

Ethnic Cleansing and Its Alternatives in Wartime

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A Comparison of the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian Empires

Why do some states engage in ethnic cleansing or genocide during wars whereas others do not?¹ This question is important for both practical and theoretical reasons. From a practical perspective, mass ethnic violence continues to shape the demography and politics of large geographical regions of the world. Recent examples include events in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo in the 1990s as well as Sudan, Iraq, and Syria in the 2000s. These cases indicate that understanding the causes of mass ethnic violence remains as relevant today as it was at the beginning of the twentieth century.

From a theoretical perspective, the literature on mass ethnic violence in wartime leaves critical issues unresolved. Existing studies suggest that a combination of strategic factors, such as the existence of a multifront war and wartime minority collaboration with enemy forces, pushes state leaders to pursue mass ethnic violence.² These works improve on earlier studies in substantial ways, but they treat the ideological and institutional structure of state leadership during wars as theoretically irrelevant.³ As a result, they have difficulty

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1. Throughout the article, the term “ethnic cleansing” refers to deportations or killings that victimize a substantial segment of an ethnic group on a state’s territory. According to this definition, “genocide” is a subcategory of ethnic cleansing in which the victimization primarily takes the form of killings rather than deportations. I use the terms “ethnic cleansing” and “mass ethnic violence” interchangeably throughout the article. For more detail on the conceptual definition of “ethnic cleansing,” see H. Zeynep Bulutgil, “Social Cleavages, Wartime Experience, and Ethnic Cleansing in Europe,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (September 2015), pp. 577–590.

2. Alexander B. Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Spring 2006), pp. 152–195; Alexander B. Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008); Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killings and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, “Draining the Sea: Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare,” *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 375–407.

3. Unlike earlier literature that emphasized the role of interethnic animosity, these studies provide a potential explanation for the timing of mass ethnic violence. In addition, their insights are consistent with micro-level studies that suggest that interethnic animosity does not necessarily precede large-scale ethnic violence. See, for example, Scott A. Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006); and Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

explaining why state leaders faced with multifront wars and minority collaboration often pursue different policies.⁴

This article seeks to bring domestic politics back into the study of mass ethnic violence.⁵ It makes two main theoretical claims. First, state leaders can vary along two dimensions in wartime.⁶ The first dimension involves the extent to which they prioritize keeping or expanding territory over other political goals. Variation along this dimension influences the degree to which state leaders are willing to invest more resources in the war, as opposed to making territorial concessions and pulling out of the conflict. The second dimension involves those who prioritize territorial goals but vary in the extent to which they think that ethnic cleansing is the best means of achieving them. This dimension reflects the fact that in wartime there is often conflicting information about whether a state's ethnic minorities are collaborating with an enemy state and about whether such collaboration hinders territorial goals.

The article's second theoretical claim is that ethnic cleansing is less likely if the state leadership includes influential political groups that prioritize non-ethnic political cleavages such as social-class or clerical-ant clerical (religious-secular) divisions over ethnic ones.⁷ Political parties or factions that are primarily focused on achieving domestic political objectives, such as economic redistribution or protection of the role of the church, may be more inclined to make territorial concessions to end wars. Moreover, given their ideological priorities, the leaders from these political parties or factions are less likely to view the world as divided into competing ethnic groups. Hence, compared to nationalist leaders, these individuals are less likely to ignore evidence that

4. This article focuses on cases of ethnic cleansing and genocide that occur during wartime. Both phenomena, however, can also take place immediately after a war ends or in peacetime. For a consideration of such cases, see Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and H. Zeynep Bulutgil, *The Roots of Ethnic Cleansing in Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

5. For other recent works that examine the role of domestic politics in the study of genocide, see Scott A. Straus, "Retreating from the Brink: Theorizing Mass Violence and the Dynamics of Restraint," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (June 2012), pp. 343–362; and Scott A. Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership, and Genocide in Modern Africa* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2015).

6. For the rest of the article, leadership of states includes not only individuals and organizations that are in government, but also individuals and organizations, such as members of robust opposition parties, with the potential to influence government policy.

7. For a classical text on the sources of ethnic and non-ethnic social cleavages in Europe, see Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments," in Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (1967; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 91–138. Both the existence of groups based on non-ethnic cleavages and the existence of institutional mechanisms that allow these groups to influence decisionmaking are important for this argument. As the empirical sections of this article show, such institutional mechanisms could exist even in the absence of a democratic regime.

calls into question the existence or strategic relevance of minority collaboration and more likely to consider alternatives to ethnic cleansing in wartime.

The article evaluates these two claims through controlled comparisons of three minority-state dyads during World War I: the Italians in Austria, the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, and the Muslims in the Russian South Caucasus.⁸ These cases were selected according to three criteria. First, they allow the analysis to control for the wartime security challenges that, according to the existing literature, result in mass ethnic violence. The states in question were fighting on multiple fronts; the minorities involved had already been linked to a territorial conflict with a neighboring state during peacetime; and some members of these minorities collaborated with the neighboring state during the war. Second, the analysis controls for regional and period-related conditions by focusing on the policies of three multinational empires in Central and Eastern Europe during the same war. Third, the wartime policies of the three states vis-à-vis the minority groups identified above differed. In Austria, the leadership pursued a temporary policy of limited deportations that targeted Italians living close to the front lines. In the Ottoman case, the government subjected the Armenians in Eastern and Central Anatolia to mass deportations and killings, leading to genocide. In the Russian case, the military engaged in targeted massacres of Muslim populations in the South Caucasus; and although the government initially decided to pursue the wholesale deportation of these populations, it reversed this policy in its early stages.

The argument presented in this article offers an explanation for the divergent policies in these three cases. In the Austrian case, the political parties based on social class and clerical-anticlerical divisions were the strongest during the prewar period. To a lesser extent, political parties that prioritized non-ethnic cleavages also played a noteworthy role in Russian politics. During World War I, the political groups that emphasized non-ethnic cleavages continued to be dominant or influential in the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. In contrast, in the Ottoman Empire the radical nationalists within the ruling party had largely pacified the opposition both inside and outside the government by 1914. In the Austrian and Russian cases, the governments did not pursue larger numbers of deportations and killings given the promi-

8. On the importance of controlled comparisons for scholars who seek to understand national-level variation in political outcomes, see Dan Slater and Daniel Ziblatt, "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 10 (October 2013), pp. 1301–1327; and Sidney Tarrow, "The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (February 2010), pp. 230–259. For a discussion of the need for controlled comparisons in the study of genocide in particular, see Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*.

nence or direct intervention of political leaders who had focused their attention on non-ethnic issues before the war. In contrast, in the Ottoman case, where such actors were comparatively weak to begin with and completely oppressed by 1914, the government pursued a genocidal policy.

This comparative historical analysis has implications for understanding the dynamics of mass ethnic violence in the contemporary period. The argument presented here is applicable to situations that meet two conditions: first, there is an ongoing international or civil war in which the sides are close to symmetrically matched in military terms; second, within the territory controlled by at least one of the sides, there is an ethnic group whose members are collaborating militarily with the other side. These types of situations are currently unfolding or have recently occurred in a variety of contexts, including in sub-Saharan Africa and post-communist Europe, which I discuss in the conclusion.

The article is divided into five main sections. The first section summarizes and critiques the theoretical argument that states' wartime security concerns result in ethnic cleansing. The second section outlines how salient non-ethnic cleavages affect state leaders' wartime decisions that relate to minorities. The third section tests the argument by comparing the Austrian, Ottoman, and Russian cases. The fourth section discusses the extent to which alternative arguments may account for the differences across these cases. The conclusion offers a summary of the article's main findings.

War, Territory, and Ethnic Cleansing: A Theoretical Critique

Theoretical approaches that link wartime security considerations to large-scale violence against ethnic minorities are rooted in two literatures. The first approach, based on the work of Myron Weiner, examines the impact on international conflict of ethnic groups that span borders, especially when these groups constitute the politically dominant majority in one state and the politically weak minority in the other.⁹ Weiner argues that this type of situation can lead to border problems between states and result in acute ethnic conflict within them.¹⁰

Several scholars have refined Weiner's argument. Most prominently, Rogers Brubaker has proposed a model of "triadic configuration," comprising a nationalizing state, a minority, and a "homeland."¹¹ He argues that homelands

9. Myron Weiner, "The Macedonian Syndrome: An Historical Model of International Relations and Political Development," *World Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (July 1971), pp. 665–683.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*

tend to show interest in the fate of their “co-ethnics” across the border, which often creates interstate conflict. Others have also provided theoretical and empirical support for the argument that ethnic groups that cross borders might increase the chances of war under certain conditions.¹²

Scholars who work on mass violence have tied this literature to ethnic cleansing in two ways. First, if the homeland tries to annex the territory that includes its co-ethnics, the state under attack begins to regard that ethnic group as a fifth column, based on its actual or anticipated collaboration with the group’s homeland.¹³ Second, from the perspective of the target state, the annexationist war raises the possibility that the very existence of the ethnic kin group increases the chances of its adversary making territorial demands in the future.¹⁴ Thus, states engage in ethnic cleansing against the ethnic kin of enemy states during wartime to avoid losing territory and to decrease the likelihood of future territorial demands.

