated phenomena.

Jonathan Leader Maynard is the Rank-Manning Junior Research Fellow in Social Sciences at New College, University of Oxford

Address correspondence to Jonathan Leader Maynard, New College, University of Oxford, Holywell Street, Oxford OX1 3BN, UK. E-mail: jonathan.leadermaynard@politics.ox.ac.uk

Scholars have sometimes assumed that a focus on ideology must involve an emphasis of *case-specific* ideologies,⁵ and as a result, comparative accounts of the *common* ideological foundations of mass violence remain limited. Even those that do exist have been uneven in their theoretical coverage. There is abundant cross-case research on dehumanisation and hate speech,⁶ for example, but other violence-promoting ideological factors have been postulated in a rather scattergun fashion. “Nationalist myths,” “narratives,” “hate propaganda,” “identities,” “purity,” “racism,” “revolutionary visions,” “scapegoating,” “militarism,” “moral exclusion,” “utopias”—all of these elements and more have been suggested as potential pieces of the ideological jigsaw surrounding atrocities. But theorists have produced few holistic accounts of how these different pieces fit together. So whilst the present literature contains many points of deep insight, we still lack a shared conceptual and theoretical framework for thinking about ideology’s role in mass atrocities. This undercuts the value of what we do know, undermining theorists’ efforts to pool research gains and resolve analytical disagreements. But it also obscures what we do not know. Without some attempt to build holistic pictures of ideology’s role in atrocities, we are less likely to spot areas where investigation has been relatively shallow. It has rarely been noticed, for instance, that whilst theorists have commented extensively on the ways ideologies depict *victims* so as to justify violence (portraying them as inhuman, dangerous, or guilty, for example), they have given far less consideration to ideological representations of *perpetrators*.⁷

Such problems have been exacerbated by an underlying failing. Despite their frequent affirmations of ideology’s importance, genocide and atrocity scholars have generally failed to engage with the specialist academic literature on ideology, ideas, and related phenomena.⁸ Leading ideological theorists of recent decades—such as Michael Freeden, Teun van Dijk, Quentin Skinner, John Jost, Raymond Boudon, or John Thompson—make almost no appearance in texts on atrocities.⁹ This is understandable up to a point. “Ideology-studies” is a fragmented field, and theorists of atrocities cannot be masters of everything. But the general failure to ground their discussions of ideology in the topic’s established literature is problematic, and leaves atrocity-theorists bereft of relevant methodological, theoretical, and empirical research.

This article aims to address these problems and encourage theorists of atrocity to think about ideology more effectively. I do this by discussing four key questions:

- (a) What do we mean by ideology?
- (b) Who, in cases of atrocity, might be relevantly affected by ideology?
- (c) How do these people come to be influenced by atrocity-justifying ideologies?
- (d) How might ideology encourage these people to commit, or permit, mass violence?

At present, atrocity-theorists’ answers to these four questions tend to take the form of unspoken and sometimes dubious assumptions. A more explicit and systematic consideration is needed. My aims here are theoretical and preliminary: I am primarily interested in offering a better *framework* for analysing ideology’s role in atrocities, not a complete and empirically substantiated *model* (though I do offer some substantive claims which gesture at what such a model might look like). Throughout, I shall use the term “atrocities” broadly, to denote all non-accidental acts of large-scale violence against civilians, including but not limited to genocide.¹⁰

I acknowledge that the critical picture I have painted is a little too sweeping. Four theorists—Eric Weitz, Ben Kiernan, Alex Bellamy, and Hugo Slim—have produced

important studies of the role of ideology across cases, and comparative observations can also be found in the work of Jacques Semelin, Michael Mann, James Waller, Donald Dutton, and several others.¹¹ More broadly, a sophisticated literature influenced by anthropology and cultural analysis has produced compelling studies of phenomena which I would term ideological.¹² I am indebted to all this work—and much of my discussion attempts to reorganise and integrate the insights of existing theorists rather than revise them or offer completely novel claims. Nevertheless, these exceptions remain too few and too partial: they still lack engagement with theorists of ideology, and their identification of ideological factors remains narrow and theoretically underdeveloped. Research on atrocities has therefore still, in my view, failed to get to grips with ideology.

Question 1: What Do We Mean by “Ideology”?

Ideology is famous for its “semantic promiscuity”¹³—described by one prominent theorist as “the most elusive concept in the whole of social science.”¹⁴ Nevertheless, in recent decades theorists of ideology have made real progress in thinking about how the concept can most usefully be used. Two impressive and influential definitional investigations by Malcolm Hamilton¹⁵ and John Gerring¹⁶ have systematically examined the many criteria that have been explicitly or implicitly attached to ideology, and exposed the vast majority of them as analytically unhelpful. Their conclusions are supplemented by the conceptual and methodological work of others, including Aletta Norval, Kathleen Knight, Michael Freeden, and Teun van Dijk.¹⁷ Whilst disagreement certainly remains on how ideology ought to be defined, these theorists have converged on certain conclusions, and produced an established literature which can guide definitional efforts.

Unfortunately, atrocity-theorists have not looked to this literature for guidance in their use of the concept of ideology. Usually theorists either do not define how they are using ideology at all,¹⁸ or specify an idiosyncratic definition, seemingly of their own invention, with little attempt to explain or justify it.¹⁹ Even then, it often becomes clear that authors’ actual understandings of ideology are bedraggled with various implicit connotations not specified in their criteria. Some studies, such as those by Barbara Harff, James Waller, or the Genocide Prevention Task Force, also attach ideology to other descriptors (“exclusionary” ideology or “extraordinary” ideology) without complete clarity on what these delimit.²⁰ The use of ideology in research on atrocities thus retains that “theoretical clumsiness” which Clifford Geertz identified in the social sciences more generally back in 1964.²¹

Unsurprisingly, this creates problems, which include but go beyond the classic difficulty of theorists talking at cross purposes. There has been a common tendency, for example, to construct typologies where “ideological” killers, motives, or atrocities are hived off from notionally non-ideological types which, from the perspective of contemporary ideology-studies, actually look deeply bound up with ideology. There may well, for example, be *some* distinction between what Michael Mann calls “ideological,” “bigoted,” “disciplined,” “comradely,” and “bureaucratic” killers. But the use of “ideological” only to describe the first category implies that it has little role to play in the others, which most theorists of ideology would dispute.²² The same could be said of Harff’s contradistinction of “ideological” and “retributive” genocides, or Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn’s separation of genocides which “implement ... an ideology” from those which “eliminate a real or potential threat ... spread terror among real or potential enemies ... [or] acquire economic wealth.”²³ Retribution, elimination/terrorisation

of threats and enemies, and the pursuit of economic wealth can all be *deeply* ideological activities. The United States' massacres of Native Americans, Belgium's murderous exploitation of the Congo, and Germany's annihilation of the Herero were, for example, variously motivated by economic interests and the perceived need to repress or punish dangerous "rebels." But they were also, as Alex Bellamy points out, inextricably bound up with European colonialist ideology.²⁴ Such typologies encourage a problematically compartmentalised view of ideology's potential relevance, and rest on narrow, unspoken, and contestable assumptions about what the concept denotes.

