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Re-evaluating Economic Genocide: When Policy becomes Predator

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ABSTRACT

Incidents of genocide just started with the dawn of civilization. However, ideas of Enlightenment have inspired humans' wish to persistently improve their societies. It is seen that if a certain group in any case stands between the population and its goal, it can be estimated as "rational" and legitimate to get rid of that group. Sometimes this eradication takes place so subtly that the standard of living of the target population gradually deteriorates. Eventually, the group become extinct and this kind of incidents are possible to discuss under economic genocide. The dominant group in such genocides isolates the target group socially and economically through the deliberate formulation of various exploitative policies. In many cases, the level of oppression has turned into atrocities and genocides, examples of which can be seen at several times in the twentieth century. The present article will attempt to re-evaluate economic genocide, analyzing different economic factors as an underlying condition that make genocide possible or may trigger mass atrocities.

Keywords: In-group, out-group, genocide, conflict, economic.

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1. Introduction

The twentieth century has been perfectly termed as an 'age of genocide'. Millions of people from different races, religions, ethnic groups, nationalities and social classes, living in different countries, on most of the continents of the earth, regardless of their age and sex, lost their lives, because their so-called welfare state thought its right. The darkest century has seen two world wars, numerous major revolutions, colonial and anti-colonial conflicts, and other disasters where state-sponsored or officially sanctioned mass murder of noncombatant civilians took place. By the mid-twentieth century, the situation turned so alarming that scholars began to quest for suitable words to describe it. Raphael Lemkin, a jurist from Poland, first introduced the concept of genocide in his book 'Axis Rule in Occupied Europe' published from Washington, D.C. in 1944 during the Second World War. Later he urged the United Nations into formulating its Convention on the Prevention and the

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Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948 that states, "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" (United Nations 1948, art.2). Since genocide requires intent to destroy a group, all mass killings do not constitute genocide. Crimes more closely related to genocide and mass killing is identified as war crimes and crimes against humanity. All such crimes, including ethnic cleansing, are classified as mass atrocities under a general heading. Moreover, the systematic study of Genocide and other mass atrocities are known as (GMAs) that actually started after the publication of Raphael Lemkin's pioneering book in 1944. The number, scale and the geographical scope of mass atrocities on every continent except Antarctica is as wide as their frequency and duration. There have been important contributions to the sector of genocide studies by scholars from various disciplines, but a clear lack of attention of economists to mass atrocities relative to other sorts of violence like war and terrorism is quite remarkable. This has created a huge void in the study of genocide. Anderton (2014) argues, although many non-economists have tried to identify important economic issues of mass atrocities in historical and contemporary contexts, various aspects of such economic problems actually need to be discussed using well-organized concepts, theories, mathematical and statistical tools available in the economics discipline. He termed it as an economics gap in the field of genocide studies (p.119).

Economic factors are closely tangled with the outbreak and legacy all kinds of violent conflict, regardless of its types; war, civil war, rebellion, mass atrocity and genocide. Consecutively violent conflict has significant consequences for the economic welfare of individuals, households, and local communities—sometimes over very long periods of time, which may have an effect on the likelihood of conflict recurrence. Several factors have been seen in explaining the participation of individuals or groups in forms of political violence, and these reasons may or may not overlap with economic motivations. However, it is clear that in some cases that the threat of poverty and destitution, unmet aspirations, or lack of productive employment may increase the likelihood of some individuals joining armed violence for reasons related to economic incentives (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Grossman 2002; as cited in Anderton & Brauer, 2016, p.214). The present study tried to discuss extensively with examples how state policy works behind economic problems and how oppressive behavior imposed by a particular group paves the way for widespread atrocities or genocide. It concludes with a call to strengthen international law and to refrain a state or any group from imposing exploitative policies through proper monitoring. It is hoped that this study will help to seriously consider economic policy or inequality before identifying a genocide as a political, ethnic or religious conflict and will create opportunities for further research in this area. It also recommends bringing the state policy under the supervision of a neutral authority to avoid the possibility of any mass conflict.

2. Methodology and limitation

This article is primarily based on the secondary literature that includes contemporary documents, organization reports and published materials, including books and esteemed journal articles. As an appropriate method for identifying results according to the title qualitative design of research methodology in the field of social science, has been followed to conduct the research and to make the qualitative method successful, the content analysis and the historical method have been used consciously and appropriately. Since economic factors are often underrated in investigating genocide, any study or research conducting within this area will have to face scarce of evidences. The present article is no exception and this might be taken as a limitation of it.