The second literature relevant for linking security considerations to mass ethnic violence is that on civil wars and military occupations.¹⁵ Here, the argument is that if the stronger party to the conflict—the occupying state or the government—is able to extract information from the civilian population and identify resistance organizers, it will seek to selectively kill these individuals. If the stronger side is unable to gather the information required to find these organizers, it will tend to target large groups, such as entire ethnicities.

Building on these insights, existing studies identify two characteristics of international wars that make the fighting parties likely to use mass ethnic violence instead of selectively targeting individuals within ethnic minorities. First, the fighting sides in international wars tend to be more symmetrically matched than those in civil wars.¹⁶ Second, in international wars states are typically engaged on multiple fronts. Both of these factors shorten the state leaders’ time horizon to win wars, and hence make them less likely to spend the

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). The “homeland” refers to a neighboring country in which the minority constitutes the majority ethnic group.

12. Andreas Wimmer, *Waves of War: Nationalism and Ethnic Politics in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, *For Kin and Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

13. Valentino, *Final Solutions*; Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*; and Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures.”

14. Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures.”

15. See, for example, Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay, “Draining the Sea”; and Reed M. Wood, Jacob D. Kathman, and Stephen E. Gent, “Armed Intervention and Civilian Victimization in Intrastate Conflicts,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 49, No. 5 (September 2012), pp. 647–660.

16. Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures”; and Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: The Making of Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

time and resources needed to selectively target individuals who collaborate with the enemy.

Arguments that identify wartime security concerns as the main cause of mass ethnic violence rely on two implicit and, as I demonstrate below, empirically questionable assumptions. The first assumption is that leaders who dominate the state apparatus uniformly prioritize keeping or acquiring territory over other political goals. A careful reading of the history, however, reveals the existence of leaders who had other priorities, even in wartime. The most obvious examples are the socialist parties across Europe and their attitude toward World War I.¹⁷ Although these parties failed to prevent World War I, their members continued to be the main champions of antiwar sentiment for the duration of the war.¹⁸ Serbian and Russian socialists were persistently opposed to the war from the beginning.¹⁹ Other organizations, such as trade unions and socialist parties in Germany, France, and Austria, engaged in anti-war activities once the costs of prolonged war became clear in 1915.²⁰ In perhaps the best-known instance of withdrawing from a war to pursue revolution, in 1918 the Bolsheviks in Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which, among other things, resulted in extensive Russian territorial losses.²¹

These examples do not necessarily suggest that political organizations that prioritize nonterritorial goals are historically ubiquitous. Rather, they suggest that instead of treating state leaderships as ideologically uniform, scholars should model them as continuums that run from factions that would incur any cost to achieve their territorial goals to those that would give up territory to achieve other political goals within the remaining territory.²² The more that a

17. The flexibility of left-wing parties in territorial matters compared to that of right-wing parties was not confined to Europe during World War I. For a more recent example, see Reuven Y. Hazan, "Intraparty Politics and Peacemaking in Democratic Societies: Israel's Labor Party and the Middle East Peace Process, 1992–96," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (May 2000), pp. 363–378; and Efraim Inbar and Giora Goldberg, "Is Israel's Political Elite Becoming More Hawkish?" *International Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Summer 1990), pp. 631–660.

18. John Horne, "Labor and Labor Movements in World War I," in Jay Winter, Geoffrey Parker, and Mary R. Habeck, eds., *The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 187–227; and Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century* (London: Abacus, 1995). Kenneth N. Waltz also famously invoked this case as evidence that international factors are more important than transnational ideologies. See Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954).

19. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 59.

20. Horne, "Labor and Labor Movements in World War I"; and Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, pp. 58, 59.

21. On the relative importance of revolutionary ideology and military expediency for Bolshevik foreign policy during 1917–18, see Richard Gregor, "Lenin, Revolution, and Foreign Policy," *International Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Autumn 1967), pp. 563–575; and Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War, America, and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916–1931* (New York: Viking, 2014).

22. The idea that domestic political organizations vary in their foreign policy preferences is not new. It is, for example, at the core of Robert D. Putnam's well-known analysis of diplomacy

state's political organizations resemble the second faction, the more reluctant the leadership will be to invest in any policy, including ethnic cleansing, designed to boost the war effort.

The second implicit assumption is that state leaders who prioritize keeping or gaining territory uniformly agree that using mass violence against ethnic groups is the best way to achieve either or both of these goals. This assumption is questionable for two reasons. First, wholesale deportations of ethnic groups typically include individuals who cannot influence battlefield outcomes, including those who reside far away from war zones and other noncombatants. Second, the state leaderships may be uncertain about whether the members of ethnic groups that serve in the armies of enemy states or form auxiliary militias have a noteworthy impact on the outcome of battles. Anecdotal historical evidence suggests that they do not typically play a crucial role on the battlefield.²³ Additionally, relevant studies do not find clear evidence that the victimization of civilians, including in ethnic cleansing campaigns, increases the likelihood of winning wars.²⁴

If mass ethnic violence was the only way for a state to reach its territorial goals, then state leaders who prioritize such goals would agree on this policy despite their uncertainty about its contribution to the war effort. Large-scale deportations and killings of ethnic minorities, however, are not the only way to achieve territorial goals. On the contrary, governments that use mass ethnic violence face opportunity costs in terms of other policies that might better achieve the state's territorial objectives. For example, the troops or militia that would be used to remove suspicious ethnic groups could instead be used in fighting the enemy state. The resources that could be used to relocate groups could be used to provide new equipment and logistical support for troops on the front lines. Additionally, targeting an entire ethnic group incurs costs that could influence the outcome of the war. These costs include the loss of manpower if members of the targeted group serve in the army or rebellion among would-be deportees.

Given the availability of alternative policies and the uncertainty regarding

through the lens of two-level games. See Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 427–460. This article suggests that the variation depends on the organized cleavages that define the society and the state's leadership.

23. "Report of the International Commission of Inquiry into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars," in George F. Kennan, ed., *The Other Balkan Wars: 1913* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Brookings Institution Publications, 1993).

24. Alexander B. Downes and Kathryn McNabb Cochran, "Targeting Civilians to Win? Assessing the Military Effectiveness of Civilian Victimization in Interstate War," in Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, eds., *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010), pp. 23–56.

the military effectiveness of ethnic cleansing, even members of the leadership who prioritize territorial goals might reasonably disagree on whether the wholesale targeting of ethnic groups is the most efficient way of achieving such goals. Again, one can imagine a continuum among state leaders who prioritize territorial objectives. At one end are those who believe that ethnic cleansing is the best way to accomplish these goals; at the other end are those who think that the opportunity costs and uncertainty of the outcome make ethnic cleansing an impractical policy. Those closer to this end of the spectrum are more likely to endorse alternative means to achieving territorial goals, such as strengthening the army or using limited deportations.

Sources of Disagreement within the Leadership

This section argues that the main factor that generates different perspectives within a state's leadership on whether to pursue ethnic cleansing against a minority group in wartime is the existence of organized ideological alternatives to nationalism based on non-ethnic cleavages such as socioeconomic or clerical-ant clerical divisions. The idea that alternative cleavages have the potential to reduce conflict on a given cleavage dimension is not new.²⁵ Many studies suggest that the existence of salient non-ethnic cleavages can mitigate the intensity of ethnic conflict.²⁶ I apply this long-standing theoretical insight to the study of ethnic cleansing by specifying how these ideological alternatives prevent the creation of radical policies against ethnic minorities in wartime.

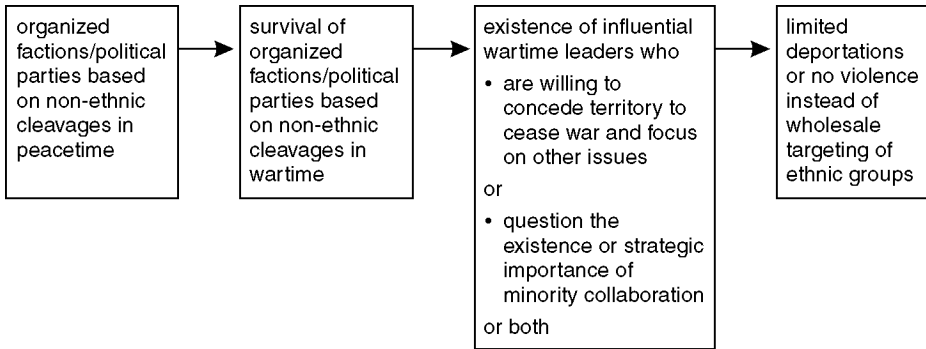
To begin, consider country A, which has two political divisions: one nationalist and one nonnationalist. The nationalists want to retain and, if possible, expand the territory of the state, as well as ensure the dominance of their ethnic group in the country. The nonnationalists are a product of social-class or religious-secular divisions.²⁷ Class-based political groups might be represented

25. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), p. 88; Michael Taylor and Douglas Rae, "An Analysis of Crosscutting between Political Cleavages," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 1969), pp. 534–547; and Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

26. Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977); Kanchan Chandra, "Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (June 2005), pp. 235–252; Thad Dunning and Lauren Harrison, "Cross-Cutting Cleavages and Ethnic Voting: An Experimental Study of Cousinage in Mali," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 1 (February 2010), pp. 21–39; and Joshua R. Gubler and Joel Sawat Selway, "Horizontal Inequality, Crosscutting Cleavages, and Civil War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 2012), pp. 206–232.