To rectify such conceptual problems, atrocity-theorists need to engage more seriously with the specialist contemporary literature on ideology, regarding two points in particular. First, atrocity-theorists should heed the increasing agreement amongst ideological analysts that a broad definition of ideology is the most analytically productive one. In this article I use the following definition: *an ideology is a distinctive system of normative, semantic, and/or reputedly factual ideas, typically shared by members of groups or societies, which underpins their understandings of their political world and shapes their political behaviour.*²⁵ These are scalar rather than binary criteria. Things may be more or less ideological the more distinctive and systematised they are, and less ideological (without being entirely *un*-ideological) when more mundane and disorganised.

Some have worried that a broad definition like this is in danger of encompassing so much that it cannot be of practical use.²⁶ I do not think so. It is a mistake to think that the utility of concepts is proportionate to their narrowness. Plenty of ubiquitous social science concepts (consider "psychology" or "culture") are far broader than even the most encompassing definitions of ideology. But they continue to be useful because their purpose is not to attach thick tranches of evaluative conclusions onto their referents, but to denote broad categories of forces, factors, and phenomena. This is the best way, I suggest, to talk about ideology. It minimises the prejudicial evaluation of belief-systems by the categories we use to refer to them. It also encourages different sorts of belief-system to be analysed in tandem, rather than drawing firm but rather arbitrary lines between certain familiar (and therefore supposedly "unideological") political desires—such as acquiring national wealth or eliminating certain threats—from notionally radical or extremist ones like redistributing property or swearing loyalty to a national leader. And as academics are never going to all agree on a single highly specific conception of ideology, a broad definition is also the most feasible way to avoid conceptual confusion.²⁷ Nor does it really involve any costs—we can always specify narrower subtypes of ideology. For most contemporary ideological analysts, therefore, ideologies need not be wrong, oppressive, dogmatic, fanatical, opposed to self-interest, in service of self-interest, fantastical, or irrational. These are all connotations that lurk in the background of many uses of ideology, but are all best left for empirical determination, not definitional pre-judgement.

However, a fleshed-out understanding of ideology is not derived solely from definitional criteria. A second crucial feature of contemporary ideological analysts' use of the concept is their depiction of ideologies as rich and multifaceted phenomena.²⁸ They are not presented as just a handful of core principles or beliefs, but as elaborate and burgeoning cultural edifices—historically sculpted networks of values, meanings, narratives, assumptions, concepts, expectations, exemplars, past experiences, images, stereotypes, and beliefs about matters of fact. Only by taking this complexity of atrocity-justifying ideologies seriously can we hope to understand how perpetrators of mass violence come to believe in them. One cannot, for example, fathom the relevance of Nazism to the Holocaust simply by talking of ferocious anti-Semitic

hatred. One has to get to grips with the idealised representation of military life and ethnic community embedded in the legacy of the World War I *kampfsgemeinschaft*, the long legacy of Christian anti-Semitism in Central Europe, the centrality of racial “science” authorised by the German medical and academic professions, the distinctively Nazi virtue-systems of obedience and merciless toughness, their quasi-deterministic conceptions of historical time, and much more.²⁹ So too with all other ideologies. Specialist analysts of individual atrocities often *have* done this—building rich and comprehensive pictures of the ideological backgrounds to violence.³⁰ But these have rarely extended to the level of overarching theory.³¹

In particular, there has been a common tendency for genocide scholars to associate “ideology” primarily with what we might think of as its “attitudinal” and “normative” components, and to ignore or background its more “descriptive” and “semantic” components (though such components are obviously always entangled).³² Ideologies are more than bundles of extremist values, hate-filled passions, and radical revolutionary ambitions. They are just as importantly comprised of basic but idiosyncratic descriptive beliefs about the world, and of subtle semantic framings which inject meaning into parts of that world.³³ Atrocity-justifying ideologies label victims as dangerous threats or guilty criminals, assert that society is at a crisis-filled turning point, euphemistically reframe killing as “self-defence” or “serving the revolution,” and enrich all of these claims with textured historical narratives and mythical “knowledge.” It is often *these* sorts of ideological elements which make violence look desirable, or at least permissible, to many ordinary perpetrators. I therefore worry about the emphasis many analysts and policy documents place on “hate ideology,” “hate speech,” “hate propaganda,” “hate broadcasts,” or, more broadly, “normative mobilization.”³⁴ Such phrases are apt in some circumstances, but it is vital to recognise that the key ideological processes which lead to violence are often built on frames and factual assertions as much as on passionate emotions or radical values. Overlooking this point can render preventive efforts to fight atrocities lopsided, and risks renewing a tendency to conceive of perpetrators as universally consumed by a burning, out-of-control hatred—a portrayal now widely accepted as inaccurate.

Question 2: Who, in Cases of Atrocity, Might Be Relevantly Affected by Ideology?

There has been a propensity, in existing scholarship on atrocities, to limit the presumed relevance of ideology to only certain specific sorts of actor. Some imply, for example, that ideologies can only influence those who are actually members of ideological organisations, or who receive explicit propaganda and indoctrination sessions, or who display manifest brutality towards their victims.³⁵ Other theorists suggest that ideology generally only matters for (some members of) the public, duped into killing by the legitimating manipulations of self-interested leaders.³⁶ Or the reverse, Valentino has influentially suggested that mass publics are largely apathetic masses induced to participate through conformity pressures, self-interest, and coercion—it is the leaders and elites who are genuinely motivated by ideologies in initiating mass violence.³⁷

Such portrayals are not wholly in error, but their restriction of ideology to certain groups often rests on the sort of conceptual confusion described above. As with the typologies discussed under Question 1, the underlying problem is an unusually narrow visualisation of what “ideology” might denote. If killers are not found to match expectations of the “raving ideologue”³⁸ acting on the basis of “insane ideological commitment,”³⁹ it is quickly inferred that they were relatively uninfluenced

by ideology *in general*. Such reasoning appears, for example, to underpin ideology's relative de-emphasis by, *inter alia*, Waller, Valentino, Scott Straus, John Mueller, Charles Tilly and Stathis Kalyvas.⁴⁰ These theorists rightly reject depictions of atrocity perpetrators as all "caught up in the throes of bloodlust" or "swept up in supremacist euphoria,"⁴¹ and stress, by contrast, the relative "ordinariness" of killers. But an explanation which emphasises ideology *need not deny such ordinariness*.⁴² Ideological beliefs do not need to be held pathologically, with one hundred per cent conviction, with explicit and self-conscious emphasis, or on the basis of many years of prior commitment. And as a result, someone does not have to be a card-carrying member of an explicitly ideological movement for ideology to influence their behaviour. A perpetrator might be conflicted, lack visible hatred, and participate in atrocity in part for non-ideological motives. Yet they may still have internalised ideological beliefs about the nature of their actions, and the moral status of their victims, which are vital in making them able to kill. I suspect that this possibility has been understated in part because of the frequent association of "ideological explanations" with the particular approach of Daniel Goldhagen, and his claim that an eliminationist anti-Semitic ideology held with high conviction was the crucial and sufficient cause of the Holocaust.⁴³ But whatever the merits or shortcomings of Goldhagen's work, he does not represent the limits of an explanatory focus on ideology.

