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Actors of genocide and processes of deviantization: a Weberian ideal typical formulation

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Abstract

Many authors have proposed different definitions of genocide. This article discusses the concept of the actor of genocide embedded in such definitions. Two groups of authors are distinguishable: 1) authors who have an explicit specification of the actor of genocide in their genocide definitions and 2) authors without an explicit clarification of the actor of genocide in their genocide definitions (using either the word perpetrator or any other general expression/or no expression at all). After discussing genocide definitions, the article develops the concept of “deviantization” as an additional detection of actors of genocide. A process of deviantization is a process which labels a person or group of persons and/or their behavior as deviant and/or criminal. In this article, we define a process of deviantization as a Weberian ideal type.

Key words: process of deviantization, ideal type, genocide definitions, actor of genocide **Introduction**

A systematic treatment of a subject such as genocide should pay attention to conceptual issues (Moshman, 2001). How can we define a concept like genocide? In their attempts to describe and explain it, many authors have proposed different definitions (see for example: Straus, 2001; Shaw, 2007), in which two types of conceptual structures are distinguishable: formal and prototypical conceptual structures (Moshman, 2001; Goertz, 2006).

Formal concepts exist in two types. The first type utilizes necessary and sufficient conditions. An example of such is the definition of a square: a square is a figure with four equal sides and four equal angles of 90 degrees. ‘Necessary and sufficient conditions’ entail a conceptual structure in the form of “if and only if n characteristics are present” (Goertz, 2006, p. 36). The second type of formal concept is the family resemblance concept. An example of this type is the concept of ‘welfare state’. A welfare state may be defined by the number of qualitatively different services a ‘state’ provides its civilians. The analyst may decide that four out of six services is sufficient to speak of a welfare state. He or she may also decide that

it does not matter which one of six services have to be present. The 'family resemblance' conceptual structure uses the form of "if m of n characteristics are present" (Goertz, 2006, p. 36).

Besides formal concepts, we distinguish a second major conceptual structure that being, the prototypical conceptual structure. A prototypical concept has fewer clear boundaries than formal concepts. It is defined according to the characteristics of a phenomenon presumed to be prototypical for a broader set of phenomena. To describe prototypical concepts, Moshman gives the example of robins and ostriches. Although they are both birds, people view robins as more birdlike than ostriches.

Although a mixture of both conceptual structures and their subtypes is possible, it is preferable to use formal concepts in scientific research. Such constructs have relatively clearer conceptual boundaries than prototypical concepts.¹ In what follows, we therefore focus on the use of formal concepts in genocide studies.

There has been substantial discussion concerning the definition of genocide.² For example, Straus identified five different constitutive elements in a review article: intentional group destruction as a core idea, intention, the mode of destruction, the actor of destruction and the victim of destruction (Straus, 2001).³ However, as of this writing there is no separate review article in the literature that entirely focuses on the conceptualization of the actor of genocide. This article therefore aims to fill that gap. After discussing the definitions of genocide, we develop the concept of "deviantization" as an additional detection of actors of genocide.⁴ We don't argue that the concept of deviantization replaces or is an alternative to the concept of genocide.

Lemkin and the actor of genocide

According to Lemkin, who coined the concept in 1944, genocide is "the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group" (Lemkin, 1944, p. 79). The concept of genocide is a combination of the Greek word 'genos' (race, tribe) and the Latin word 'cide' (killing). According to Lemkin (1944)

Genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group. (p. 79)

Lemkin's (1944) concept of genocide as discussed in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* seems to refer directly to phenomena during the German national socialist rule, including the destruction of European Jews. Lemkin made relatively short, direct references to other historical contexts, but they seem to stay in the periphery of his work, as background information.⁵ McDonnell and Moses (2005), however, claim that "early modern and modern colonialism was central to his conception of genocide" (p. 501). Lemkin continues by describing techniques of genocide in different domains (the political, social, cultural, economic, biological, physical, religious and moral domains) that the German occupier carried out in several nations (Lemkin, 1944). In his description of techniques of genocide, Lemkin emphasizes the use of legal regulation.