27. Although the emphasis here is on leadership disagreements resulting from broad societal cleavages, it is conceivable that elite-level disagreements that are based on generational or educational differences might play a comparable role. For example, it is possible that leaders with a certain generational or educational background are more or less likely to respect international norms that pertain to human rights.

Figure 1. Domestic Political Structure and the Treatment of Minorities during Wars



by socialist parties seeking economic redistribution and conservative parties opposed to such policies. Secular groups might be represented by parties seeking to end the traditional privileges of religious organizations, whereas religious/clerical parties want to preserve these privileges. The members of the leadership in country A vary in the extent to which they consider the nationalist or the economic/religious objectives a priority. Therefore, one can imagine a continuum with those focused only on nationalist objectives at one end and those focused only on economic/religious objectives at the other.

Now assume that country A becomes the target of an annexationist war by a neighboring state and that this neighboring state forms an alliance with members of a minority ethnic group located in country A. In this situation, the greater the relative importance of the nonnationalist dimension, the more robust are the obstacles against ethnic cleansing, for two reasons. (See figure 1 for the summary of the argument presented here.) First, those closer to the nonnationalist side of the continuum might be more willing to offer territorial concessions to end the war and redirect the resources that would have been spent on it to pursue other goals. For socialist parties, these goals might include restructuring the economy; for anti-clerical groups, they might include dismantling the organizational links between the state and religious institutions. By implication, compared to nationalist groups, these factions would be more reluctant to invest in the war effort, regardless of whether the investment involves mass ethnic violence or other attempts to boost that effort.

Second, those closest to the nationalist end of the political spectrum might evaluate the information regarding wartime security differently from those further from it.²⁸ Extreme nationalists are prone to viewing the world as di-

28. For a relevant discussion on how ideologies might influence decisionmaking under uncer-

vided into competing ethnic groups. Consequently, they might consciously or subconsciously give credence to evidence that supports the existence or strategic relevance of minority collaboration during wars, while ignoring information to the contrary. They also might be more inclined to consider ethnic minorities a long-term threat, and hence pursue policies that target the entire group rather than selected subgroups that collaborate with the enemy. In contrast, those further from the nationalist end of the spectrum would be more likely to consider evidence that raises doubts about the extent of minority collaboration or its strategic relevance for the outcome of the war. They would also be more likely to view the minority as a potential future political partner rather than a long-term threat.

The factions closer to the nonnationalist end of the spectrum can try to block an ethnic cleansing campaign in two ways. First, if they dominate in the government, they can control the political agenda and obstruct political groups that endorse policies targeting minority groups. Second, if they do not control the government, they can still raise questions about the effectiveness of ethnic cleansing in wartime. For example, they can use institutional mechanisms such as parliamentary sessions to question the existence or strategic importance of minority collaboration or to underline the opportunity costs of ethnic cleansing.²⁹ In this way, they might prevent the government from starting an ethnic cleansing campaign or help to halt ongoing deportations and killings.

War, Minority Collaboration, and Divergent Outcomes

This section demonstrates that the Austrian, Ottoman, and Russian cases compared in this article share three critical characteristics: the existence of a territorial dispute between neighboring states, a connection between this dispute and an ethnic minority in the contested region, and a war between the states during which some members of the minority collaborated with the enemy state. (See table 1 for a summary of the criteria involved in the case selection.)

ITALIANS IN AUSTRIA

Historically, the Italians in Austria primarily lived in two regions; the Alpine regions bordering Italy (Trentino and South Tyrol) and the Austrian Littoral (Trieste, Gorizia, Gradiska, Istria, and Dalmatia).³⁰ After the unification of Italy

tainty, see Arthur T. Denzau and Douglass C. North, "Shared Mental Models: Ideologies and Institutions," *Kyklos*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (February 1994), pp. 3–31.

29. This argument does not presume the existence of a particular form of government. As the following sections show, the institutional mechanisms discussed here could exist even in contexts in which the main executive authority was not elected, and therefore the regime was not democratic.

30. The total number of Austrian Italians was around 760,000. In Trentino, the Italian speakers

Table 1. Similar Wartime Security Conditions but Divergent Outcomes in Multinational Empires during World War I

		Austro-Hungarian Empire and Italians	Ottoman Empire and Armenians	Russian Empire and Muslims in South Caucasus
Factors controlled	prewar link between interstate territorial dispute and minority group	yes	yes	yes
	involvement in multifront war	yes	yes	yes
	minority collaboration with enemy state during war	yes	yes	yes
Divergent outcome	treatment of minorities during war	temporary and limited relocation from war-zone areas, no massacres	ethnic cleansing and genocide	localized massacres, plans for mass deportation that do not materialize

in 1861, control of these territories became a topic of dispute between Italy and Austria-Hungary. At the time, there was a strong movement within Italy to annex the Austrian territories with Italian populations. Through its consular services, the Italian government established organizations in Austria, such as Pro-Patria and Lega Italia, to promote the Italian language.³¹ In addition, several high-level politicians and government officials in Italy were members of the Dante Alighieri Association, which offered financial support to Italian schools and electoral campaign subsidies to irredentist Italian parties in Austria.³²

Italy made explicit territorial demands to the Austro-Hungarian government on two occasions. In 1908, it demanded territorial compensation in exchange for supporting Austria's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Then, after the Austrian army experienced serious losses on the eastern front in 1914 during World War I, Italy demanded the Alpine and Littoral territories as the price for its neutrality in the war.³³ In response, Austria offered to cede

were the majority; in South Tyrol and the Littoral, the majorities were German and Slavic speakers, respectively.

31. Kent R. Greenfield, "The Italian Nationality Problem of the Austrian Empire," *Austrian History Year Book*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1967), pp. 491–526.

32. Luciano Monzali, *The Italians of Dalmatia: From Italian Unification to World War I* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 150–182.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 304; and Leo Valiani, "Italian-Austro-Hungarian Negotiations, 1914–1915," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (July 1966), pp. 113–136.

Trentino to Italy after the war. But because the Allies promised more territory to Italy than did Austria, Italy entered the war against Austro-Hungary in May 1915.³⁴

During the war, Trentino, South Tyrol, and the areas along the Isonzo River close to the Adriatic became front lines between Italy and Austria. In 1915 and 1916, the Austrian armies defended the border against numerous Italian offensives. Despite a limited Italian push into Austrian territory in 1916, the front remained relatively static until 1917, after which the Austrians defeated the Italians with the help of German troops. In the spring of 1918, the German armies aiding the Austrian troops were pulled from the Austro-Italian front line, leaving the Austrian troops in a relatively weak position compared to the Italians backed by their allies. In November 1918, Austria lost the areas with Italian-speaking populations in the Alpine regions and Austrian Littoral.

Throughout the war, ethnic Italians in Austria maintained a relationship with the Italian government.³⁵ Even before Italy entered the war, around 3,000 Austrian Italians had joined the Italian army.³⁶ Once the war started, this number increased significantly and included leading Italian members of the Austrian parliament and the Tyrolean Regional Diet.³⁷ In addition, there were reports of desertions and draft avoidance among Austrian Italians, a trend that was relatively common among Italian farmers.³⁸

At no time, however, did Austria engage in a policy of ethnic cleansing against its Italian minority. Rather, it temporarily evacuated Italians from war-zone areas in the Alpine and Littoral territories. The evidence suggests that these evacuations were mandatory in areas on the front lines but voluntary in those merely close to the battle zones.³⁹ The Austrian authorities relocated around 114,000 Italians from Trentino, South Tyrol, and the areas close to the Isonzo River after Italy entered the war.⁴⁰ These individuals were sent to refu-

34. Valiani, *The End of Austria-Hungary*.

35. Mark Thompson, *The White War: Life and Death on the Italian Frontier, 1915–1919* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009).

36. Manfred Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), p. 389.

37. Approximately 87,000 Italians left Austria to fight for Italy. See John Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). This number includes Italian citizens who had come to Austria as temporary workers. See also Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 333; and Peter Gatrell and Philippe Nivet, "Refugees and Exiles," in Jay Winter, ed., *Cambridge History of the First World War*, Vol. 3: *Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 186–216.

38. Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 333.

39. *Ibid.*; Gatrell and Nivet, "Refugees and Exiles"; and Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

40. Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*, pp. 390–391; and Gatrell and Nivet, "Refugees and Exiles."

gee camps across the empire and, with the exception of around 12,000 Italians who were deemed dangerous and taken to internment camps, were allowed freedom of movement.⁴¹

ARMENIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The Armenians of the Ottoman Empire primarily lived in the six eastern provinces of Anatolia, but significant numbers could also be found in the central regions and in western cities, including Istanbul.⁴² Like the Alpine and Littoral regions in Austria, parts of Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus had been the objects of territorial conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century.