3. Literature review

3.1 Economic genocide: Context and concept

Economic genocide is a unique but little-discussed aspect of genocide studies. Just as it is possible to analyze genocide statistically, theoretically and practically showing evidences, scholars have to face theoretical and factual inadequacies in discussing economic genocide. Since there might not be

proper evidences to prove it. Although the genocide has been discussed for a long time from political, social and other perspectives, the efforts to find and explain the economic motive behind the genocide have been recent. The economic consequences of the genocide should be considered as a different discussion. Sometimes without causing direct physical atrocities, state exploitative policies can weaken the economic viability of a population, isolating it from the mainstream of society and exterminating it for generations. Although the UN Convention on Genocide is not clear on such extinctions, there are implicit indications. There are some problems too behind this ambiguity. Perhaps this problem complicates the process of explicit mention of the issue in the international law, and probably for the same reason it has created a void in the discussion of the issue from the analytical point of view of economists.

In the 1940s, Raphael Lemkin coined the term “genocide” for the first time taking into account the Holocaust and he signified it with the return of an enlightened people to barbarism (Freeman 1995, p. 210). According to some scholars, the Holocaust occurred as a deviation from the enlightened and developed nation. On the other hand, the rest of the scholars argued that genocide should not be considered as separate from the Enlightenment but as a result. Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the ideals of Enlightenment, which are human emancipation and rationality, alienate humans from nature and make them want to control nature and consecutively other people as well. Enlightenment has the same relationship to things as the dictator has to people. A dictator knows people well enough to manipulate them. Similarly, a man of science knows everything to the best of his ability (Horkheimer et al., 2007, p.6).

Although theorists claim the Enlightenment's involvement in the genocide, but not all enlightened nations descends into genocide. There are several other factors behind the genocide. According to (Staub, 1999), difficult life condition is an important indicator for the potential of future genocide, such as war or an economic crisis. He argues that humans feel the need to protect themselves when they face hardship or sufferings, which may result in losing respect for another group or blaming that group for the present conditions. This kind of situation does not directly lead to group violence. Instead, it effects psychological processes in individuals and social processes in-groups that result in turning against and harming members of another group (p.305). When a group in a region or country thinks of itself as the main entity of that region they can be called in-group and when they think of other group as external they are considered as out-group. Now by identifying the out-group as a target group, the in-group thinks the out-group illegitimately accessing the resources of their country or region that actually belongs to them (in-group). In such cases, some provocative actions are enough to bring the situation to an extreme level, but provocation can be both direct and indirect, which can lead to the extinction of the target group. The chances of genocide increase against out-group that perceived as standing between society and resources. This happens mostly during times of hardship when there is war and economic crisis. Human feels the necessity to blame an out-group and eliminate that threat from the society. Therefore, being involved in a genocidal squad may give them a feeling of security they need during those times of instability. In Hamburg's (2008) words, “a sharp economic downturn can create a sense of crisis that makes a population ready to scapegoat a vulnerable out-group and softens popular reluctance to kill others”(p.34). Local leaders think that these feelings can be easily manipulated for their own purpose, which may be the elimination of an unwanted minority (Hamburg 2008, p.24). Often victims are portrayed as wealthy and as willing to take advantage of other groups, which justifies killing that group (Hamburg 2008, p.27). For instance, there was an increasing support for the Nazi party in Germany after the World Economic Crisis in 1929. At the time of Hitler's rise to power, Germany was experiencing great economic crisis, and Hitler used the Jews as a scapegoat, blaming them for the collapse of German society (Hitler's Rise to Power: 1918–1933, n.d.). Similarly, Tutsi in Rwanda were accused of causing the economic crisis in the 1980s, a crisis that had been brought about by reducing coffee prices to restore power and dominance (Hintjens 1999, p. 256). Since, people look for someone to denounce or blame when they become sufferer of deep economic crisis, that is why reaching out to a wealthy minority like the Jews in Germany or the Tutsis in Rwanda is quite simple. If this is combined with local leaders who want to take advantage of such grievances, it can lead to genocide. Economic factors, particularly income and economic growth, are negatively associated with the outbreak of genocide. Anderton & Carter, (2014) emphasized that genocide risk