Ideology cannot, therefore, be presumed to be relevant at only one part of the machinery of atrocity-perpetration. In terms of their causal relationship to violence, a loose distinction can be drawn between three main categories of perpetrators: *policy-initiators* (who make the key decisions which lead to the commission of atrocities); *direct killers* (who do not issue the original orders to kill, but carry out the acts of physical destruction); and *bystanders* (who do not actively participate in killing, but possess potential unused power to frustrate it, making their passivity a key enabling condition). These categories are not completely clear cut: sometimes policy-initiators may serve as direct killers as well, and in relatively spontaneous acts of atrocity there may be no discretely identifiable policy-initiators. We might also want to talk about two further categories: *indirect killers* (staffing the bureaucracies linking policy-initiators and direct killers) and *victims* (given the ways they have occasionally been tragically complicit in their own destruction, most famously in the case of the Jewish *Sonderkommando* in the Holocaust).

A successful account of the ideological dynamics of atrocities should explore the potential role of ideology for *all* these participant categories, and should avoid the temptation to treat them as homogenous blocks, with members all sharing the same motives and mind-sets. As many theorists emphasise, perpetrators of violence participate for a variety of reasons and in a range of dispositional states.⁴⁴ As such, they may be influenced by ideological beliefs held with varying levels of commitment, conviction, and consciousness.⁴⁵ In general, for the reasons Valentino identifies, we might expect atrocity-justifying ideologies to be endorsed with greater conviction amongst policy-initiators than direct or indirect killers. We might also expect ideology to play a more active motivational role for the former, and a more passive enabling role for the latter. And at least in the cases of the Nazi and Stalinist leaderships, data on the internal discourse of the regime can be found which supports such a presumption.⁴⁶ But these are still broad-brushed generalisations. Actual assessments of ideology's role should be attuned to complex distributions of ideological belief across members of participant categories, rather than reaching binary conclusions to the effect that some groups of killers "are ideological" whilst others "aren't."

Question 3: How Do These People Come to Be Influenced by Atrocity-Justifying Ideologies?

In discussing how atrocity-justifying ideologies come to influence large numbers of people, a plea to avoid crude “brainwashing” accounts, in which beliefs are channelled in a top-down manner from policy-initiators to passive direct killers, is likely to meet with quick approval. But there is not an abundance of more sophisticated models available in the atrocity-studies literature—in general, the question of ideological dissemination in contexts of atrocity remains under-examined.⁴⁷ Two subsidiary questions can be delineated here. First, how is ideology *communicated*—how does it “get around”? Second, how is ideology rendered *persuasive*—why do people buy in to the discourses and arguments which serve to justify mass violence?

The first question has no definitive answer. Ideology can be communicated by almost any means, and dominant conduits are largely determined by contextually available resources and technologies. But four principal forms can be distinguished: first, everyday social interactions; second, long-term institutionalised practices of explicit education such as state schooling or institutional training programmes; third, medium-run propaganda programs such as sustained media campaigns, or organised public protests aimed “upwards” at leaders; and fourth, short-run calls to violence such as incitement speeches, SMS instructions, orders funneled through institutional hierarchies, and escalatory radio and television broadcasts. Effective ideological dissemination will usually rely on multiple channels, and involve a combination of “top-down,” “bottom-up,” and “horizontal” communication. This is important, as it demonstrates the error in assuming that a lack of explicit indoctrination in blatant political organisations indicates the weakness of ideological motives or beliefs.⁴⁸ Such explicit indoctrination is simply not the only way that ideology “gets around.”

But why do audiences buy in to atrocity-justifying ideologies? Again, existing work in the study of ideology and ideas provides a wealth of explanations to be plundered in analysing this question. I will outline only what I take to be one un-radical but nevertheless central insight associated with work in social epistemology, namely that the vast bulk of peoples’ beliefs are formed, not through a process of personal empirical inference, but under conditions of “epistemic dependence.”⁴⁹ As the sociologist Michael Baurmann puts it:

Almost all of our knowledge is acquired, not by our own autonomous exploration, but by relying on information from others ... the quality of our beliefs is [dependent] on the quality of collective knowledge acquisition.⁵⁰

People absorb prominent ideological discourse not because they are unusually gullible but because, like all of us, they are dependent on key “epistemic authorities” (political leaders, intellectuals, church and community elders, news media, or simply other individuals) for the *vast majority* of their political knowledge.⁵¹ Atrocity-justifying ideologies are most influential when they operate through such epistemic dependence: when they can be founded on top of factual claims and narratives circulated by significant epistemic authorities who are deemed trustworthy by members of a social group.⁵²

This raises the question of why ordinary people, who are not mindless, psychotic, or already committed ideologues, deem disseminators of atrocity-justifying ideologies to be credible epistemic authorities. But this is not a difficult question to answer. Disseminators may have strong reservoirs of status and credibility in the eyes of those

they influence, at least compared to (potentially limited) alternatives.⁵³ Or the ideological beliefs they peddle may look plausible in light of the broader ideological environment of an audience's specific historical context.⁵⁴ Or perhaps the beliefs are simply amenable to the audience's basic self-interest or psychological needs.⁵⁵ Indeed, one of the most important strands of research in recent ideology-studies has been the analysis of such "motivated social cognition": the endorsement of ideological beliefs because they satisfy psychological compulsions towards positive self-esteem, cognitive dissonance minimisation, or terror management, or otherwise provide a satisfying (rather than epistemologically optimal) account of reality.⁵⁶ Finally, epistemic authorities may be able to make their claims plausible simply by *saturation*. Sufficiently suffuse an ideological environment, so that a belief becomes something "everybody says," and it is liable to receive wide endorsement even if never properly substantiated.⁵⁷ These processes, though not the whole story, are all crucial explanations for the successful dissemination of beliefs conducive to violence (and conversely, ideological dissemination will tend to fail when these conditions are not satisfied).

Question 4: How Might Ideology Encourage These People to Commit, or Permit, Mass Violence?

In a sustained analysis of the ideological dynamics of mass atrocities, this is likely to be the question which occupies theorists the most. Yet despite individual points of deep theorisation (on dehumanisation and moral exclusion,⁵⁸ for example), it has generally been answered either incompletely or indirectly. Comparative studies have tended to identify broad recurring ideological themes that surround atrocities: Weitz focuses on "utopias of race and nation,"⁵⁹ Kiernan on "racism," "territorial expansionism," "cults of cultivation," and "purity";⁶⁰ whilst Bellamy lists three "basic pathways" for the justification of atrocities—"denial," the "principle of military necessity," and a broad "ideology of selective extermination."⁶¹ These are insightful conclusions, but they remain causally unspecific, sometimes intentionally so.⁶² They trace important patterns in the ideological *background* to violence, but they leave the more causally proximate ideological *foreground* under-theorised. How, in a given ideological environment, do perpetrators actually come to believe that mass violence is permissible or even desirable? How do the background themes actually feed into the concrete decisions to initiate and participate in atrocities? We lack detailed answers to these questions.