In his text on the techniques of genocide in the political domain, Lemkin notes, for example, that “commercial signs and inscriptions on buildings, roads, and streets, as well as names of communities and of localities, were changed to a German form” (Lemkin, 1944, p. 82). In the section on the social domain, the author writes that the German occupier supplanted national law and judicial systems with German ones. In the section on the cultural domain, Lemkin describes the legal prohibition of teaching in the national language. Describing the economic domain, Lemkin writes that Jews were economically deprived of material existence and refers to their legal status (Lemkin, 1944). In the section on the biological domain, Lemkin refers to subsidies “provided in Poland for German families having at least three minor children” (Lemkin, 1944, p. 86). In the section on the physical domain, Lemkin details different methods of “physical debilitation and even annihilation of national groups in occupied countries” (Lemkin, 1944, p. 87). For example, he describes the way in which these targeted groups were forced to endure food rationing measures that resulted in malnutrition and starvation. In the sections on the two remaining domains, the religious and the moral, he describes more legal measures (Lemkin, 1944). For the religious domain, the author refers to an order given on 9 December 1940 which permitted children over fourteen years “to renounce their religious affiliations” (Lemkin, 1944, 89). In the section on the moral domain, the author writes that “the curfew law, enforced very strictly against Poles, is relaxed if they can show the authorities a ticket to one of the gambling houses which the Germans have allowed to come into existence” (Lemkin, 1944, p. 90). Although Lemkin did not explicitly clarify the actor of genocide in his definition, we note that the creation of legal regulation is almost an exclusive domain of the ‘state’. This seems to indicate that Lemkin saw the ‘state’ as the main actor of genocide. The following section gives an overview of the concept of the actor of genocide post-Lemkin.

The concept of the actor of genocide post-Lemkin

It is important to emphasize from the outset that definitions of genocide may have different objectives. A definition such as the UN definition of genocide has legal ends, such as prosecution. Social science definitions have other goals, such as theory building.

In the literature on genocide definitions, there exists almost a consensus that a ‘state’ does not have to be the exclusive actor who perpetrates genocide. However, two groups of authors are distinguishable: 1) authors who have an explicit specification of the actor of genocide in their definitions and 2) authors without an explicit clarification of the actor of genocide in their definitions (using either the word perpetrator or any other general expression/or no expression at all). In this section, we discuss both groups.

Harff & Gurr (1996) define the actors of genocide as “governing elites or their agents – or, in the case of civil war, either of the contending authorities” (p. 34).⁶ For Melson (1992), “a state” is the actor of genocide (p. 26). Horowitz (1980) conceptualizes the actor of genocide as a “state bureaucratic apparatus” (p. 17). Chalk & Jonassohn (1990) see the actor of genocide as “a state or other authority” (p. 23). With other authorities, they mean “local authorities” different from the state (p. 26). Chorbajian (2002) sees “authoritarian states” as actors of “classic genocide” (p. xxi). Midlarsky (2005) considers genocide as a specific policy of the state. Levene (2005) explicitly emphasizes in an ideal typical way “the state” as the actor of genocide (p. 35). Shaw (2007) explicitly includes in an ideal typical way “armed power organizations, (...) states, quasi-states, parties, militaries and armed settler and paramilitary movements.” The difference with unarmed individuals (“officials of political institutions and ‘ordinary’ civilians”) for Shaw are the relatively more organized and armed character of their actions. According to his definition, genocides may involve many different types of actors (p. 155).⁷ Unlike other genocide definitions, Shaw therefore does not assume a monolithic nature of the actor of genocide.

A second group of authors have no explicit clarification of the actor of genocide in their genocide definition. It consists of Mann, Staub, Huttenbach, Lemkin, the authors of the UN convention, Fein, Bauer, Drost, Kuper, Straus, Katz, Barta, Powell and Charny. The UN convention provides no clarity about the actor of genocide.⁸