In the early twentieth century, the link between the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire and Russian territorial claims was weaker than the link between the Italian claims on Austrian territory and the Austrian Italians. Russia based its plans for Eastern Anatolia on relatively fluid imperialist goals rather than irredentist ones. As a result, unlike Italy, which had explicit claims only to territories inhabited by Austrian Italians, Russia's territorial plans did not depend on the presence of Armenians in a given area.⁴³ In addition, unlike Italy, which entered World War I specifically to annex the Italian-speaking areas in Austria, the Russians considered the front with the Ottomans a distraction from their conflict with the German and Austro-Hungarian armies.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, on the eve of World War I, the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire became entangled in the territorial competition between the two empires in two ways. First, in 1914 the great powers, including Russia, pressured Ottoman leaders to agree to a set of reforms that would increase the autonomy of the Christian population of Eastern Anatolia and allow foreign inspectors to oversee progress of the reforms. Thus, the Christian population of Eastern Anatolia, composed primarily of Armenians, became linked to foreign intervention.⁴⁵ Second, because the main Armenian political parties (the

41. Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, p. 60; and Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 814.

42. There were between 1.5 and 2 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in all. For a summary of the debate on the number of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, see Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), p. 235; and Raymond G. Hovannisian, "The Historical Dimensions of the Armenian Question, 1878–1923," in Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (Piscataway, N.J.: Transaction, 2009), p. 52.

43. Ronald G. Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015).

44. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

45. Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012).

Dashnak and Hinchak Organizations) operated in both Russian and Ottoman territories, Russian Armenians, who tended to be more dominant in these organizations, could exert influence on their co-ethnics in the Ottoman territory. In late 1914, the Ottoman leadership asked Ottoman Armenian leaders to organize their Russian counterparts to rebel against Russia.⁴⁶ The Armenian leaders refrained from making this commitment, but agreed to cooperate with the Ottoman leaders by endorsing the conscription of Armenians into the Ottoman army.⁴⁷ The Russian leadership was more successful, however, in enlisting the support of the Russian Armenians in seeking volunteers among the Ottoman Armenians.⁴⁸

The Ottoman Empire entered World War I in November 1914. In the early stages, the Ottomans captured parts of Ardahan Province, which had been lost to Russia in 1878. After these modest successes, they conducted an offensive in December 1915, with the ultimate goal of recovering the provinces of Kars and Batum. During this campaign, the Ottoman army experienced a crushing defeat at the Battle of Sarikamis, exposing Eastern Anatolia to Russian invasion.⁴⁹ The Russian army started to move into Ottoman territory beginning in the spring of 1915, recovering Ardahan and capturing several other Ottoman provinces in Eastern Anatolia.

Like those of the Austrian Italians, the Ottoman Armenians' loyalties were divided during the war. The majority of Armenian men of military age were recruited as soldiers into the Ottoman army with the cooperation of the Armenian leadership.⁵⁰ At the same time, from the beginning some Ottoman Armenians volunteered for units organized by the Russian army and fought against Ottoman forces, including in the Battle of Sarikamis.⁵¹ During the war, Ottoman Armenians occasionally revolted against government efforts at military recruitment and engaged in isolated attempts at sabotage in areas in which they lived.⁵²

The Ottoman leadership started its ethnic cleansing campaign targeting the Ottoman Armenians in March 1915. Initially, the main targets were the

46. Donald Bloxham, "The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916: Cumulative Radicalization and the Development of a Destruction Policy," *Past & Present*, Vol. 181, No. 1 (November 2003), pp. 141–191.

47. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else," p. 223.

48. Bloxham, "The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916."

49. Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2001), pp. 58–60.

50. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else"; and Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

51. In *The Dark Side of Democracy*, Mann states that 5,000–8,000 Ottoman Armenians fought against the Ottoman army during the Sarikamis offensive.

52. Bloxham, "The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916"; and Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else."

Armenian populations in areas considered strategically important or prone to revolt. In late April, these policies were broadened to include the entire Armenian population of not only Eastern but also Central Anatolia, far from the front lines. In the same period, the government rounded up and deported the political and intellectual leaders of the Armenian community in Istanbul. At this stage, an organization under the control of the ministry of interior, the Special Organization (Teskilat-i Mahsusa), began conducting large-scale killings of Armenians who were in the process of being deported. By the fall of 1915, the Armenian populations of Eastern and Central Anatolia were on the brink of annihilation.

MUSLIMS IN THE RUSSIAN SOUTH CAUCASUS

At the end of the 1877–78 Russo-Turkish war, Russia incorporated into its territory the three provinces of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum, which until then had been under Ottoman control. These provinces contained significant Muslim populations, including Turks, Kurds, and Georgian-speaking Ajars and Lazi.⁵³ In the broader region of the South Caucasus lived other Muslim populations, including the Abkhazians and Circassians.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Muslim populations in the provinces of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum became entangled in the territorial competition between the Russian and Ottoman Empires. One of the goals of the Ottoman leaders before and during World War I was to regain control of the three provinces. Although the Ottoman leadership generally expressed this ambition in imperialistic rather than irredentist terms, its more nationalistic members wanted to expand the empire's borders to include the Turkic-speaking populations of Central Asia.

To fulfill their territorial goals, Ottoman leaders recruited the Muslim populations in the South Caucasus for espionage missions and provided assistance to those seeking to organize resistance to Russian rule. Both policies were carried out by intelligence units of the Ottoman consulates in the contested region, as well as by former Russian subjects with local contacts, such as Ajars who had migrated to the Ottoman Empire after the Russian annexation of the three provinces and Circassians who had been deported to the Ottoman Empire in the 1860s.⁵⁴ After the formation of the Special

53. Michael A. Reynolds suggests that after the Russian takeover, tens of thousands of Muslims migrated to the Ottoman Empire. See Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 50. At the end of the nineteenth century, the total number of Muslims in Kars Province (including Ardahan) and Batum Province was slightly more than 200,000.

54. Michael A. Reynolds, "Buffers, Not Brethren: Young Turk Military Policy in the First World War and the Myth of Panturanism," *Past & Present*, Vol. 203, No. 1 (May 2009), pp. 137–179; and Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*.

Organization by Ismail Enver Pasha in November 1913, the Ottoman policy in the region focused on recruiting volunteer units that could be used in the event of a war.⁵⁵ As a result, in late 1914, irregular military units composed of Ajari and Laz volunteers from Russian areas, thought to number around 5,000, fought alongside Ottoman forces in battles that resulted in the takeover of parts of Ardahan.⁵⁶

After recapturing parts of Ardahan from Ottoman forces, Russian army units engaged in targeted massacres of the Ajars and Lazi.⁵⁷ In addition, political figures in the Kars, Ardahan, and Batum Provinces sought to deport their entire Muslim populations to inner Russia. Such plans for a full-scale ethnic cleansing campaign initially found backing in the national government but, for reasons discussed below, ultimately failed.

Domestic Political Structures and Wartime Minority Policies

This section examines the differences among the domestic political structures of the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian Empires and shows how these differences relate to the presence or absence of wartime ethnic cleansing against minorities.

AUSTRIA: DOMESTIC POLITICS AND THE ABSENCE OF ETHNIC CLEANSING

Before World War I, Austro-Hungary was a multinational empire comprising two entities, one Austrian and the other Hungarian.⁵⁸ These two entities were politically independent of each other except for their shared ministries of war, finance, and foreign affairs. In Austria, the Germans were the largest and politically dominant group.⁵⁹ Austria operated as a constitutional monarchy in which the parliament passed laws that the emperor either accepted or rejected. The Austrian parliament was bicameral; the Upper House comprised unelected nobility and clergy, while the Lower House comprised repre-

55. Reynolds, "Buffers, Not Brethren."

56. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*.

57. The Russian army killed an estimated 30,000 Muslims in Coruh Valley, in Ardahan Province. See Peter Holquist, "Forms of Violence during the Russian Occupation of Ottoman Territory and in Northern Persia (Urmia and Astrabad), October 1914–December 1917," in Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, eds., *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 334–361.

58. The Austrian part of the empire included modern-day Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, the Alpine Territories, Galicia, Bukovina, Slovenia, and parts of Croatia.

59. The Germans dominated the army and nobility. German was the language of the state, but other languages could play a role in the bureaucracy and education at the regional level. See Istvan Deak, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Oscar Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

sentatives elected through limited suffrage until 1907 and universal male suffrage thereafter.