To develop them, I believe we should distinguish at least three proximate causal pathways. Ideology may (a) generate or shape active *motives* that create the desire to commit violence; (b) create *legitimizing* perceptions or beliefs which make violence seem permissible prior to/during commission; and/or (c) provide *rationalising* resources for retrospectively dealing with the commission or permission of violence after the fact.⁶³ There is no reason to assume, as some appear to,⁶⁴ that a weak role along one pathway necessitates an equally weak role along the others. It may be the case, for example, that many direct killers do not possess strong ideological motivations, yet do participate in part due to ideological legitimations. It is also important to avoid the easy assumption that the third pathway—post-hoc rationalisation—is causally irrelevant. Atrocities, we must not forget, are hardly ever single isolated acts of killing, but campaigns of violence involving *reiterative* participation on the part of many direct killers. As such, successful rationalisation of violence may well be a key requirement for large scale atrocities to occur. Though often forthcoming, successful rationalisation is not guaranteed and may be facilitated or obstructed by ideological factors.

We can unpack the potential role of ideology further. Ideology may serve to motivate, legitimate, and rationalise for a committed core of policy-initiators and/or direct killers themselves, but it may also serve as a means for the committed core to mobilise (or demobilise) others, providing *them* with ideological motivations, legitimations, or rationalisations. Such efforts will generally aim to convert the less enthusiastic into active participants, but ensuring that they remain passive bystanders may be enough. Motivations, legitimations, and rationalisations may also enable and encourage violence at varying levels of cognitive complexity. As has been made particularly clear by the research of sociologist Randall Collins and military psychologist David Grossman, killing is *hard*.⁶⁵ But there are several reasons for this, and an important distinction can be drawn between deep-seated psychological resistance to killing on the one hand, and “higher-order” normative concerns with appropriate behaviour and positive moral self-identity on the other.⁶⁶ Ideological motivations, legitimations, and rationalisations may be important in overcoming both of these sources of restraint.

Having drawn the distinction between motivation, legitimation, and rationalisation, however, I should stress that most ideological components can serve all three pathways. Which pathway is more or less important will vary at the individual level, so our generalisations about ideology’s role may need to remain presumptively neutral between the three pathways. I therefore collectively refer to processes of motivation, legitimation, and rationalisation as ideological *justification*. One foremost task in understanding ideology’s role in atrocities, then, is an identification of the recurring mechanisms by which ideologies justify (motivate/legitimate/rationalise) mass violence against civilians across different cases.

Drawing on a review of the existing secondary literature on atrocities, combined with my own analysis of available primary documents from a range of cases, I suggest that we can identify *six* such recurring justificatory mechanisms. I term these (with varying degrees of originality):

- (a) dehumanisation,
- (b) guilt-attribution,
- (c) threat-construction,
- (d) deagentification,
- (e) virtuetalk, and
- (f) future-bias.

I believe this six-fold list of justificatory mechanisms more comprehensively describes the ways ideologies actually feed into perpetrators’ willingness to kill than existing models. Importantly, it encompasses ideological representations of both victims and perpetrators. The first three justificatory mechanisms are primarily about victims—portraying them as subhuman, guilty, or threatening. A central function of all three is the “moral exclusion” of victims from the “universe of obligations” perceived by perpetrators⁶⁷—but this is not the only way in which these three mechanisms serve to justify violence, nor are the means of moral exclusion described by each mechanism the same. The latter three justificatory mechanisms principally describe ideological representations of perpetrators (whether policy-initiators, direct killers, indirect killers, or bystanders). Nevertheless, this division between characterisations of victims and perpetrators is not total. For example, the ideological processes which depict victims as threatening and guilty also serve to frame perpetrators as acting in self-defence and as being, themselves, the “real victims.” Portrayals of victims and perpetrators are thus entangled.

In the remainder of this section, I provide a brief account of these six recurring justificatory mechanisms. I stress that this is an illustrative model only, an example of what a more comprehensive account of the causally proximate ways in which ideologies contribute to the perpetration of atrocities might look like. Developing and substantiating the six-fold model in a sustained fashion is a task beyond the confines of this article.

Dehumanisation

As analysed in an extensive literature, atrocity-justifying ideologies typically contain conceptions of victims which represent them as inhuman, subhuman, or in other ways inferior to perpetrators, as documented in Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Japanese occupation of China, and numerous other atrocities.⁶⁸ “No war may be conducted humanely against nonhumans,” declared General von Trotha, the senior German commander during the Herero genocide.⁶⁹ “We thought of them as things,” one Japanese general reported, regarding Chinese victims of the Rape of Nanking, “not people like us.”⁷⁰ Such beliefs are frequently endorsed by leading epistemic authorities: including scientists, members of the medical professions, and public intellectuals. As one Nazi doctor put it: “Of course I am a doctor and I want to preserve life. And out of respect for human life, I would remove a gangrenous appendix from a diseased body. The Jew is the gangrenous appendix in the body of mankind.”⁷¹ Such dehumanisation encourages mass violence in a number of ways: legitimating killing by morally excluding victims from the universe of obligations perceived by perpetrators;⁷² actively motivating violence through feelings of revulsion and the need to “purify” alien infections;⁷³ and providing a euphemistic lexicon for sanitised communication about mass killing (as “cleansing,” “delousing,” “pest-control,” and so forth) which eases legitimation and rationalisation.⁷⁴

Guilt-Attribution

But dehumanisation is not the sole way to portray victims in a manner conducive to violence. Accusing victims of great past or present crimes has been just as prevalent a justificatory mechanism—generating the desire for vengeance and framing victims as legitimate targets of repression. As clear proof of victims’ guilt is typically unavailable, conditions of epistemic dependence are crucial. Rumours, unsubstantiated assertions by authorities, and incessant repetitions of anecdotal cases have been utilised to create a confident social perception of victims as guilty in cases of violence ranging from Cambodia, to Armenia, to racist violence in the United States.⁷⁵ And in almost all large-scale atrocities, the guilt-attribution process involves the ascription of guilt to a *collective*.⁷⁶ That such a perception is an established part of atrocity-justifying ideologies has been noted by several theorists, notably Waller, Mann, Semelin, and Ervin Staub,⁷⁷ and it is also frequently affirmed by subsequent perpetrator testimony. “I was then of the conviction that the Jews were not innocent but guilty,” declared one former Nazi police battalion member involved in mass shootings of Jews, “I believed the propaganda that all Jews were criminals ... and that they were the cause of Germany’s decline. ... The thought that one should disobey or evade the order to participate in the extermination of the Jews did not therefore enter my mind at all.”⁷⁸ Similarly, Hutu killers of the Rwandan genocide described how “we thought all Tutsis at fault for our constant troubles. ... That’s how we reasoned and that’s how we killed at the time.”⁷⁹