Huttenbach and Straus are openly skeptical about the state as the exclusive actor of genocide. Huttenbach (1988) claims that "(...) the proposition needs to be tested whether it is necessarily true for the future, that genocide policy can only be executed by government institutions. (...) In fact, upon closer examination, the role of the state is not so integral to the practice of genocide" (p. 296). Huttenbach however does not specify the actor of genocide. Straus (2001) is similarly skeptical when he writes that "(...) no *prima facie* reason exists for why the state must be the agent committing genocide" (p. 365). Straus does, however, include a general specification of the actor of genocide, calling it the "perpetrator". Barta and Powell focus on specific social relations in their definition. Powell (2011) defines genocide as "an identity-difference relation of violent obliteration" (p. 84), whereas according to Barta (1987), "relations of destruction" are important to conceptualize in a genocide definition. In his case study of Australia, he states that

Very few people are conscious of having any relationship at all with Aborigines. My thesis is that all white people in Australia do have such a relationship; that in the key relation, the appropriation of the land, it is fundamental to the history of society in which they live; and that implicitly rather than explicitly, in ways which were inevitable rather than intentional, it is a relationship of genocide. (p. 239)⁹

In the next section, we introduce the concept of a process of deviantization as an additional means to detect actors of genocide.

Processes of deviantization and the actor of genocide

Introduction

In this article, we argue that the phenomenon of genocide (however defined) includes processes of deviantization. This refers to a process that labels a person or group of persons and/or their behavior as deviant and/or criminal.¹⁰ In the section that follows, we argue that a process of deviantization offers an additional detection of actors of genocide. Processes of deviantization are not the only possible elements for executing genocide. Such processes therefore do not exhaust all possible phenomena that happen before, during or after genocide. We propose that although not every process of deviantization is genocidal or happens in a genocidal context, it may be a part of genocide, however defined. A process of deviantization as we define it is as a social scientific concept and not a legal one.

The perspective of a specific actor constructs deviance. Specific rules which emanate from the perspective of a specific actor define deviance. With rules, we mean written (formal) or unwritten (informal) specifications that explicitly or implicitly indicate differences between individuals and/or groups of individuals and/or their behavior, which should be acted against according to the perspective of an actor. Deviance indicated by criminal law is also usually called criminality.

A first example of a process of deviantization is the law for the restoration of the professional civil service of 7 April 1933. The law forced the dismissal of specific "civil servants who are not of Aryan descent" (Arad et al., 1999, p. 40). According to Longerich (2010), "national socialist racial policy consisted above all in the exclusion of so called 'alien races' and in the 'racially hygienic filtration of the

weaker members of the native 'Germanic' race" (p. 30). Longerich (2010) also claims that "a racial criterion was being used to rob part of the civil service of the constitutionally guaranteed status that formed such an important element of the German tradition of the servant of the state" (p. 38). This law divided the group of civil servants into two main groups: Aryan civil servants and non-Aryan civil servants. Non-Aryan civil servants were made to seem deviant against the figure of the Aryan civil servant.

A second example is found in the work of Cohn on *Europe's Inner Demons*. Cohn described how Christians were accused of orgies and the murder of children in Roman society. They were persecuted (for example during the reign of Marcus Aurelius) (Cohn, 2005, p. 15).

Constructing differences between people and/or their behavior, like Non-Aryan civil servants or Roman Christians, is common in current and past societies. In this article, this is only partially a process of deviantization. The claim of an actor that there should be action against these differences lends a certain character to this construction. Particular phenomena are then made objects for social control.

Deviance as we defined it is a social phenomenon and as such, cannot exist without human actors. These same human actors may share a common recognition of a rule (as we defined it). Conflict over the creation, interpretation, modification and application of these rules is possible.

Labels of deviance and/or criminality are always preceded by a labeling process, regardless of the ethical content of the labels.¹¹ According to Fein (1990), the labeling perspective of deviance "is most suggestive for studies of manufactured deviance for social control" such as conspiracies of witches (p. 14). She also claims that this perspective is insufficient without acknowledging possible existing objective indicators of group membership. These indicators may have a more decisive role in defining group membership and may also predate the "administrative designation" of membership by actors of genocide. Fein (1990) claimed that

the victims of genocide are generally members of real groups, whether conceived of as collectivities, races or classes, who acknowledge their existence, although there may be administrative designation of their membership as German authorities designated Jews for 'the Final Solution', including some people of Jewish lineage who no longer considered themselves Jews (and did not register voluntarily with the Jewish community) or were members of other religious communities (converts and their children). Had there not been an actual Jewish community with its own institutions, German authorities could not have defined and enumerated Jews, for there was no objective indicator of their alleged criteria of Jewishness - race - which divided 'Jews' and 'Aryans' categorically. (p. 14)

Certain victims of genocide do acknowledge their membership in a victimized group. It is also true that there exist objective indicators of group membership that are/were necessary to define and enumerate victims. However, actors of genocide still have to target specific people. This targeting may involve recognizing and indicating differences between people and/or their behavior as something which should be acted against. This happens regardless of the existence or non-existence of objective indicators of group membership.¹² In the following section, we further develop the concept of deviantization with the use of the methodology of the ideal type.