The Austrian-German leadership contained four main ideological blocs.⁶⁰ The Pan-German bloc consisted of radical nationalists who prioritized territorial goals and viewed minority groups with suspicion. Members of this group advocated the complete dominance of the German language across the empire and eventual unification with Germany. The peak of their support came in 1901, when they sent twenty-one deputies to the parliament, but they lost most of these seats after the 1907 introduction of universal male suffrage.⁶¹ A group of Pan-Germans then formed the Austrian National Socialist Party, which tried but failed to break the influence of the Social Democrats among German workers.⁶²

The second bloc, the Liberals, had an anti-clerical, capitalist, and mildly nationalist agenda. When in government during 1867–80, they passed various pieces of anti-clerical legislation and advocated the dominance of the German language in a more centralized Austria.

The third bloc, the Conservatives, was supported by the nobility, high clergy, and peasant followers of these groups from various ethnicities. Members of this bloc advocated extensive provincial autonomy and clerical dominance in education. A coalition of Conservatives and minority representatives, labeled the “Iron Ring,” formed the backbone of Austrian governments in the 1880–93 period and passed laws that extended linguistic rights to Austria’s minority groups. On the eve of the 1907 elections, the Conservatives united with the Christian Social Party, which had a clerical, anti-Semitic agenda and was popular among the Germans in Vienna. After unification, the Christian Democrats, now including the Conservatives, emerged as the largest group in the parliament in the 1907 elections.⁶³

The fourth bloc comprised the Social Democrats, who focused primarily on socioeconomic issues and occasionally cooperated with minority nationalist parties. Like the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats strongly benefited

60. For a summary of these factions, see Pieter M. Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848–1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); John W. Boyer, “The End of an Old Regime: Visions of Political Reform in Late Imperial Austria,” *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (March 1986), pp. 159–193; and Gary B. Cohen, “Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914,” *Central European History*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (June 2007), pp. 241–278.

61. The parliament contained 425 deputies in 1901. See Andrew G. Whiteside, “Austria,” in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

62. Andrew Gladding Whiteside, *Austrian National Socialism before 1918* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962).

63. Boyer, “The End of an Old Regime.”

from the introduction of universal suffrage and in 1911 emerged as the largest party in the Austrian parliament.⁶⁴

Austria's domestic politics during World War I can be divided into two periods. From 1914 until the death of Emperor Franz Joseph in November 1916, the government prorogued the parliament and extended the military's powers over civilians. After November 1916, the military began losing its extended powers and the parliament started to function again. In both periods, divisions within the leadership helped avert the creation of a policy of ethnic cleansing against the Italians.

Austria's wartime government was dominated by nobles who had served as governors or members of previous Conservative-Catholic governments. The government agreed on a combative policy toward Serbia, but took a less aggressive approach toward Italy that included territorial compromise. Before Italy declared war against Austria in May 1915, the Austrian government conducted lengthy negotiations with the Italians in an effort to persuade them against entering the war. During these talks, many members of the Austrian government supported plans to concede territory to Italy in return for its neutrality.⁶⁵ As noted earlier, the negotiations failed when the Allies promised more territory to Italy. Nevertheless, the talks show that within the Conservative government, territorial concessions were considered potentially acceptable.

Once Italy entered the war, the Austrian military leadership made two demands. First, it wanted emergency powers over all areas close to the front lines, including the Alpine territories. Second, it wanted the thousands of Italian citizens who had come to Austro-Hungary as guest workers before the war to be put into internment camps.⁶⁶ Under Count Sturgkh, the government agreed to allow military trials of some civilians, including Italians, and to establish military rule in Galicia, which was under imminent Russian threat. It also launched a program of forced and voluntary relocation of populations from areas on or close to the front lines. Beyond these policies, however, the high command's repeated requests to impose emergency measures in regions such as the Alpine territories were refused by the emperor on the advice of

64. Lothar Hobelt, "Late Imperial Paradoxes: Old Austria's Last Parliament, 1917–18," *Parliaments, Estates & Representation*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1996), pp. 207–216.

65. See Valiani, *The End of Austria-Hungary*. These leaders were not eager to concede territory; however, they varied in the extent to which they were willing to make territorial concessions, depending on their understanding of the strategic situation. As the following discussion shows, no such diversity existed within the Ottoman leadership at the beginning of World War I, despite the military weakness of the Ottoman army.

66. Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*.

the government.⁶⁷ Similarly, the emperor rejected the military's push to incarcerate all Italian citizens living in Austria.⁶⁸

Ideological discord among Austria's political parties became particularly prominent after the death of Franz Joseph. Following the suspension of the parliament, the German Liberal and Nationalist parties passed a resolution that outlined their political goals, such as closer relations with Germany.⁶⁹ Their demands, however, were far too mild for the Pan-Germans, who published a document calling for "such relations between Germans and other races as shall permanently ensure and maintain the dominant political and cultural position of the German race."⁷⁰ Whatever their demands, however, the Pan-Germans remained a small minority even within the nationalist German leadership.

Deeper political divisions prevailed between the Nationalists, on the one hand, and the Social Democrats, Conservatives, and clericals, on the other. The Social Democrats opposed the suspension of the parliament from the beginning; and in the spring of 1916, their demands to reconvene the parliament began to gain momentum. They were also cautiously backed by the Christian Democrats, uncomfortable with Liberal and Nationalist demands for closer relations with the predominantly Protestant German Empire.⁷¹ Although the government initially resisted the efforts of these groups to reconvene the parliament, two events resulted in a reversal. First, a pacifist Social Democratic leader, Fredrick Adler, assassinated Prime Minister Count Sturgkh, who had resisted efforts to allow the parliament to resume its activities. Second, Austria's new emperor, Charles I, did not share his predecessor's antagonism toward the parliament.⁷²

When the parliament reconvened in May 1917, some of the earlier divisions among the various ideological blocs started to influence wartime policy. For example, as a reaction to the news of defections by ethnic-minority soldiers on the front line, German Nationalists demanded harsh punishments and stronger repressive measures.⁷³ In collaboration with the minority groups in

67. Joseph Redlich, *Austrian War Government* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1929).

68. Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*, pp. 388–389, 814–816.

69. Redlich, *Austrian War Government*.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 146. Note that the Christian Democrats in Austria-Hungary were overwhelmingly Catholic.

72. Hobelt, "Late Imperial Paradoxes."

73. Redlich, *Austrian War Government*. Defections occurred not only among the minorities with neighboring homelands, such as the Italians, but also among other minorities, such as the Czechs, some of whom fought on the side of the Russian forces in volunteer units. See David Bullock and Ramiro Bujeiro, *The Czech Legion, 1914–20* (Oxford: Osprey, 2009).

parliament, however, the Social Democrats passed measures to reverse military decisions that had resulted in the arrest of many minority politicians, including Italians, and restored judicial authority to the civilian courts.⁷⁴

During the war, Austria's Italian minority could have become the target of an ethnic cleansing campaign under two counterfactual scenarios. Both were averted as a result of divisions within the Austrian leadership. First, if the military had succeeded in imposing martial law in Trentino, South Tyrol, and the Littoral regions of Austria, it could have eventually conducted mass deportations and killings for reasons of military security or to avoid future territorial demands by Italy. To implement this policy, the military could have relied on the predominantly German local militia in South Tyrol, the Tyrolean Riflemen Association, which had already significantly increased its membership at the beginning of the war.⁷⁵ There were also members of the civilian government, especially those with a military background such as War Minister Alexander Krobotin, who advocated deporting ethnic Italians to Italy if not during, then possibly after, the war.⁷⁶ Ultimately, however, other figures in the civilian government, including the foreign minister, persuaded Franz Joseph to reject martial law in the Alpine and Littoral areas and hence curbed the potential for a military-driven ethnic-cleansing campaign in these regions.⁷⁷

In a second, more remote counterfactual, the Pan-Germans or a similar nationalist party could have pushed for an ethnic-cleansing campaign once the parliament reconvened in May 1917. Like the military, they may have wanted to prevent future Italian territorial demands or to show displeasure with the enlistment of thousands of Austrian Italians in the Italian army. This type of policy might have become especially attractive for the Nationalists after it became clear in early 1918 that Germany would no longer be able to aid Austrian troops on the Italian front. Such a policy, however, was unlikely to materialize for two reasons. First, the nationalist parties did not dominate Austrian politics. Second, during 1917–18, the Social Democrats, who were willing to end the war and work with the minorities, including the Italians, were dominant in the parliament.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE: DOMESTIC POLITICS AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

With the exception of a short-lived parliamentary experience in 1877–78, the Ottoman Empire remained an autocratic regime without any effective con-

74. Redlich, *Austrian War Government*, p. 158.

75. Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*.

76. Valiani, *The End of Austria-Hungary*.

77. *Ibid.*

straints on the power of Sultan Abdulhamit II until 1908. From 1878 to 1908, several groups sought to introduce a parliamentary system and curb the powers of the sultan. Among them were émigrés residing in European cities and a group of young Ottoman officers, who formed a secret organization known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). In 1908 this organization started a rebellion in Macedonia and forced Abdulhamit to sanction elections for a new parliament.

After 1908, the Turkish leadership began to experience a degree of political competition. On one side was the CUP, which favored a centralized political system and sought to curtail the privileges of religious institutions, both Muslim and Christian. On the other side was a coalition of liberals and religious elites bound by their preference for a more decentralized system that would allow for religious and communal autonomy. By implication, this faction supported retention of the communal privileges of Christian minorities as opposed to pursuing policies that sought to “Ottomanize” and secularize them along with their Muslim counterparts.