Threat-Construction

A striking feature of atrocities is the mismatch, in the eyes of an outside observer, between the objective harmlessness of victims and the perception of them as dangerous threats by their killers. It is the perceived threat that matters, and killers' ideological worldviews are centrally characterised by their descriptive and semantic representation of victims as threatening.⁸⁰ There is, as Martin Shaw writes, a "construction of civilian groups as enemies, not only in a social or political but also in a military sense, to be destroyed."⁸¹ I say descriptive *and semantic*, because of the crucial role played by the recurring lexicons deployed by perpetrating organisations which presumptively assign victims threatening status.⁸² Suharto's anticommunist policies in Indonesia, for example, consistently targeted "gangs of security disruptors,"⁸³ the Nazis fought "Judeo-Bolsheviks"⁸⁴ or "International World Jewry,"⁸⁵ and Stalinists targeted "socially harmful elements."⁸⁶ Defining the enemy is thus a crucial process of constructing them, but such lexicons also look appropriate because of direct factual claims expounded by powerful epistemic authorities—often the state security apparatus. A Rwandan Army memorandum thus asserted a threat from "Tutsi inside or outside the country, extremist and nostalgic for power... who wish to reconquer power by all means necessary including arms."⁸⁷ The infamous Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences similarly affirmed that: "Except for the period of the [Croatian Ustaše state established by Nazi Germany] Serbs were never so endangered as they are today."⁸⁸ Such threat-construction has three central effects: establishing a clear motivation for killing victims, framing them as legitimate targets, and reframing perpetrators as legitimately acting in self-defence.⁸⁹ It is also conducive to violence through several indirect psychological processes, increasing in-group cohesion and identification, increasing propensities to obey authorities, increasing inclinations for severe punishment, and so forth.⁹⁰

Deagentification

By "deagentification," I refer to the ideological portrayal of killers as lacking meaningful agency or responsibility in causing atrocities to occur. Such deagentification is not usually total: perpetrators rarely claim that their *individual actions* lacked any agency. But the overall atrocity—the fact that people are dying—is typically presented by atrocity-justifying ideologies as an "inevitable" or "necessary" result of certain irresistible forces or unavoidable conditions. Providence, the laws of class or racial struggle, technological progress, the nature of war, or simply the actions of others are held up as the real cause of atrocities, rather than the deliberate decisions made by policy-initiators, direct and indirect killers, and bystanders. To borrow a phrase from Eric Gordy, atrocity-justifying ideologies engage in the "destruction of alternatives"⁹¹: forcefully asserting that *no other option but violence exists* (a move particularly visible in justifications of atrocity in terms of "military necessity").⁹² And for some atrocity-justifying ideologies, such claims are supported by elaborate quasi-deterministic conceptions of history. Nazis asserted that they merely wished, in Martin Bormann's words: "to adapt our people to the laws of nature... the ineluctable struggle for existence. This struggle exists, whether we like it or not, whether we reject or accept it.... Just as the individual... must assert and maintain his existence, so must the nation as a whole."⁹³ Similarly Communist and colonialist ideologies consistently depicted the destruction of whole groups as an unavoidable consequence of historical development.⁹⁴ Whatever the method, such ideological elements occlude the

role of human agency in causing the atrocity in question, shielding perpetrators from the perception of moral responsibility for the death and suffering caused. They are recurring features of the ideological discourse surrounding atrocities, yet, aside from scattered comments across the atrocity-studies literature, and rather more sustained reflections by Hannah Arendt and certain social psychologists, their role remains under-examined.⁹⁵

Virtuetalk

By virtuetalk, I refer to the rhetorical presentation of killing as demonstrating the laudable character of the perpetrator—a pervasive element of atrocity-justifying ideologies. Virtuetalk attempts to connect the substantive activity of killing with sedimented, respectable social values: duty, vigilance, hardness, courage, etc., and to denigrate moral qualms or resistance as indicating weakness, treasonous tendencies, or other socially disrespected qualities. Bolsheviks in Russia were told:

You must assume your duties with a feeling of the strictest Party responsibility, without whimpering, without any rotten liberalism. Throw your bourgeois humanitarianism out of the window and act like Bolsheviks worthy of Comrade Stalin. Beat down the kulak agent wherever he raises his head.⁹⁶

The Khmer Rouge likewise recommended “seething hatred and blood rancor against national and class enemies,”⁹⁷ whilst a Nazi police battalion manual stated that “he behaves correctly who, by setting aside all possible impulses of personal feeling, proceeds ruthlessly and mercilessly.”⁹⁸ Such discourse, whilst sometimes noted, has received little empirical or theoretical examination from theorists of genocide.⁹⁹ Yet perceptions of virtuous and vicious behaviour are crucial components of any ideological worldview, and may be psychologically vital: strengthening conformity pressures by tugging on the machoistic insecurities of typical perpetrators, and legitimating participation in atrocity by attaching it to a positive and socially lauded sense of self-identity.¹⁰⁰ It also, like dehumanisation, serves to provide a euphemistic lexicon for sanitised communication about mass killing.¹⁰¹

Future-Bias

Theorists have often remarked on the “utopian” quality of atrocity-justifying ideologies.¹⁰² The most horrific campaigns of violence—such as the Holocaust, Stalinist Terror, Maoist Cultural Revolution, or Cambodian politicide—are often conducted as part of radical visions of societal transformation. But the causally significant dynamic here is not, I believe, limited to such grandiose schemes. I talk of “future-bias” to refer to a future-orientated moral fallacy which recurs across atrocities: the perception of known moral harms in the present—the deaths of victims—as outweighed by massive future goods which have *not been discounted for their uncertainty*. Atrocity-justifying ideologies frequently invoke a consequentialist calculus, in other words, but the calculus is loaded: no means in the present is sufficiently terrible as to be unjustifiable given the confident assertion of huge benefits multiplied into the infinite future. This creates an extraordinarily permissive moral logic. And because the expected future benefits have often been ideologically hegemonized

in their historical context by powerful epistemic authorities, it often does not even occur to perpetrators to question the likelihood of the benefits that their actions are framed as being in pursuit of actually accruing. Nazi soldiers were thus confident that after the war “the great peace will come for which all peoples are hoping. Fighting for that, no sacrifice is too great.”¹⁰³ “We were convinced that we were creating a Communist society,” one Soviet citizen later testified, “that it would be achieved by the Five Year Plans, and we were ready for any sacrifice.”¹⁰⁴ More broadly, extreme or abusive military policies have frequently been justified in the name of speculative future benefits which are then fallaciously weighed up with known present harms on an equal footing.¹⁰⁵ This form of consequentialist reasoning, and the broader orientation towards a speculative future that surrounds it, is a key recurring feature of the ideological justification of violent atrocities.

These six justificatory mechanisms may be present in varying degrees in different cases—certainly they are not all required for atrocities to become viewed as justified. But all six have in fact been pervasive, I believe, in the twentieth century’s major cases. They are visible in the public and private discourse which surrounds atrocities at the time, and in the subsequent testimony of perpetrators (despite often running against their self-interest).¹⁰⁶ This provides some basis for taking them seriously, as data telling us something about how perpetrators actually thought.