Methodological remarks

In this article, we conceptualize deviantization as an ideal type in the Weberian sense. Weberian ideal types are "conceptual constructs that are ideal in the sense that they are abstractions from, and hence simplifications of, concrete social reality, rather than mirrors or full depictions of it. And they are

types insofar as they seek to capture what from the analyst's viewpoint are "typical" features of this complex reality" (Camic et al., 2005, pp. 8-9).¹³

We construct ideal types because empirical reality is complex and ever-changing. Therefore, "no exhaustive depiction of reality 'as it actually exists' or 'as it actually occurred' is possible" (Kalberg, 1994, p. 84). Ideal types are used to analyze reality without having the ambition to create a complete picture of what actually occurred in the past or distant past or will occur in the future.

The use of ideal types has specific goals. Firstly, they hypothesize certain patterns of action-orientations¹⁴ that can be tested through empirical research (Kalberg, 1994). Secondly, ideal types are conceptual tools to examine social reality. More specifically, they conceptualize regular, recurring or patterned features of social reality. They are used as *benchmarks or yardsticks* of empirical phenomena. The deviation of empirical phenomena to these yardsticks helps to define and locate relevant empirical phenomena (Kalberg, 1994).

In other words, it is through this deviation that we delineate empirical phenomena in relation to the ideal type. Once the ideal type is constructed, the analyst is in a position to examine why and how a specific slice of social reality deviates from the ideal type (Swedberg 2005). Kalberg (1994) notes that ideal types "facilitate the researcher's grasp upon and comprehension of an amorphous and ceaselessly flowing reality and assist the clear conceptualization of the particular case or development under investigation" (p. 93).

Although the ideal type is not constructed as an average type of empirical phenomena or an empirical classification of phenomena, the use of an ideal type lends itself to classifying phenomena or creating average types. An ideal type also does not try to describe social reality in an exhaustive way (this is impossible) or to introduce general laws or theories (Kalberg, 1994). Although ideal types are anchored in social reality and can, as such, be used to track empirical developments, they do not try to capture empirical developments (Kalberg, 1994) (see also the definition of an ideal type at the beginning of this section).

Elements of a process of deviantization

A process of deviantization divides analytically into three elements, namely into:

- A primary deviantization (defining behavior and/or individuals as criminal and/or deviant through the construction of rules including the interpretation and possible modification of these rules).
- A secondary deviantization (action against the deviant and/or criminal (behavior) including also possible elements of reporting, investigating, arresting, prosecuting, trialing and punishing).
- A tertiary deviantization (the possible harmful effect of the primary and/or secondary elements).

These three ideal types are relevant for classifying and studying empirical phenomena. The ideal types offer a particular analytic point of view and are not postulated as universally valid (see also Fijnaut, 1990).

The rules have two possible forms: formal (written) and informal (unwritten), which have two possible applications: a legal and non-legal application. Rules that are non-legal are written or unwritten. Legal rules are usually written or have a written foundation. The construction, the interpretation, modification and/or the application of rules (including the reporting, investigating, arresting, prosecuting, trialing and punishing of people and/or behavior) is not always the result of a formal procedure. Informal processes may suffice. A "state" is therefore not necessarily involved in a process of deviantization.