The liberal-religious faction created two political parties. The Liberal Party, established in September 1908, proved to be short-lived after becoming involved in an unsuccessful coup attempt organized by religious officers and elites on April 13, 1909. Following the failure of the coup, the liberal group formed the Freedom and Unity Party, in 1911. The party defeated the CUP in the intermediary elections of 1911, but it performed poorly in the general elections of 1912. Nevertheless, the party was able to exert some influence on government policy through individuals who were not official members but were sympathetic to its political agenda.

Whatever influence the liberal-religious elite had, however, was wiped out during the First Balkan War (1912–13), which resulted in the loss of Macedonia and Western Thrace to Greece. Enraged by these territorial losses, three leaders from the radical nationalist faction of the CUP—Enver, Mehmed Talat, and Ahmed Cemal—took control of the government in a coup d’état.⁷⁸ The Freedom and Unity Party dissolved, and many of its members as well as other dissenting voices went into exile or were otherwise politically sidelined. The triumvirate also removed potential opposition in the military and appointed supporters to key domestic security positions.⁷⁹ In the 1914 elections, just prior to the start of the war, the CUP was the only party fielding candidates.

The Ottoman Empire entered World War I under the leadership of the radical nationalist faction of the CUP, which was motivated by the prospect of cap-

78. Enver and Cemal had military backgrounds; Talat had served in the civilian bureaucracy.

79. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, p. 130.

turing territories lost to Russia in the nineteenth century. Immediately after entering the war, the group dissolved the Ottoman parliament, preemptively silencing the remaining relatively moderate members within the CUP. Given that the liberal opposition from outside the CUP had already been suppressed before the war, the radical faction of the CUP encountered no effective opposition when making decisions regarding the fate of the minorities, including the Armenians.

The period that resulted in the genocide of Ottoman Armenians can be roughly divided into three stages.⁸⁰ From the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the war until the end of the Sarikamis offensive in January 1915, the CUP leadership arrested members of selected Armenian organizations, primarily members of the Hinchak Party. In the second stage, from the end of the Sarikamis offensive until late April 1915, two developments occurred. First, the Ottoman military started the systematic deportation and massacre of Armenians in areas considered to be strategically important to the war effort. At this point in the war, the deported populations from the east and southeast of Anatolia were sent to Central Anatolia. In addition, Armenian soldiers and officers, who until then had been serving in the Ottoman army, were transferred to labor battalions. Meanwhile, the Armenians revolted in late March in the southeastern town of Zeitun and in mid-April in the eastern town of Van.

In the third stage, starting in May 1915, the CUP moved to a full-scale policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide against the Armenians of Anatolia. The CUP leadership issued a “deportation order” aimed at wartime opponents of the government.⁸¹ Armenians who had been recruited into labor battalions were systematically killed; the deportations were expanded to target all Armenians of Central and Eastern Anatolia, including those not on the front lines. In addition, the government began directing the deportees to the Syrian desert rather than to Central Anatolia.⁸²

There are at least three counterfactual scenarios in which the Armenians of Anatolia would not have been subjected to ethnic cleansing and genocide.⁸³ In the first scenario, the radicals within the CUP could have failed to silence other factions in their party or the state bureaucracy. Given the presence of prominent individuals in the bureaucracy who disagreed with the triumvirate’s

80. These stages are based on Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*; Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*; and Bloxham, “The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916.”

81. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, p. 149.

82. The deportees were also subject to attacks in the course of the deportation itself and after their arrival in the Syrian desert. See Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*.”

83. On the role of counterfactual analysis in causal inference, see Jack S. Levy, “Counterfactuals, Causal Inference, and Historical Analysis,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (September 2015), pp. 378–402.

harsh policies against the Armenians, this counterfactual seems quite plausible. For example, Tahsin Bey, who had been the governor of Van until March 1915 and later served as the governor of Erzurum in July 1915, criticized the Armenian policy of the triumvirate as follows: "Rather than deporting the Armenians in the middle of a war, I suggest for my part that they be maintained in their present situation until further notice and not be spurred to revolt by the illegitimate use of force. . . . After enduring this painful experience and its deadly consequences, we are, I fear, making the mistake of putting our army in an untenable situation."⁸⁴

Tahsin Bey thus considered the deportations and massacres misguided not only because they were morally reprehensible but also because they were likely to hurt the war effort.⁸⁵ If governors such as Tahsin Bey had enjoyed some organizational backing in Istanbul, they might have been able to prevent the policy from moving to the second or third stage. Even without organizational backing, if the CUP leadership had been unable to replace these governors, they might still have been able to prevent ethnic cleansing in the areas under their charge. The CUP's radical leadership, however, was able to remove the governors who resisted its Armenian policy.

In the second counterfactual scenario, the liberal opposition, as it existed prior to 1914, could have remained intact during the war. The liberals had a sustained history of working with Christian populations to curb the centralizing policies of the CUP.⁸⁶ Given this history, they might have been more willing to believe evidence from the east, such as details offered by the former governor of Van, that the Armenians were, generally speaking, compliant and that an ethnic-cleansing campaign was unlikely to improve the security situation. Thus, if the Liberals had wielded influence in the government, the Armenian policy might have never moved beyond the first or second stage.

A third, more remote, counterfactual scenario is one in which political parties such as the Social Democrats in Austro-Hungary, which wanted to stop the war and focus on other issues, also existed in the Ottoman Empire. Especially after the military defeat at Sarikamis, such political groups could have ceded some territory to Russia and pulled out of the war. It is plausible that the

84. Quoted in Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else," p. 262.

85. Other governors also had objections to the ethnic-cleansing policy. See Ayhan Aktar, "Debating the Armenian Massacres in the Last Ottoman Parliament, November–December 1918," *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Autumn 2007), pp. 240–270; and Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 159–163.

86. Feroz Ahmad, "Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1914," in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), pp. 401–434.

Russians would have agreed to such a policy because Russia's main focus was its military front with the Germans; and until the Ottomans entered the war in late 1914, Russia had favored Ottoman neutrality to avoid opening an additional front in the Caucasus. But given the absence in the Ottoman Empire of parties similar to those of social democrats elsewhere, no such outcome was likely.

RUSSIA: DOMESTIC POLITICS AND PARTIAL ETHNIC CLEANSING

Like the Ottoman Empire, the Russian political system lacked effective constraints on the decisionmaking ability of the monarch for much of the pre-World War I period. The period from 1860 to 1905, however, also witnessed important changes that were largely absent in the Ottoman Empire, such as the establishment of semi-autonomous local peasant units, increasing industrialization, and the emergence of an organized labor movement.⁸⁷

In 1905, widespread strikes and peasant protests forced Czar Nicholas II to declare the formation of the State Duma, whose members would be elected through universal male suffrage. Four politically significant factions, two on the left and two on the right, emerged as a result. The first was the Kadets, or Constitutional Democrats, who represented the liberal left and were largely supported by the urban educated strata and progressive nobles. The Kadets advocated a constitutional monarchy and universal male suffrage and were open to non-Russian members. The second included left-wing groups such as the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks, and the Socialist Revolutionary Party. These parties were interested primarily in changing the political structure of the empire and, in the case of the Bolsheviks, were adamantly against Russia's entry into World War I.⁸⁸ The left-wing parties and the Kadets dominated in the first two Dumas that served until June 1907, when an electoral law passed restricting suffrage and minority representation, thus giving dominance to right-wing parties.⁸⁹

The right-wing parties included the Octobrists, which like the Kadets supported constitutional democracy but adhered to a more conservative economic agenda, and the Conservative and Nationalist Parties, which advocated Russian and aristocratic dominance throughout the empire. Some nationalist subgroups, such as the Black Hundreds, held especially radical views toward

87. Victoria E. Bonnell, ed., *The Russian Worker: Life and Labor under the Tsarist Regime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); and Alexander Kerensky, "Russia on the Eve of World War I," *Russian Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Autumn 1945), pp. 1–30.

88. Fedor A. Gaida, "Governments, Parliaments, and Parties (Russian Empire)," in *1914–1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, <http://www.1914-1918-online.net/>.

89. Warren B. Walsh, "Political Parties in the Russian Dumas," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (June 1950), pp. 144–150; and Kerensky, "Russia on the Eve of World War I."

minorities.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, among the groups on the right it was the Octobrists who enjoyed the largest representation in both the third and fourth Dumas, which coincided with the war period. Thus, the radical nationalists, though gaining ascendancy in the 1907–14 period, were not a dominant political force.