But I stress that these six justificatory mechanisms do not describe *all* the ideological dynamics of atrocities. Other scholars may identify further justificatory mechanisms that recur across cases, as well as case-specific justificatory mechanisms which do not recur. And there are many other ideological phenomena which less directly cause violence, but remain relevant, such as the background themes mentioned at the beginning of this section. In particular, there are at least some other recurring ideological forces which we might think of as “intensifier mechanisms,” such as polarised group identities, highly antagonistic attitudes towards existing normative systems, and ideologically-based epistemic over-confidence. Such forces do not justify violence on their own—even polarised group identities need to be converted into a reason for violence through threat-construction, guilt-attribution, etc.¹⁰⁷ But they broaden and strengthen the justificatory mechanisms, expanding the scale of the violence they can encourage. A full theory of the ideological dynamics of mass atrocities would need to account for these, just as it would also need to consider those ideological factors which *restrain* violence.¹⁰⁸ Justifications (as motivations/legitimations/rationalisations) are, I have argued, the most causally proximate manner in which ideology encourages violence, but they are not the only ideological phenomena that matter.

Conclusion

Theorists have increasingly accepted that genocides and other mass atrocities occur, in part, because “perpetrators believe that mass killing is the right thing to do.”¹⁰⁹ For outsiders, convinced that mass killing is amongst the very worst things one can do, such a belief is inexplicable unless we get to grips with ideology: with the distinctive worldviews and justifications that perpetrators operate under. This is not to imply that ideology provides a sufficient explanation of atrocities—it does not. Ideological factors sit alongside psychological, personal, institutional, situational, economic, and

political ones. But they are central in their own right, and are also entangled with these other factors, since few forces can shape human behaviour unmediated by the world-views and schemas of meaning which ideologies provide.¹¹⁰

In this article, I have sought to offer a more systematic and comprehensive framework for thinking about the role of ideology across cases, and in the process tried to offer some illustrative outlines of what a more theoretically developed account of that role would look like. Bellamy rightly notes that whilst “the precise contours of justification shift from case to case” of atrocity, there are nevertheless useful generalisations we can make regarding the features of ideologies which serve to justify violence across cases.¹¹¹ Theorists have been doing this for some time, generating much important knowledge in the process. My argument is not that this existing work is hopelessly flawed, but that it has been held back by a lack of theoretical development on a range of vital questions. How do the many different ideological elements identified by theorists fit together? How are they disseminated in specific contexts of atrocity? Why do perpetrators buy in to them? How are they differently internalised (or not) amongst different sorts of perpetrator? How might they actually encourage violence? How do they draw upon or constitute broader ideologies? How do they interact with other ideological forces which may intensify or restrain them? These questions have certainly not been ignored by atrocity-theorists, but they have not been considered in a systematic or comprehensive fashion.

This article cannot claim to have changed all of that, since *much* more remains to be said on all the points I have raised. But I hope to have offered a better footing for building the sorts of theories which would systematically investigate these issues, and which would incorporate the latest research from *both* atrocity-studies and ideology-studies. This article has therefore aimed to start a “rethinking” process which might allow us to advance our understanding of ideology’s role in atrocities. It certainly has not finished it.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Sidney Tarrow and Jennifer Welsh for their invaluable advice on this project, to members of the Cambridge Centre for Governance and Human Rights for their many helpful comments at a seminar on April 2, 2013, and to two anonymous reviewers for their detailed and exceptionally helpful comments and suggestions.

Notes

1. Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 71–72.
2. Scott Straus, “‘Destroy Them to Save Us’: Theories of Genocide and the Logics of Political Violence,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 4 (2012): 544–560.
3. See Alex Bellamy, “Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy: Empire and the Ideology of Selective Extermination,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 58 (2012): 159–190; Robert Melson, “Modern Genocide in Rwanda: Ideology, Revolution, War, and Mass Murder in an African State,” in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, eds., *The Spectre of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 325–326; Ben Kiernan, “Twentieth-Century Genocides: Underlying Ideological Themes from Armenia to East Timor,” in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, eds., *The Spectre of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29–52; Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?: The Logic and Prevention of Mass Political Murder* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide:*

Utopias of Race and Nation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Alexander Hinton, "Why Did You Kill?: The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honour," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57 (1998): 93–122; Barbara Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955," *American Political Science Review* 97 (2003): 57–73.

4. Genocide Prevention Task Force, *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2008); Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APC R2P), "A Common Standard for Applying R2P," *APC R2P Brief 2/3* (2012); Office of the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG), *Analysis Framework*, October 14, 2012, <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/>; <http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/8stagesofgenocide.html>

5. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4, 8; James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 53.

6. On dehumanisation, see: Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2010), 393 and 437; Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above), 105–106, 222–223, and 239; Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides" (see note 3 above), 32–33; Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 322; Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 38–39; Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 27–28; <http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/8stagesofgenocide.html>. On hate speech, see: Susan Benesch, *Dangerous Speech: A Proposal to Prevent Group Violence*, 2012, <http://www.worldpolicy.org/susan-benesch>, 3; APC R2P, "A Common Standard for Applying R2P" (see note 4 above), 4; Genocide Prevention Task Force, *Preventing Genocide* (see note 4 above), 41 and 83; OSAPG, *Analysis Framework* (see note 4 above), 3.

7. Straus also suggests that theorists have focused too exclusively on ideological factors encouraging atrocity, and insufficiently on factors of restraint. See Scott Straus, "Retreating from the Brink: Theorizing Mass Violence and the Dynamics of Restraint," *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (2012): 343–344 and 350–351.

8. See, for example: Michael Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Michael Freedon, *The Meaning of Ideology: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Teun van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: Sage, 1998); Raymond Boudon, *The Analysis of Ideology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989); Aletta Norval, "The Things We Do With Words," *Journal of Political Science* 30 (2000): 313–346; John T. Jost and Brenda Major, *The Psychology of Legitimacy: Emerging Perspectives on Ideology, Justice and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For an overview, see: Jonathan Leader Maynard, "A Map of the Field of Ideological Analysis," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 18, no. 3 (2013): 299–327.

9. For an exception see: Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 162–163; Alex Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality: Mass Atrocities in an Age of Civilian Immunity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 31.

10. See: Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality* (see note 9 above), 14. I believe my discussion has relevance for both "terroristic" and "non-terroristic" atrocities, as they have typically been conceived, but my focus is on the latter.

11. Donald Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007); Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above); Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides" (see note 3 above); Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above); Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality* (see note 9 above); Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above); Semelin, *Purify and Destroy* (see note 6 above); Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above); and Hugo Slim, *Killing Civilians: Method, Madness and Morality in War* (London: Hirst & Company, 2007). In the broader

literature on violence and conflict in general, a major exception to the neglect of specialist work on ideology can be found in: Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

12. Alexander Hinton, ed., *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002); Alexander Hinton, "Why Did the Nazis Kill?: Anthropology, Genocide and the Goldhagen Controversy," *Anthropology Today* 14, no. 5 (1998): 13; Isabel Hull, "Military Cultures and the Production of 'Final Solutions' in the Colonies: The Example of Wilhelminian Germany," in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, eds., *The Spectre of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141–162.