The formal type of rule and legal application has already been exemplified when we mentioned the law for the restoration of the professional civil service of 7 April 1933. Another example is the Politburo decree “on measures for the liquidation of kulak farms in raions of wholesale collectivization” of 30 January 1930 (Viola et al., 2005). The Politburo decree divided kulaks into three categories: the “counterrevolutionary kulak *aktiv* elements”, “remaining elements of the kulak *aktiv*”, “kulaks who are left within the borders of the raion” (Viola et al., 2005, pp. 228-229).¹⁵ An example of an informal type of rule and informal application is found during the Pueblo revolt of New Mexico in 1680. According to Robins (2009), “ethnicity played a central role in determining who was targeted. In addition to skin tone, people were often marked for death for their language, dress, occupation, or religion” (p. 35). This seems to suggest that there existed certain informal rules for targeting people.

In social reality, the three mentioned elements are often intermingled with other processes (such as war) and each other. They may also co-evolve in social reality (for example a tertiary deviantization may feedback and result into a new construction of rules).

The rules are also not necessarily consistent throughout a process of deviantization. Actors may modify, interpret and/or apply rules differently during the process. Conflict over the creation, interpretation, modification and application of these rules is also possible. This is dependent on situational elements (Becker, 1973). A “grand intention” throughout the process, as Shaw puts it, is therefore not necessary in a process of deviantization.¹⁶

The three sub processes are also not necessarily temporally and/or spatially connected in a direct way. But it is imaginable that one actor performs a primary, secondary and tertiary process all by himself. The Einsatzgruppen, for example, selected victims to be shot. They possessed a relative autonomy in defining people and/or behavior as deviant. They also chose how and when to apply these conceptions. For example, in Ereignismeldung 148 of 19 December 1941, Einsatzgruppe B claimed the following measures: “da die Juden in Paritschi bei Bobruisk eine deutschfeindliche Haltung zeigten und enge Bindungen zu Partisanen hatten, wurde eine Sonderaktion durchgeführt, in deren Verlauf 1013 Juden und Jüdinnen erschossen wurden” (because the Jews in Paritschi in Bobruisk showed an anti-German attitude and had close relations with partisans, a special action was carried out in the course of which 1013 male and female Jews were shot) (Mallmann et al., 2011, p. 889). This example displays the construction of a complex relationship involving anti-German attitudes, Jewishness, and the partisanship of a considerable number of people. To a certain extent, the act was against this construction of difference.

A process of deviantization is inherently a goal-directed endeavor. The first sub-process is necessary for the two other sub-processes to exist. Without defining behavior and/or individuals as criminal and/or deviant, there would be no application of rules of deviance and/or criminality or specific forms of damage from a process of deviantization. The first subprocess is thus common to all processes of deviantization. The first sub-process implies the application of created rules, with the possibility of damage infliction. Damage can be material and/or immaterial (physical, psychological), legal and/or illegal, direct and/or indirect.¹⁷ In a process of deviantization, each step taken (the primary and secondary sub-processes of deviantization) increases the possibility of damage (tertiary deviantization).¹⁸

In the ideal type, the definition and/or application of rules precede damage. Actual genocide is often messy and does not always involve a definition and/or application of rules. If it does exist, there can also be a co-evolution of the three identified processes of deviantization. A process of deviantization with its focus on rules is thus not necessary for genocide to happen. In fact, it is not a given that any of the

sub-processes take place during genocide. It is relevant to understand why and to what degree these processes do or do not take place.

For example, civilians were killed during anti-guerrilla warfare. According to Gerlach (2010), “in order to limit the political success of guerrilla movements among the rural population, to cut off their supplies and recruitment, and to destroy any shelter for them, armies hit out against civilians rather more than against the partisan forces” (p. 177). Civilians were *not always* targeted through a process of deviantization. For example, saturation bombing campaigns of “forbidden zones” could primarily be used to weaken guerrilla movements and could result in mass civilian deaths (see also Gerlach, 2010). Social transformations of economic processes which resulted in mass civilian death did not always have processes of deviantization at work: For example, the loss of life from famine witnessed in Cambodia from 1975-1979, as a result of the transformation of the economy, comes to mind (see also Chandler, 1999).

It is also important to emphasize that an evolution towards a complete execution of all three elements does not necessarily occur in social reality (see also Sémelin, 2007). A process of deviantization does not always end in the third postulated process. This is especially the case when we study these processes at the individual level (for example the persecution of an individual) instead of an aggregated level (for example the persecution of a group of people viewed as a whole). The first sub-process of deviantization possibly flows directly into sub process three without going over into the second sub-process. Why a process of deviantization does (not) end in the first, second or third sub-process are questions that have to be investigated in empirical studies.