The Russian Empire entered World War I under the leadership of a conservative government dominated by monarchists who earlier had served as civil servants. Seeking national unity during wartime, the moderate nationalists and Octobrists initially suspended the activities of the Duma in August 1914. The opposition, however—including the left-wing parties and significant sections of the Kadet Party—continued to convene regularly, if informally, to discuss the progress of the war.⁹¹

Dissatisfied with Russia's war effort, the parliamentary groups demanded the reopening of the Duma, which occurred in January 1915. Thereafter, the parties in the Duma, including the Octobrists, become more critical of the conservatives in the cabinet. In the summer of 1915, the Duma-based opposition increased its pressure on the government by demanding appointments to ministerial positions and asking for reforms that would extend the political rights of Russia's lower classes and minorities.⁹² Czar Nicholas acceded to replacing most members of the cabinet but did not undertake political reforms. In February 1917, growing protests resulted in the abdication of the czar and the formation of a provisional government led by the parties in the Duma. Increasing competition between the Bolsheviks and the provisional government eventually culminated in the October 1917 revolution.

Starting in February 1917, divisions similar to those between the right- and left-wing political factions began to emerge in the army. The first signs were declarations of soldiers' rights and rank-and-file resistance to punishment. Then, after an unsuccessful military offensive against Austro-German positions in June 1917, the demands included the resignation of bourgeois ministers, the transfer of power to the Soviets, and a peace treaty ending the war.⁹³ At times, the regular soldiers were joined by lower-ranking officers, but not higher-ranking ones, who typically came from nobility. By September 1917, these divisions had resulted in the collapse of the Russian army, including the army of the Caucasus, which had been fighting against the Ottomans.⁹⁴

Once again, it is useful to consider counterfactual scenarios that could have

90. Michael Melancon, "Social Conflict and Control, Protest and Repression (Russian Empire)," in *1914–1918 Online*.

91. Gaida, "Governments, Parliaments, and Parties (Russian Empire)."

92. *Ibid.*

93. Marc Ferro, "The Russian Soldier in 1917: Undisciplined, Patriotic, and Revolutionary," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (September 1971), pp. 483–512.

94. *Ibid.*; and Reynolds, "Buffers, Not Brethren."

resulted in ethnic cleansing against the Muslims in the South Caucasus. Because the revolutionary situation in Russia beginning in 1917 increasingly distracted the leadership from the war effort, I focus on two scenarios that relate to the 1914–16 period. In the first counterfactual, the Russian military could have turned to ethnic cleansing during the initial stages of the war in late 1914, when Ottoman troops annexed areas around Ardahan. This period could have witnessed ethnic cleansing not only because Ottoman forces were annexing Russian territory, but also because they were aided by volunteer units made up of Russian Muslims from the territory under Ottoman threat. Despite minority collaboration and the Ottoman threat, however, the Russian leadership did not resort to ethnic cleansing.

The second period during which the Russians could have turned to ethnic cleansing was after the Sarikamis offensive. During this period, the immediate security threat was mitigated as a result of the defeat of the Ottoman army, although the fighting was expected to continue. The Russian authorities at the local and national levels indeed came close to implementing an ethnic cleansing policy. Once the Russian army recovered Kars, Ardahan, and Batum, Russian units conducted massacres against the Muslim population of the region of Artvin, who were suspected of collaboration with Ottoman forces.⁹⁵ In addition, the viceroy to the three provinces asked the council of ministers to withdraw the citizenship of Muslims living in the three provinces and deport them first to the Russian interior and then to Ottoman territory at the end of the war.⁹⁶ With the backing of the council, provincial authorities launched the wholesale deportation of the Muslim population.

These deportations were stopped in their early stages because, unlike the Ottoman political system, the Russian system retained organized groups able to challenge such policies. The group in this case consisted of Social Democratic deputies who represented Georgia in the Duma. These deputies argued that the Muslim population in question, which included significant numbers of Georgian-speaking Ajars, did not constitute a threat to Russian control of the region.⁹⁷ In reaction, Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich, a gen-

95. Holquist, "Forms of Violence during the Russian Occupation of Ottoman Territory and in Northern Persia (Urmia and Astrabad), October 1914–December 1917," p. 350.

96. Eric Lohr, *Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012). Note that the council of ministers was the main national-level executive body during the war.

97. Robert W. Coonrod, "The Duma's Attitude toward War-Time Problems of Minority Groups," *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (February 1954), pp. 29–46; and Lohr, *Russian Citizenship*. During World War I, there was also significant resistance in the Russian Duma to the deportation efforts against other groups, such as the Jews and Germans. See Coonrod, "The Duma's Attitude toward War-Time Problems of Minority Groups."

Table 2. Non-ethnic Cleavages and Ethnic Cleansing in Multinational Empires during World War I

	Austro-Hungarian Empire and Italians	Ottoman Empire and Armenians	Russian Empire and Muslims in South Caucasus
Extent to which non-ethnic cleavages play a role during peacetime	highest	lowest	middle
Whether leaders from organizations based on non-ethnic cleavages control the government or have the means to influence it during war	yes	no	yes
Wartime policy against minority	temporary and limited relocation from war-zone areas	ethnic cleansing and genocide	localized massacres, plans for mass deportations that do not materialize

eral in the Russian army with roots in Georgia, presided over a committee that investigated the deputies' claim. Based on the conclusions of the investigation, the government decided to halt the deportations of Muslims inhabiting the three provinces.⁹⁸ (Table 2 provides a summary of the evidence from the three cases discussed in this section.)

Other Explanations for Absence or Presence of Ethnic Cleansing

This section examines two alternative explanations for why among the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian Empires, only the Ottomans engaged in ethnic cleansing and genocide. The first explanation centers on the nature of preexisting ethnic cleavages.⁹⁹ The second considers whether the wartime security problem in the Ottoman Empire was greater than in the other two empires.

98. Lohr, *Russian Citizenship*.

99. For examples of studies that focus on long-standing ethnic dislike or prejudice as a cause of mass ethnic violence, see Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, p. 57; Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press); Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); and Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). On the Ottoman Armenians specifically, see Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Oxford: Berghahn, 1995).

PREWAR ETHNIC DISLIKE

One alternative explanation for the Armenian genocide can be found in the intense dislike of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire. Scholars highlight two factors that could have made ethnic dislike more intense in the Ottoman case: first, the existence of religious differences between the dominant and minority ethnic groups and, second, the existence of previous instances of violence toward the minority group in the decades prior to World War I.¹⁰⁰

There are several reasons why these two factors are not sufficient to account for the existence or nonexistence of ethnic cleansing in the three cases under review. Consider, first, the Russian and Ottoman cases. In both cases, the dominant ethnic group had a religious affiliation different from the minority in question. Additionally, repression and violence were aspects of both Russian and Ottoman minority policies in the prewar period. For the Ottoman Armenians, the period up to 1908 under Abdulhamit was marked with repression and violence. From 1893 to 1896, the government had organized Hamidiyye Units, which conducted a series of pogroms targeting the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia.¹⁰¹ There were also anti-Armenian riots in Adana during the attempted coup of 1909. In Russia, the government organized large-scale massacres and deportations that targeted the Muslim populations in the South Caucasus in the 1860s.¹⁰² After the takeover of the provinces of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum, Muslims were subject to milder forms of repression by the Russian government, resulting in the large-scale migration of the Laz and Ajar populations to Ottoman territory.¹⁰³ Moreover, while the Muslims in Russia were almost completely excluded from mainstream national politics, the main Armenian and Turkish political organizations in the Ottoman Empire cooperated with each other both before and after the reforms of 1908.¹⁰⁴

In the Austrian case, the evidence suggests that the dominance of politicians who did not prioritize nationalist policies accounts for the absence of large-

100. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, p. 57. On the Ottoman Armenians in particular, see Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*. Former instances of interethnic violence can also be thought of as an indicator, rather than a cause, of preexisting ethnic dislike.

101. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else," pp. 127–132; and Selim Deringil, "The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed": Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895–1897," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (April 2009), pp. 344–371.

102. Lohr, *Russian Citizenship*.

103. M. Pelkmans, "Uncertain Divides: Religion, Ethnicity, and Politics in the Georgian Borderlands," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2003, p. 41.

104. Ahmad, "Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1914"; and Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

scale prewar violence, despite serious tensions between ethnic Italians and Germans. For instance, in 1904 the Austrian government decided to open two divisions in the German-speaking University of Innsbruck, in Tyrol, that would provide education in Italian. Following this decision, German students, accompanied by a town mob, organized widespread attacks on Italian students and faculty.¹⁰⁵ The riots ended only after government troops intervened. This episode highlights the role of the government, not ethnic tolerance, in potentially precluding large-scale violence.¹⁰⁶

EXTENT OF THE SECURITY CHALLENGES

Another alternative is that, in addition to confronting challenges similar to those of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires, including multifront wars and wartime minority collaboration, the Ottoman Empire faced another challenge: an even graver security situation. In particular, historians have argued that revolts, such as the one that occurred in Van in April 1915, diverted Ottoman troops from the Russian front and hence played an important role in the government's decision to deport the Armenian population of Anatolia.¹⁰⁷

This argument has several problems. First, the occurrence of sporadic revolts does not negate the central argument made in this article that, during wartime, the decision on whether revolts or collaboration constitutes a threat depends not only on the actions of the members of the minority, but also on the type of state leaders who are assessing the security situation. In the Ottoman case, there were reasons for suspecting that the widespread deportations and massacre of Armenians would not improve the security situation. In fact, these policies had the potential to divert troops from the war effort and incite further revolts. Indeed, scholars who argue that the Armenian revolts threatened the Ottoman troops in the east note that once the deportations and killings spread, localized uprisings turned into a general insurgency.¹⁰⁸ Such concerns, however, were ignored by the radical faction that controlled the governing Committee of Union and Progress.