increases when an out-group becomes exploited. Exploitation or discrimination can foster the “othering” of an out-group, which reduces the costs to an authority group of recruiting perpetrators. However, economic discrimination can further reduce the costs of recruitment by rendering acceptable the seizure of victims’ wealth. Moreover, undercutting a victim group’s economic livelihood may be particularly damaging to the group’s viability, and that is an important precursor to genocide. Because people can live without anything but food. Thus, economic discrimination can especially elevate the risk of genocide (para 6.5). Motivation is an important topic of discussion in the case of economic genocide. There may be various ways to persuade a group to eradicate another group of people. Rothe and Mullins (2009) believed that it is essential to explain motivation when trying to understand international crimes. There must be some motivation for the state, the organization, and the individual actors to engage in such crimes. These motivations may include political power, economic or resource gain, revenge, or some other variable. Beyond motivation, there must be an opportunity to commit a crime. Motivated offenders cannot commit a crime unless they encounter an opportunity to do so. For an act as complex as genocide or some other international crime to occur, however, the illegitimate opportunity must extend beyond the individual to other levels. This would include things like a vulnerable population, international relations, global economics, military supremacy, diffusion of responsibility, and propaganda (p.106).

It is possible to discuss some genocides of the twentieth century from an economic point of view. One thing that is important here is that most of the genocides that have taken place since the twentieth century have been politically motivated. However, with the emergence of the concept of the modern welfare state, various new concepts of exploitation and deprivation have also emerged last century. Practical examples of such phenomena, as, the regulatory behavior of various international corporate groups, the intentional incitement of one group against another by the state, and the attempt to extinct a group in order to impose full control over resources are not scarce.

3.2 Economic genocide under international law

‘Genocide is as old as humanity’ (Sartre, n.d.). However, the convention regarding genocide is considerably younger. The concept is now well developed in international law. The Genocide Convention is an important step in recognizing genocide as a crime in international law. This comparative success in the international criminal justice system regarding genocide has given the access that perpetrators responsible for genocide will be brought to justice. Yet, it does not contain any reference to economic genocide. According to the provision of Article 2 of the genocide convention, genocide encompasses killing, serious bodily or mental harm, conditions of life that may bring about destruction, measures to prevent birth and forcibly transfer of children within a group in a society. The third clause of Article 2 is the most directly related to economic genocide, as it defines genocide an act where perpetrator intentionally inflicting on people's conditions of life calculated to bring about its bodily destruction in whole or in part. This clause is most relevant on defining and inferring economic genocide as a crime in international law because it is so broad and can conceivably be regarded to address a wide range of difficulties. Although the clause can be interpreted in many ways related to economic genocide, several states from Latin America and Saudi Arabia insisted on direct inclusion of economic genocide in the Convention while it was in a draft. A supplemental provision was demanded that defines economic genocide as a genocide committed by means of the economic destruction of whole groups of people. However, these initiatives did not succeed (Morris, 2018, p.19 & 25).

During the Cold War, the concept of genocide lost relevance and economic disparities were in high proportion amongst the states who were prone to socialism and capitalism. Specially, the concept of genocide suddenly took a new meaning when socialism favoring states began to tilt towards liberalism in 1980 and early 1990s. However, that meaning was related to the huge economic disparities and the aggressive nature of Western capitalist institutions and their hunger for wealth. Even after the end of the Cold War and the acceptance of capitalism by former Soviet states such as Russia, the impression of capitalism remained harmful to some Russians, who assumed it represents a form of economic genocide. However, the concept of economic genocide was not only a concern for Russians but to the developing and under developing nations too. Smaller states in Africa and Asia that served the larger liberal states with natural resources during the Cold War were beginning to cry foul and

those investments and uneven trade rules resulted in a form of economic genocide or at least contribute to economic genocide (Morris, 2018, p.23)

It is usually seen that most of the weak nations or states when experience conflicts or civil unrest, they blame religious, cultural and ethnic differences rather than examining economic decision-making policies that probably might have influenced the emergence of conflicts and led to economic genocide. In the case of Prosecutor v Jean-Paul Akayesu, Case No. ICTR-96-4-T, 2 September 1998 the tribunal observed that by blaming deteriorating economic conditions on certain ethnic groups creates favorable conditions for the crime of genocide:

[T]hat incitement may be direct, and nonetheless implicit. Thus, at the time the Convention on Genocide was being drafted, the Polish delegate observed that it was sufficient to play skillfully on mob psychology by casting suspicion on certain groups, by insinuating that they were responsible for economic or other difficulties in order to create an atmosphere favorable to the perpetration of the crime (para 557).