We are thus not necessarily writing about “the” process of deviantization. We recognize possible differences or similarities between different processes of deviantization at different levels of aggregation (for example central and local levels). Local variation is therefore important to examine (see also Straus, 2006).

There are also possible unintentional consequences of a process of deviantization. It may also entail improvisation. The sub-processes may flow into each other through intentional action and/or it's unintentional.¹⁹ Whether processes of deviantization during genocide are similar or different from processes of deviantization we see in current societies such as the deviantization of murder is a question that has to be investigated in empirical studies. Whether processes of deviantization temporally, functionally or spatially change in content or form is also an empirical question.

The speed of a process of deviantization also varies. The process stops when actions end in one of the sub-processes. Reactivation or continuation at another time or place is possible. The construction of differences between “Hutu’s” and “Tutsi’s” in Rwanda (without being a construction of deviance as we defined it) essentially originated from its previous colonial administration. These differences were essentially handed over and were instrumental for the 1994 genocide to occur (see also Melson, 2003).

The approach in this article is broader than the dehumanization perspective. Such a perspective focuses on how people are made to look less than human. This is only one facet of our approach. It is important to understand that the processes of deviantization are also used against actors of genocides: persecutors of genocidal actors often use the same structures as the genocidaires themselves.

Roles of actors of genocide and processes of deviantization

In this section, we define roles of actors of genocide and processes of deviantization. An actor of genocide acts meaningfully and has a demonstrable connection with a process of deviantization during

genocide (however defined). The identification of different types of actors of genocide in this article happens in relation to processes of deviantization.

According to Goffman in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, the actions and roles of individuals are dependent upon place and time. In his book, Goffman defines interaction “as the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another’s actions when in one another’s immediate physical presence” (Goffman, 1959, p. 8). This will be an important distinction in our article: face-to-face and non-face-to-face action. Goffman uses the metaphor of a stage play and constructs concepts from the perspective of the theatrical performance. According to Goffman, a performance is “all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants. Taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contribute the other performances as the audience, observers, or co-participants” (Goffman, 1959, p. 8).

At this point we will diverge from Goffman. While Goffman takes the performance of individuals as the point of reference, we take a specific process of deviantization as the point of reference and define roles of actors according to this perspective or performance. There are “front stage”, “backstage” and “outside” roles relative to the performance. These regions, as Goffman calls them, are defined relative to a performance. He writes that “in general, then, we must keep in mind that when we speak of front and back regions, we speak from the reference point of a particular performance, and we speak of the function that the place happens to serve at that time for the given performance” (Goffman, 1959, p. 77).

Our point of reference is a process of deviantization in a genocidal situation (however defined). We define the front stage relative to a process of deviantization as the stage where face-to-face action with the targeted individuals occurs. Back stage in a process of deviantization is where non-face-to-face action with the targeted individuals occurs (bureaucratic killers, for example, act in the back stage according to this definition). According to Goffman, there is also “...a third region, a residual one, namely, all places other than the two already identified. Such a region could be called ‘the outside’” (Goffman, 1959, p. 82). In our conceptualization, the outside would be a situation where no process of deviantization is operating.

The content and phase of the specific process of deviantization during genocide (however defined) conditions the specific role of actors of genocide. For each sub-process of deviantization, there exist *social carriers*. Examples of such carriers are political parties, military movements, social movements, religious organizations and economic organizations.

We define specific types of actors of genocide with the use of the described concepts. More specifically, we are defining roles that actors may embody in the process. It is important to emphasize that another perspective will certainly identify other roles.²⁰

We constructed eight different types or roles of actors of genocide (see table one). Each role is an ideal type and therefore a yardstick for studying empirical cases. The relations of the different roles can also be scrutinized. There is also the possibility of a plurality of motives of actors who orient their action towards a process of deviantization. These motives can also change during a process of deviantization. The same actor can perform different roles depending on time and/or place.