13. John Gerring, "Ideology: A Definitional Analysis," *Political Research Quarterly* 50 (1997): 957.

14. David McLellan, *Ideology* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), 1.

15. Malcolm B. Hamilton, "The Elements of the Concept of Ideology," *Political Studies* 35 (1987): 18–38.

16. Gerring, "Ideology: A Definitional Analysis" (see note 13 above).

17. Kathleen Knight, "Transformations in the Concept of Ideology in the Twentieth Century," *American Political Science Review* 100 (2006): 619–626; Norval, "The Things We Do With Words" (see note 8 above); Freedden, *Ideologies and Political Theory* (see note 8 above); Michael Freedden, *Ideology—A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (see note 8 above).

18. Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above); Melson, "Modern Genocide in Rwanda" (see note 3 above); Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides" (see note 3 above); Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above); John Mueller, "The Banality of 'Ethnic War,'" *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 42–70; Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42–48.

19. Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (see note 6 above), 22; Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 185; Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 30; Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 50; Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality* (see note 9 above), 11 fn. 25.

20. Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust?" (see note 3 above); Genocide Prevention Task Force, *Preventing Genocide* (see note 4 above), 25; Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 40–53 and 185.

21. Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in David Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent* (London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 49.

22. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 27–29.

23. Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust?" (see note 3 above), 61; Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (see note 6 above), 29. See also: Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 204; Peter du Preez, *Genocide: The Psychology of Mass Murder* (London: Bowerdean and Boyars, 1994), 66–78; Hull, "Military Cultures and the Production of 'Final Solutions' in the Colonies" (see note 12 above), 161.

24. Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality* (see note 9 above), 81–95.

25. See: Hamilton, "The Elements of the Concept of Ideology" (see note 15 above), 38; Stuart Hall, *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), 26; Martin Seliger, *Ideology and Politics* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1976), 11; Freedden, *Ideology—A Very Short Introduction* (see note 17 above), 3.

26. Georges Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), 15; Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), 7; McLellan, *Ideology* (see note 14 above), 50 & 72.

27. See: Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System" (see note 21 above).

28. David Howarth, Aletta Norval, and Yannis Stavrakakis, eds., *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester

University Press, 2000); Alan Finlayson, "Rhetoric and the Political Theory of Ideologies," *Political Studies* 60 (2012): 751–767; James H. Tully, "The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics," *British Journal of Political Science* 13 (1983): 491; Teun van Dijk, "Ideological Discourse Analysis," *New Courant* 4 (1995): 147–157.

29. Omar Bartov, "'Fields of Glory': War, Genocide, and the Glorification of Violence," in Moishe Postone and Eric Santner, eds., *Catastrophe and Meaning: The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 117–135; John Weiss, *Ideology of Death* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1997); François Haas, "German Science and Black Racism: Roots of the Nazi Holocaust," *The FASEB Journal* 22 (2008): 332–337; Benjamin Madley, "From Africa to Auschwitz," *European History Quarterly* 35 (2005): 429–464; Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above), 32–52; Hinton, *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (see note 12 above), 13–14.

30. E.g., Paul M. Hagenloh, "'Socially Harmful Elements' and the Great Terror," in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Stalinism: New Directions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 286–308; Karl D. Jackson, "The Ideology of Total Revolution," in Karl D. Jackson, ed., *Cambodia 1975–1978: Rendezvous with Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Hinton, "Why Did You Kill?" (see note 3 above).

31. E.g. du Preez, *Genocide: The Psychology of Mass Murder* (see note 23 above), 122–124; Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above), 31; Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 40–53.

32. Leonard S. Newman, "What is a 'Social-Psychological' Account of Perpetrator Behavior?," in Leonard S. Newman and Ralph Erber, eds., *Understanding Genocide: The Social Psychology of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 51–52; Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above), 55; Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 49.

33. Hilde Eileen Nafstad and Rolv Mikkel Blakar, "Ideology and Social Psychology," *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 6 (2012): 285; van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (see note 8 above), 20 & 38.

34. Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 162–163; David Simon, "Building State Capacity to Prevent Atrocity Crimes: Implementing Pillars and Two of the R2P Framework," *Policy Analysis Brief* (Muscatine: The Stanley Foundation, 2012), 6–9; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 60, 84 & 96–113; Payam Akhavan, "Beyond Impunity: Can International Criminal Justice Prevent Future Atrocities?," *The American Journal of International Law* 95 (2001), 9–13; Dwight Raymond, Cliff Bernath, Don Braum, and Ken Zurcher, *MAPRO: Mass Atrocity Prevention and Response Options* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2012), 13. This danger is noted in James F. Alexander, "The International Criminal Court and the Prevention of Atrocities: Predicting the Court's Impact," *Villanova Law Review* 54 (2009): 29.

35. Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 40–53 and 104; Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above), 31 and 48–49; Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 26–30 and 214.

36. Valère Philip Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 188–189 and 196; Akhavan, "Beyond Impunity" (see note 34 above), 7 and 10; Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 34 and 59; Genocide Prevention Task Force (see note 5 above), 36 and 42.

37. Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above); Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 90–91; Straus, "'Destroy Them to Save Us'" (see note 2 above), 549; Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust?" (see note 3 above), 62–63; Genocide Prevention Task Force (see note 4 above), 42 and 82.

38. Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 102.

39. *Ibid.*, 185.

40. *Ibid.*, 40–53, 102, 124 and 185; Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above), 24 and 55; Mueller, "The Banality of 'Ethnic War'" (see note 18 above); Scott Straus, "The Order of Genocide: The Dynamics of Genocide in Rwanda," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 2, no. 3 (2007): 259–264; Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 2003), 141, 175, and 237; Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence* (see note 18 above), 44–48 and 98. See also: Martin Shaw, *What Is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 110 and 138.

41. Alexander, “The International Criminal Court and the Prevention of Atrocities” (see note 34 above), 18; Mark Drumbl, “Collective Violence and Individual Punishment,” *Northwestern University Law Review* 99 (2005): 591.

42. Michael Freeden, “Thinking Politically and Thinking about Politics: Language, Interpretation, and Ideology,” in David Leopold and Marc Stears, eds., *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 196–215; Malešević, *Sociology of War and Violence* (see note 11 above), 63.

43. See Paul Roth, “Hearts of Darkness: Perpetrator History and Why There Is No Why,” *History of the Human Sciences* 17 (2004): 211–251; Newman, “What is a ‘Social-Psychological’ Account of Perpetrator Behavior?” (see note 32 above); Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 40–53.

44. Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 20–44; Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 26–29; Staub, *The Roots of Evil* (see note 19 above), 38–43; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 115–122.

45. Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20 (2008): 416.

46. See, in general, Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, *Nazism 1919–45: A Documentary Reader* (London: Cape, 1974); John Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

47. Though see Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality* (see note 9 above).

48. Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 124.

49. John Hardwig, “Epistemic Dependence,” *Journal of Philosophy* 82 (1985): 335–349.

50. Michael Baumann, “Rational Fundamentalism? An Explanatory Model of Fundamentalist Beliefs,” *Episteme* 4 (2007): 151.

51. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 498–500; Jens Rydgren, “Beliefs,” in Peter Hadström and Peter Bearman, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Analytical Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 83–87; Russell Hardin, “The Crippled Epistemology of Extremism,” in Albert Breton, Gianluigi Galeotti, Pierre Salmon, and Ronald Wintroppe, eds., *Political Extremism and Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3–22; Raymond Boudon, “Local vs General Ideologies: A Normal Ingredient of Political Life,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 4, no. 2 (1999), 157–158.