Second, the argument that the Armenian revolts were sufficient to incite wholesale deportations and killings also ignores the question of why the CUP did not pursue less aggressive policies toward the Armenians, such as relocat-

105. See "Innsbruck Riots May Wreck the Dreibund; Italian-Austrian Relations Are Near Breaking Point," *New York Times*, November 6, 1904.

106. The prime minister at the time was a left-leaning politician named Ernest von Koerber. Fredrik Lindström, *Empire and Identity: Biographies of the Austrian State Problem in the Late Habsburg Empire* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2008), pp. 50–60.

107. Edward J. Erickson, "The Armenians and Ottoman Military Policy, 1915," *War in History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (April 2008), pp. 141–167.

108. *Ibid.*

ing them from towns and villages that had experienced significant revolts. Indeed, this seems to have been the policy until March–April 1915. Thereafter, the policy expanded to include all Armenians in Central and Eastern Anatolia, regardless of whether they lived close to the front lines or had organized a revolt. Thus, the evidence suggests that around this time the CUP leaders stopped considering the Armenians a short-term, war-related threat and instead considered them a general threat that would hinder their ability to hold on to Central and Eastern Anatolia in the long run. Yet, the long-term security threat related to the minority in question was not more acute in the Ottoman case compared with that in the Austrian and Russian cases. Especially in the Austrian case, the very basis for Italy's territorial claims was the presence of ethnic Italians in Austria. Hence, the minority in question would appear to have constituted a more potent long-term threat to the territorial integrity of this country.

Conclusion

This article makes two contributions to the literature on mass ethnic violence. First, it argues that the decision to adopt a policy of ethnic cleansing against a minority group in wartime depends not only on the severity of the security threat posed by the group but also on the structure of the state leadership.¹⁰⁹ Even if the security threat from minority ethnic groups is comparable, leaders might opt for different minority policies in wartime depending on how they perceive it. Second, how leaders react to and interpret wartime threats from minority groups depends largely on the extent to which political organizations based on non-ethnic cleavages such as class or clerical-anticlerical divisions play a salient role in society. Leaders who prioritize such cleavages are more likely to make territorial concessions so that they can turn their attention to the socioeconomic or cultural issues that matter to them. As such, they are also less likely to support policies that require them to invest their time and resources further to achieve territorial goals. In addition, the more that leaders prioritize non-ethnic issues, the less likely they are to view the world as divided into competing ethnic groups. Hence, they are also less likely to ignore evidence that calls into question the existence or strategic relevance of minority collaboration and more likely to use means other than ethnic cleansing to achieve territorial goals.

109. Here, this study joins other recent works that focus on domestic political leadership as an explanatory factor that accounts for the presence or absence of mass ethnic violence under similar conditions. See Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*.

The article evaluated these arguments by comparing the policies of three multinational empires (Ottoman Turkey, Russia, and Austro-Hungary) vis-à-vis three minority groups (Armenians, Muslims in the South Caucasus, and Italians) during World War I. All three groups had links with neighboring states that made claims on the territories in which they were located, and some of their members collaborated with these states during the war. Yet, the three governments opted for different wartime policies regarding these minorities. In the Ottoman case, where political parties and factions prioritizing non-ethnic cleavages were, comparatively speaking, weak until 1914 and non-existent thereafter, the radical nationalist leaders were able to implement a genocidal policy against ethnic Armenians. In the Russian case, where there were more salient non-ethnic cleavages, regional- and national-level leaders came very close to implementing the wholesale deportation of Muslims in the South Caucasus. Social Democratic deputies from the South Caucasus, however, successfully challenged the security rationale behind the deportation decision. Finally, in the Austrian case, actors who could have favored radical policies against the Italians, such as the Pan-Germans or elements within the military, lacked sufficient government control to implement a policy of full-scale deportation or genocide.

To what extent are these findings applicable to other cases? Recent political science literature provides evidence compatible with the argument of this article. In his 2015 study of the causes of genocide in sub-Saharan Africa, Scott Straus finds that non-ethnic cleavages were an important obstacle against genocidal policies in high-risk civil wars in the early 2000s.¹¹⁰ For example, during the civil war in Ivory Coast, non-ethnic cleavages that divided Christian southerners and connected them to Muslim northerners made a genocidal policy against the northern Muslim communities unlikely.¹¹¹ Similarly, in Mali “cousinage ties” or “joking alliances” between clans and ethnic groups allowed for dialogue and helped avoid an outcome that could have resembled the Rwandan genocide.¹¹²

The findings also provide a fresh perspective on the cases of ethnic cleansing following the end of communism in the Soviet Union. The argument in this article suggests that the elimination of class and other non-ethnic cleavages

110. Straus also emphasizes the importance of founding narratives in the postcolonial period as a factor that prevents genocide. A potentially fruitful line of future research is the study of the relationship between founding narratives and the salience of non-ethnic cleavages at the time of independence. See *ibid.*

111. *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 160–161.

112. *Ibid.*, pp. 197–202. On “cousinage ties” and ethnicity in Mali, see also Dunning and Harrison, “Cross-Cutting Cleavages and Ethnic Voting.”

in communist contexts made ethnic cleansing a likely outcome when wars occurred. For example, in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the absence of salient class cleavages contributed to the ethnic cleansing campaign of 1992–95 in two ways. First, in the initial free elections in 1990, the lack of significant non-ethnic cleavages that could rival ethnicity contributed to the failure of the political parties that sought to emphasize economic rather than ethnic issues. Second, given their inability to access power, parties with non-ethnic agendas were also unable to prevent nationalist leaders from starting a civil war and rapidly converging on ethnic cleansing as a war strategy.¹¹³

Are there policies that might promote the types of domestic conditions that, according to this article, can prevent ethnic cleansing? On the one hand, whether or not non-ethnic cleavages and, eventually, nonnationalist parties become influential in a state's political system is at least partially a function of long-term historical processes such as state formation and economic modernization.¹¹⁴ From this perspective, formulating and implementing policies that generate domestic conditions that prevent ethnic cleansing would be extremely difficult.

On the other hand, the findings have implications for the debate on whether and how democratic institutions might inhibit mass ethnic violence. One view is that democratic countries are less likely to engage in mass killings because they impose institutional constraints on the leader.¹¹⁵ Another view, however, is that democracies are more likely to engage in mass ethnic violence because they empower majority ethnic groups or generate electoral incentives to incite ethnic conflict.¹¹⁶

This article agrees with the first view that institutional arrangements that allow for competition among multiple political parties, even when they do not fulfill all the procedural requirements for democracy, could decrease the likelihood of ethnic cleansing. The argument suggests that whether a competitive institutional system can help avoid ethnic cleansing depends on the existence

113. Bulutgil, *The Roots of Ethnic Cleansing in Europe*, pp. 128–149.

114. Lipset and Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments."

115. R.J. Rummel, "Democracy, Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (March 1995), pp. 3–26. For an empirical study that criticizes this idea, see Alexander B. Downes, "Restraint or Propellant? Democracy and Civilian Fatalities in Interstate Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 6 (December 2007), pp. 872–904.

116. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*; Andreas Wimmer, "Ethnic Exclusion in Nationalizing States," in Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar, eds., *SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Sage, 2006), pp. 334–345; Steven I. Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000); and Rui J.P. de Figueiredo and Barry R. Weingast, "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in Barbara F. Walter and Richard Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 261–302.

of influential parties that prioritize issues other than ethnicity. From this perspective, establishing competitive political systems in conflict-prone regions could contribute to the prevention of mass ethnic violence to the extent that such institutions lead to the emergence and empowerment of political parties that emphasize non-ethnic issues.

This theoretical intuition also generates some expectations about the future of countries such as Bosnia and Iraq. It suggests that Bosnia's complicated consociational democracy, designed to assuage ethnic conflict, is unlikely to prevent ethnic cleansing if warlike conditions that resemble those of the early 1990s were to emerge in the future. At the same time, the modest electoral success of parties with non-ethnic agendas in the 2010 election, if repeated, could pose a serious barrier to political groups that might desire to use ethnic cleansing in the future.¹¹⁷ By contrast, in Iraq, where political organizations that focus on non-ethnic issues, such as secular or left-wing parties, have become increasingly marginalized, there remains almost no domestic barrier against groups that could target minorities with an ethnic-cleansing campaign during international or civil wars.

117. In the 2010 parliamentary elections, the Social Democratic Party emerged as the largest party in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which includes the Croat and Muslim cantons. It lost its dominant position in the 2014 elections, but only because of a split in the party. Nationalist parties, however, continue to dominate the elections in Republika Srpska.