Table one: different roles of actors of genocide

		Front stage	Back stage
Creation, modification, interpretation of rules without damage	1	2	Creation, modification,
interpretation of rules with damage	3	4	
Application of rules without damage		5	6
Application of rules with damage		7	8

Conclusion

In this article, we reviewed definitions of genocide and focused specifically on the concept of the actor of genocide. We also constructed ideal types that help us conceptualize possible actors of genocide. With the use of ideal types, an alternative comparative historical research design is possible. Such a design would focus on long-term and short-term developments and would include the study of primary and secondary data. The ideal types would be related to specific historical realities and filled in and compared with historical details.

This article ends with a comment on the relation of deviantization to killing. In the literature of genocide definitions, there is a tendency of reducing genocide to mass killing (Shaw, 2007). It is clear that the concept of a process of deviantization does not reduce to a form of killing. We are describing a process that involves multiple actors in a specific assemblage of time and space with or without killing. Killing is not intrinsic to the process of deviantization.

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Endnotes

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¹ The Holocaust is sometimes taken as the prototypical case of genocide. See for example Katz, 1994.

² See for example a recent monograph dealing with the UN convention: Schabas, 2009.

³ See also the appendix for an overview of genocide definitions. ⁴

In the following two sections, we will solely discuss definitions of genocide. Authors may offer a definition of the actor of genocide that is not included in their definition of genocide. This is beyond the scope of this article. See for example Michael Mann and killers’ motives: Mann, 2005. ⁵

On page eighty of his book, in footnote three, Lemkin gives examples of “wars of exterminations in which nations and groups of the population were completely or almost completely destroyed” like the destruction of Carthage, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the religious wars of Islam and the crusades, the battle of Magdeburg. Lemkin cites examples without analyzing them any further. See Lemkin, 1944, p. 80.

⁶ See also Harff, 2003.

⁷ See also Gerlach, 2006;

Gerlach, 2010. ⁸

See Art. II Convention 9 December 1948 on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Paris, 9 December 1948, *U.N. Treaty Series*, Vol. 78, 277; Schabas, 2009. ⁹ See also Barta, 2008. ¹⁰

See also Fijnaut, 1990. A process of deviantization may for example involve what Hiebert (2008) called the “three switches” of genocide: “(1) the identification of the victim group as outside or foreign to the political community; (2) the identification of the victim group as an almost superhumanly powerful,

dangerous “enemy within” whose continued existence threatens the very survival of the political community; and (3) the paradoxical identification of the victim group as subhuman” (p. 12). 11

The question of who is right or wrong on deviance is an important ethical question that will not be taken up in this article. 12 It is worth mentioning that Lemkin described processes of deviantization himself in his text on “techniques of genocide in various fields,” without naming it as such. He described what we call legal processes of deviantization, such as the restriction of national law systems and discriminatory practices against Jews and other people. The German occupier used juridical instruments to make particular phenomena deviant and thus, objects for social control. 13

An ideal type does not use a prototypical conceptual structure. Only after an examination of the literature and doing research should one construct ideal types. 14

In this article, we adopt the perspective of Max Weber on action. *Action* exists when “the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior – be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is “social” insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course” (Weber, 1978, p. 4). *Behavior* lacks subjective meaning for the actor (see Swedberg 2005). These three ideal typical conceptual distinctions are maintained in this article.

15 *Aktiv elements* mean activists and *raion* means district. See Viola et al., 2005.

16

More specifically, Shaw (2007) writes about “the absolutist idea of a singular, heavily value-laden original intention that informs all the actions of a perpetrator organization over a whole historical period” (pp. 83-84). 17

If, from the perspective of an actor of genocide, a process of deviantization gets out of hand, the damage caused could be assessed as illegal. 18

The primary and secondary processes of deviantization may flow into the infliction of damage. A primary process of deviantization may also flow into a tertiary process of deviantization without going through a secondary process of deviantization (for example because of psychological damage). It is also imaginable that a secondary process of deviantization does not inflict any damage. A secondary process of deviantization does not have to flow into a tertiary process of deviantization. No matter the order, each step taken increases the possibility of suffering. 19