One thing is easy to assume from the observation of the tribunal that if economic conditions can be used favorably by the perpetrators of genocidal crimes, then it is obligatory to consider economic conditions in consideration of the crime of genocide. However, there is another question arises. How to recognize whether deliberate economic measures have been taken to change conditions of life of a certain group that inflicted destruction? We will try to answer this question in the next section, showing some facts and instances of twentieth century.

Developed and stable nations even with the wealth gap between the rich and the poor rarely descend into civil war or any form of internal conflict in the modern era because they own a strong system of social laws to protect the state. The situation is not the same for countries that are ethnically diverse, based on race, religion, culture amongst other factors and are poor. As such, armed conflicts that occurred in the post-Cold War period could easily be linked to the geography and political economy of natural resources. Competition over natural resources, the direction of economic policies and inequalities drives social and economic divisions that leads to conflicts (le Billon, 2001, p. 568). Conflicts under these circumstances create a war economy, whether it happens because of internal or external force. A war economy might influence the production of goods from natural resources to control the production and flow of goods. This can bring positive and negative consequences on the group of peoples or the fate of an entire country (Morris, 2018, p.27).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Economic genocide: Facts and instances

The economic motives of each genocide are as obvious as the economic consequences. Economic motives are often overlooked in race, religion, and caste conflicts. It will be noticed that in most of the genocides, the process of exploitation in the form of various economic policies begins long before the ethnic or nationalist conflict reaches its final provocative stage. It is from the exploitation that other conflicts in society can escalate and at one stage turn into dreadful conflicts. In this section I will be discussing some facts and instances of genocides occurred in twentieth century that shows how prior to genocide, deliberate economic decisions and policies inflicted on group conditions of life to bring its complete or partial physical destruction. Undoubtedly, there are notable other examples too. However, the purpose of this study is not to prove that, these genocides took place entirely because of economic reasons, but rather to show that, one of the main reasons behind these genocides was the various discriminatory economic policies, which were easily overlooked.

Nazi Holocaust

By 1936, under Hitler Nazi had consolidated their power achieving economic stability. Immediately after that, Hitler started to proceed for his key ideological goal-Lebensraum, or living space for the German people, that to be added through a war to take control of lands in the east. Within four years, Germany's two-third of industrial development came from war preparation and unemployment was almost completely eradicated by 1938. However, Jews and political prisoners were an exception because they were excluded from work by the Nazis' discriminatory policies (although many of these still completed forced labor in concentration camps). Hitler's new law came in 1938 right after, a few weeks, Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria. To make an estimation of Jewish wealth or

to say confiscate them, there was actually no legal way for banks to know which of their customers were Jewish or “non-Aryan” according to the definitions of the 1935 Nuremberg racial law. In this context, relying on “Jewish sounding” names alone was unsatisfactory and in several cases caused difficulties and complaints by customers. The process became much easier while on April 26, 1938, a “Decree for the Reporting of Jewish-Owned Property” was issued requiring all Jews in both Germany and Austria to register their all types of (literally everything from furniture and paintings to life insurance and stocks) domestic and foreign property or assets. Foreign Jews were obliged to register only German assets) and imposed large penalties for failure to comply (James, 2006, p.197). This was an important part of Hitler's 'Aryanization'. Historian Götz Aly writes, “Aryanization was essentially a gigantic, trans-European trafficking operation in stolen goods,” (Aly, 2008, p.168). Jews throughout Europe, including Germany, were exploited in many ways before the decree of 1938, but the law added a new dimension to exploitation. It was a forerunner to a complete and definitive removal of Jews from the German economy. Though Germany's financial state recovered during Hitler, he needed more money for the military and that was where Jewish wealth was used. Therefore, he promoted a lethal form of anti-Semitism that held Jews responsible for Germany's military humiliation in World War I and encouraged the belief that Jews are the 'parasites' who grew wealthy through theft from Aryans and had to be exterminated drastically and ruthlessly (Hitler, 2021, p.238). However, the majority of the Jewish families actually belonged to the middle class. The edict of 1938 not only made the Jewish families loss all their wealth but also encouraged to leave the country which was another of Hitler's goals too known as 'Final Solution' (the wholesale extermination of Jews). It is remarkable that people were easier to liquidate than property in Nazi Germany.