52. Baumann, “Rational Fundamentalism?” (see note 50 above), 150–151; Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War* (see note 36 above), 189.

53. Benesch, “Dangerous Speech” (see note 6 above), 3 and 5; Baumann, “Rational Fundamentalism?” (see note 50 above), 154 and 161; Alexander Hinton, “Introduction: Genocide and Anthropology,” in Alex Hinton, ed., *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 8; McCauley and Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization” (see note 45 above), 423.

54. See: Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics—Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967); Boudon, *The Analysis of Ideology* (see note 8 above).

55. Baumann, “Rational Fundamentalism?” (see note 50 above), 152 and 160; Murray Edelman, *Political Language: Words That Succeed and Policies That Fail* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 3 and 11–12; Jost and Major, *The Psychology of Legitimacy* (see note 8 above); Boudon, “Local vs General Ideologies” (see note 51 above), 160; Staub, *The Roots of Evil* (see note 19 above), 48.

56. John T. Jost and Orsolya Hunyady, "Antecedents and Consequences of System-Justifying Ideologies," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 14, no. 5 (2005): 260–265; Boudon, "Local vs General Ideologies" (see note 51 above); Agnieszka Golec de Zavala, Aleksandra Cislak, and Elzbieta Wesołowska, "Political Conservatism, Need for Cognitive Closure, and Intergroup Hostility," *Political Psychology* 31 (2010): 521–541.
57. Benesch, "Dangerous Speech" (see note 6 above), 5; Edelman, *Political Language* (see note 55 above), 1–21; Boudon, "Local vs General Ideologies" (see note 51 above), 156–158.
58. Susan Opatow, "Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction," *Journal of Social Issues* 46 (1990): 1–20; Helen Fein, "Genocide: A Sociological Perspective," in Alexander Hinton, ed., *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 84; Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 161; Randall Collins, "Three Faces of Cruelty: Towards a Comparative Sociology of Violence," *Theory and Society* 1 (1974): 416–419.
59. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above).
60. Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides" (see note 3 above).
61. Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 160–161.
62. *Ibid.*, 161.
63. Hinton, *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (see note 12 above), 13.
64. Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above), 67 and 100; Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 49, 53 and 121–122; Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above) 54 and 56; Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (see note 40 above), 116.
65. Randall Collins, *Violence: A Microsociological Approach* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Dave Grossmann, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2009).
66. This builds on Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 52–57.
67. See note 58 above.
68. Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (see note 6 above), 339; Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil* (London: Rider Books, 2009), 14 and 307; David Chandler, *Voices from S-21: Terror and History in Pol Pot's Secret Prison* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2000), 118 and 121–122; Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides" (see note 3 above), 45–51; Melson, "Modern Genocide in Rwanda" (see note 3 above), 333; Hinton, "Why Did You Kill?" (see note 3 above), 111; Chirot and McCauley *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 37 and 80–81; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 63–68.
69. Hull, "Military Cultures and the Production of 'Final Solutions' in the Colonies" (see note 12 above), 154.
70. Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect* (see note 68 above), 307.
71. Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London: Abacus, 1997), 269. See also: Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 172.
72. Fein, "Genocide: A Sociological Perspective" (see note 58 above), 84.
73. Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 41–42, 80–81 and 86; Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil* (see note 68 above), 13–14 and 308–310. See also: Albert Bandura, Bill Underwood, and Michael E. Fromson, "Disinhibition of Aggression Though Diffusion of Responsibility and Dehumanization of Victims," *Journal of Research in Personality* 9 (1975): 253–259.
74. Semelin, *Purify and Destroy* (see note 6 above), 252–253; Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 5 above), 208 and 211–212; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 22 and 33–34.
75. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 92–98, 128, 133, 169–170; Semelin, *Purify and Destroy* (see note 6 above), 172, 186, 250 and 354–355; Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 70–80; Staub, *The Roots of Evil* (see note 19 above), 48–49; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 74–84.

76. Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 177; Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 29, 63 and 140; Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (see note 6 above), 357; Hinton, *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (see note 12 above), 11.

77. See note 75 above; Waller, *Becoming Evil* (see note 6 above), 212–219.

78. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (see note 71 above), 179.

79. Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect* (see note 68 above), 15.

80. Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (see note 6 above), 10 and 25; du Preez, *Genocide: The Psychology of Mass Murder* (see note 23 above), 48–9; Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 5, 14–16 and 31–36; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 33, 37, 106–112.

81. Shaw, *What Is Genocide?* (see note 40 above), 111.

82. Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust?" (see note 3 above), 61; Chandler, *Voices from S-21* (see note 68 above), 6 and 93–94.

83. Hinton, "Why Did You Kill?" (see note 3 above), 47.

84. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above), 105, 107–108, 125 and 139.

85. Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (see note 6 above), 337.

86. Hagenloh, "'Socially Harmful Elements' and the Great Terror" (see note 30 above).

87. Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above), 182.

88. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above), 195–196.

89. Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 31–36 and 61–65; Jackson, "The Ideology of Total Revolution" (see note 30 above), 56–57; Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 136, 162–163 and 400; Semelin, *Purify and Destroy* (see note 6 above), 145; Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (see note 71 above), 262; Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 169.

90. Herbert C. Kelman, "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict," in I. William Zartman, ed., *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques* (Rev. Ed.) (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 61–107; Chirot and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 65; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 100.

91. Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

92. Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 168 and 173; Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above), 61.

93. Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Bormann Letters* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1954), 54.

94. Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality* (see note 9 above), 84; Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above); Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above), 107; Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 81–82, 88, 101. See also: Lewis Cass, "Removal of the Indians," *North American Review* 30 (1830): 69–71.

95. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 1976), 349 and 465; Albert Bandura, "Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 3, no. 3 (1999): 193–209; Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect* (see note 68 above); Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (London: Pinter and Martin, 2010).

96. Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 85.

97. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above), 153.

98. Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 183. See also: Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 209; Hinton, *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (see note 12 above), 13.

99. Although see: Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 177.
100. Chirof and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 52; Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (see note 6 above), 200 & 254; Semelin, *Purify and Destroy* (see note 6 above), 286. See also: Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1959).
101. Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 22, 33–34 and 99.
102. Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above), 92–93; Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (see note 3 above); Chirof and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 60–61, 134 and 142–144; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 108.
103. A. J. Coates, *The Ethics of War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 149.
104. Figs, *The Whisperers* (see note 96 above), 91.
105. Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 169; Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect* (see note 68 above), 420 & 431–433; Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres and Extreme Violence* (see note 11 above), 20 and 71.
106. See: Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz* (see note 100 above).
107. Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust?" (see note 3 above), 66–68; Valentino, *Final Solutions* (see note 1 above), 16–22.
108. See note 7 above.
109. Chirof and McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All?* (see note 3 above), 5.
110. Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (see note 54 above); Newman, "What is a 'Social-Psychological' Account of Perpetrator Behavior?" (see note 32 above), 60.
111. Bellamy, "Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy" (see note 3 above), 180.