Michael Mann’s depiction of murderous cleansing as an escalation towards more radical solutions to a problem is interesting to compare with our ideal typical model. According to Mann (2005), “murderous cleansing is rarely the initial intent of perpetrators” (p. 7). Mann constructs a model of murderous cleansing containing different plans (plan A, B, C,...). These different plans escalate towards more radicalization: “Plan A typically envisages a carefully planned solution in terms of either compromise or straightforward repression. Plan B is a more radically repressive adaptation to the failure of Plan A, more hastily conceived amid rising violence and some political destabilization. When these both fail, some of the planners radicalize further. To understand the outcome, we must analyze the unintended consequences of a series of interactions yielding escalation” (p. 7). 20

What we now construct are what Marx called, “*dramatis personae*” (such as the figures of buyer and seller) (Marx 1976).

Appendix

Author	Definition
R. Lemkin (1944)	Destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group.

- UN convention (1948) Acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.
- P. Drost (1959) Genocide is the deliberate destruction of physical life of individual human beings by reason of their membership of any human collectivity as such.
- I.L. Horowitz (1980) A structural and systematic destruction of innocent people by a state bureaucratic apparatus.
- L. Kuper (1981) Crime against a collectivity, taking the form of massive slaughter, and carried out with explicit intent.
- T. Barta (1987) What we need, I shall argue, is a conception of genocide which embraces relations of destruction and removes from the word the emphasis on policy and intention which brought it into being.
- H. Huttenbach (1988) Genocide is any act that puts the very existence of a group in jeopardy.
- B. Harff & T. Gurr (1988) The promotion, execution, and/or implied consent of sustained policies by governing elites or their agents— or, in the case of civil war, either of the contending authorities—that result in the deaths of a substantial portion of a communal (...) group.
- E. Staub (1989) An attempt to exterminate a racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, or political group, either directly through murder or indirectly by creating the conditions that lead to the group's destruction.
- H. Fein (1990) Genocide is sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or indirectly, through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members, sustained regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim.
- F. Chalk & K. Jonassohn (1990) Genocide is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the actor of genocide.
- R. Melson (1992) A public policy mainly carried out by the state whose intent is the destruction in whole or in part of a social collectivity or category, usually a communal group, class, or a political faction.
- I. Charny (1994) Genocide in the generic sense means the mass killing of substantial numbers of human beings, when not in the course of military action against the military forces of an avowed enemy, under conditions of the essential defenselessness of the victim.
- S. Katz (1994) Actualization of the intent, however successfully carried out, to murder in its totality any national, ethnic, racial, religious, political, social, gender, or economic group, as these groups are defined by the perpetrator, by whatever means.
- L. Chorbajian (1999) Initiated by authoritarian states, premeditated, involving great cruelty, and bringing about large numbers of deaths in absolute terms and deaths as a percentage of target populations.

S. Straus (2001)	An organized attempt to annihilate a group that a perpetrator constitutes as an organic collectivity.
Y. Bauer (2002)	A purposeful attempt to eliminate an ethnicity or a nation, accompanied by the murder of large numbers of the targeted group.
B. Harff (2003)	The promotion, execution, and/or implied consent of sustained policies by governing elites or their agents— or, in the case of civil war, either of the contending authorities—that are intended to destroy, in whole or part, a communal, political, or politicized ethnic group. In genocides the victimized groups are defined by their perpetrators primarily in terms of their communal characteristics.
M. Midlarsky (2003)	The state-sponsored systematic mass murder of innocent and helpless men, women and children denoted by a particular ethno religious identity, with the purpose of eradicating that group from a given territory.
M. Mann (2005)	Intentional, aiming to wipe out an entire group, not only physically but also culturally (destroying its churches, libraries, museums, street names). Yet if only cultural cleansing occurs, I call this not genocide but only cultural suppression.
M. Levene (2005)	Genocide occurs when a state, perceiving the integrity of its agenda to be threatened by an aggregate population – defined by the state as organic collectivity, or series of collectivities – seeks to remedy the situation by the systematic, en masse physical elimination of that aggregate, in toto, or until it is no longer perceived to represent a threat.
M. Shaw (2007)	Genocide is a form of violent social conflict or war, between armed power organizations that aim to destroy civilian social groups and those groups and other actors who resist this destruction.
C. Powell (2011)	An identity-difference relation of violent obliteration.