Former Yugoslavia: Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosnia has been an ethnically diverse state since its history with three respective largest ethnic groups Muslims (Bosnian), Serbs and Croats who considered themselves as Yugoslavs. Differences between these ethnic groups are in terms of religion, Bosnian's are mainly Muslims, Serbs are Orthodox and Croatians are Roman Catholic. Before its independence in 1992, Bosnia was a constituent republic of the former Yugoslavia (Demény, G., 2011, p.4). In the 1980s, Yugoslavia found itself in an economic crisis, the standard of living fell, and both economic and political measures were taken to correct this (Sekulić et al., 2006, p.804). At the beginning of the 1980s, several conflicts escalated because of political and economic front. The economic system and the economic policy adopted by the federal government was liable behind the conflicts occurred. According to Žižmond, (1992):

"Conflicting economic interests (which had been ignored by the constitution since 1974 within the institutions of the 'consensual economy': self-management agreements, social compacts, social planning, etc.) caused a collapse in the unity of the Yugoslav market. By the end of the 1980s, the breakdown was clearly visible" (p. 110).

The economic growth went down to 0.6 percent by 1989 (Yarashevich & Karneyeva, 2013, p.269). Soon, a violent territorial and ethnic mass conflict that lasted from April 1992 to December 1995 in Bosnia-Herzegovina broke out after the dissolution of federal Yugoslavia at a time of economic and political transition in the early 1990s. From June 1991 to March 1992, there was a wave of secessions took place (Macedonia declared independence on 25 September 1991, and Bosnia-Herzegovina – on 3 March 1992). These incidents should not be considered merely as a reaction to federal macroeconomic disaster. Rather, it had roots within more complex economic conflicts that built up throughout the postwar period.

Rwanda

The Rwanda crisis has been portrayed by the Western media in a way that actually minimized the enormity of the event. They tended to understate the magnitude of the tragedy, while the explanation of the underlying social and economic causes has been carefully neglected. The brutality of the massacres shocked the global community, but what the international press fails to mention is that the civil war was preceded by a profound economic crisis. The restructuring of the agricultural system led the population into extreme poverty and hardship. This deterioration in the economic environment immediately followed the collapse of the international coffee market and the imposition of radical macroeconomic reforms by the Bretton Wood institutions exacerbated smoldering ethnic tensions and hastened the process of political collapse.

Coffee cultivation has been Rwanda's main source of income since the 1970s and accounts for over 70% of the country's export earnings. Due to this, during the Habyarimana presidency in 1973, Rwandan coffee farmers were forced to grow coffee and the pulling of coffee plants from the ground has been made illegal. In 1987, the quota system introduced as part of the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) began to fall apart that was established by President Kennedy's administration in 1963 to create a stable coffee market for preventing communist uprisings in Latin America during Cold War. As one of the coffee producers, Rwanda benefited from this fixed market. However, in 1986 coffee prices began to decline as more coffee producers started to export huge amount of coffees who were not a part of the agreement. The fall in prices is having devastating consequences for Rwanda and several other African countries. Coffee production was drastically reducing in every single year. Peasants could not go back to yield other food crops in the coffee fields because of over cropping of coffee trees. The cash income from coffee was not enough to buy food, instead the prices of agricultural supplies skyrocketed and the monetary income from coffee was very inadequate. The crisis in the coffee industry had an impact on the production of traditional staple foods and led to a marked decline in the production of cassava, beans and sorghum. The credit union system that gave loans to smallholders had also crumbled. In addition, with the liberalization of trade and the deregulation of the grain markets recommended by the Bretton Woods institutions (heavily subsidized), cheap food imports and food aid from rich countries reached Rwanda with the effect of destabilizing the local markets. The crops and food crops were not economically viable. The entire agricultural system fell into crisis (Chossudovsky, 1996). In this crisis moment, the Rwandan government subsidized the country's coffee farmers until 1993 and the subsidies were funded through the loans of World Bank and International Monetary Bank. The process did not sustain for long. By 1994, these funds ended. President Habariyama now wanted new techniques to hold the loyalty of the majority. He started out to emphasize ethnicity, which served to divert interest from financial problems. Anti-Tutsi rhetoric have become a nationalist rallying cry. A constant stream of anti-Tutsi propaganda was broadcasted on Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) – referring to tutsis' as "Inyenzi", cockroaches in kiswahili, and encouraging Hutus for their elimination (Brown, 2019, p.49). A situation that inevitably contributed to the worsening of the Rwandan crisis. The collapse of the 1989 International Coffee Agreement only fueled the seeds of genocide from an economic perspective when Rwanda was already divided into ethnic groups, languages, and other factors. The financial incentives of the coffee trade accelerated genocide from an economic viewpoint, as the trade financed the dominant group that controlled its harvest (Morris, 2018, p.27). Thus, the deliberate manipulation of market forces destroyed economic activity and people's livelihoods, fueled unemployment and led to widespread famine and social despair that caused bountiful human sufferings.

Sudan

Darfur in South Sudan as many other conflict zones in the world have seen a group of people and other ethnic minorities chased and killed from their lands. These crimes have been widely cataloged as ethnic cleansing, but the more ominous reason for the occurrence of those crimes lie in the high value of economic property and natural resources. Various regimes in Sudan have pursued economic policies that have resulted in high food prices since independence, which has contributed to genocide in the years since Sudan escaped colonialism. Sudan's ethnic divide between "blacks" and "Arabs", too divided in religious lines, Muslims versus Christians. Although today's South Sudan enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in the past, the deep racial, religious and economic divisions between black Sudanese and Arabs have always been difficult to resolve. Therefore, various population groups in Sudan have been killed in the decades since independence, where control of the earth's territory and natural resources has also been a major factor behind the mass murders that is termed as "ethnic cleansing" in modern times. Since Omar al Bashir's 1989 coup took political power in Sudan, conflicts between various ethnic and religious groups flared-up and all-out civil war started. Economic policy and the brutal civil war in Sudan under the Bashir regime eventually led to Africa's newest country, South Sudan (Morris, 2018, p.31). When Bashir regimes began to use economic policy to create "ethnic borders as economic borders, this resulted in Darfurians creating wealth for the elite and growing inequalities. These added to ethnic tensions, leaving some economically destitute and others wealthy (Solevad Nielsen, 2008, p.435). According to Nielsen, the economic genocide occurred in Darfur:

The term genocide as enshrined in international law seems to apply to the violence in Darfur economic destruction.... I claim that state-sponsored attacks on the homeland of rebel militias, the destruction of civil economic life and food sources, and the mass displacement and expropriation of the population would constitute genocide under the UN definition (Solevad Nielsen, 2008, p.456-457).

Bangladesh

After the partition of British India, the newly formed state of Pakistan was viewed as a geographic anomaly with more than 1,300 miles between its western and eastern parts. Although the two regions were united under one religion, the differences in language, culture, and way of life, including the religious perspectives of the two regions, eventually forced them to separate. The people of West Pakistan viewed the Bengali Muslims as inferior and impure and hoped to turn them into "model Muslims" by alienating them from their Hindu origins. Headquarters of the government of Pakistan were established in the west wing and were mostly dominated by the elite groups in West Pakistan, who were mainly Punjabi. Although the Bengali population formed the largest ethnic population in the country, they were not significantly represented in the government. Therefore, the control over state organizations, government mechanisms and the armed forces were in the hands of the dominant Punjabi. This situation resulted in severe economic exploitation of the east wing that was highly evident in the distribution of various national resources, such as the financial budget and military personnel, which had a negative impact on the welfare and development of the Bengali population (Bangladesh's Genocide Debate; A Conscientious Research, 2018).

East Pakistan's foreign trade earnings were diverted to finance imports for West Pakistan. Pakistan's Economic policy favored West Pakistan at the expense of East Pakistan. In particular, tariffs, import controls and industrial licensing compelled East Pakistan to buy goods from West Pakistan. Since 1948-60, East Pakistan's export earnings were 70%, while import earnings were only 25%. There had been a significant net transfer of resources from East to West Pakistan too. Most of the infrastructural, social, educational developments were taking place in West Pakistan using the export earnings of East Pakistan. As a result, East Pakistan's economy transformed from a surplus one to a deficit one. Moreover, the aid flowed from abroad was disproportionately allocated between the two wings through various agencies such as Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation (PICIC), Industrial Development Bank (IDB) and 77% of foreign resources were easily accessible for West Pakistan and only 23% were available for East Pakistan (Gul, 2015, p.4). The basic economic prerequisite for genocide is a weak economic structure, a shock of economic policy and this was fully evident in East Pakistan for 23 years along with other multilateral exploitation, and that ultimately led this region to quest for independence in 1971.

Myanmar

The global coverage of the Rohingya crisis focused entirely on the religious / ethnic aspect and characterized it as religious persecution. Human Rights Watch described the violence against the Rohingya as "crimes against humanity" committed as part of an ethnic cleansing campaign that was carried out by the government of Myanmar. Over the past two decades, corporate acquisitions of land for mining, timber, agriculture and water have increased massively around the world. In the case of Myanmar, the military has been forcefully taking large tracts of land from smallholders across the country without compensation and regardless of ethnicity or religion since the 1990s. Projects including the expansion of military bases, the exploitation and extraction of natural resources, large-scale agriculture, infrastructure and tourism are the main reason behind this land acquisition. The development has forcibly displaced or forced to settle thousands of people both domestically and across borders with Bangladesh, India and Thailand. This land grab has continued over the decades, but has expanded enormously in recent years. According to Saskia Sassen, the intensified persecution of the Rohingya (and other minorities) could be driven in part by military-economic interests and not primarily by religious / ethnic issues. The government of Myanmar recently allocated a huge amount of land (1,268,077 hectares that is equal to 3,100,000 acres) of Rohingya inhabited area of Myanmar for corporate rural development and this is a huge leap from the first formal allocation of its kind in 2012, when the allocated land amount was only 7,000 hectares (17,000 acres). They have been doing this for the past 20 years (Sassen, 2017).

Religious and ethnic differences are mostly considered the main causes of Rohingya persecution. Especially since Myanmar has officially recognized 135 ethnic groups (the Rohingya were

removed from this list after the promulgation of Burma Citizenship Law, 1982). However, too much focus on religion has underrated the issue of vast land grabs that have affected millions of people in Myanmar, including the Rohingya, over the years. In 2011, Myanmar undertook economic and political reforms that led to what it was called “Asian last frontier,” opening the door to foreign investment. Soon thereafter, in 2012, violent attacks increased against Rohingya in Rakhine state and, to a lesser extent, the Karen people. Therefore, it will not be absurd to assume that, religion may be functioning as a veil in Myanmar that military leaders can use to minimize attention on the land-grabbing aspect of this economic development part of their agenda (Sassen, 2017). The treatment of Rohingya in Rakhine State is the most prominent example of wider minority displacement. About a million Rohingya have fled Myanmar to avoid persecution since the late 1970s. They are continuously forced or encouraged to cross borders since no country is willing to take responsibility for them. This has left the Rohingya in a terrible vulnerable state. The Rohingya tragedy is part of a larger picture showing the oppression and displacement of minorities in Myanmar and neighboring countries. The relevance and complexity of religious and ethnic issues are present in Myanmar. However, we must not ignore the political and economic context and reasons for displacement, which often go unnoticed.

5. Conclusion and policy implications

Poverty and lack of economic opportunities are significant variables in the beginning of genocide. Lower standard of life has consistently been seen to add fuel to the fires of internal conflict and instability. While each conflict has significant contextual differences, genocides are more likely to happen in economically weak nations even when other instabilities, previous genocides and politicides, as well as political, external and demographic variables are well controlled. Genocides are also shown to be more likely to occur in countries with lower economic growth rates. This type of despair and lack of hope or opportunities can instigate and intensify any conflict situation. These situations were evident in Germany in the 1930s, Rwanda / Burundi in the 1990s, West Africa in the early 2000s. The ethnic perspective is not immediate. In fact, it starts when the economic crisis hits. Since in most cases economically weak, poor countries are prone to economic genocide, the various mechanisms of society and the state need to be closely monitored as part of the preventive measures. It would be possible to avoid such disastrous consequences if the variables of economic system and policies are properly managed. Quick and early diplomatic and political responses are more important in conflict zones than multilateral ones in changing the underlying potentials for genocidal violence. Long-term international engagement such as employing economic, diplomatic incentives and sanctions are needed as well to the countries where adverse regime changes and the outbreak of internal war are likely to occur. According to the convention, it is a state's utmost duty to take proper initiatives to prevent genocide, and they are fully liable before the International Court of Justice. However, in majority cases, the governing body itself, often seen as the patron or exploiter of the exploiting group and that is where international law enforcing organizations might play an active role.

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