'A TERRIBLE WAR OF DEFENCE'

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Examining the Role of Dehumanisation in Genocidal Mobilisation

Leah Owen

Balliol College, University of Oxford

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an account of the role played by discourses of dehumanisation in mobilising genocidal violence. While scholars of ethnic conflict, social psychology, and genocide have extensively studied dehumanisation, this has focused on it as a phenomenon that reduces moral restraints on violence. Other forms of dehumanisation, however, do something different, designating target populations as an existentially threatening, monstrous, or contaminating threat, and thus a valid target for 'defensive' violence. What literature has addressed this latter understanding has been limited by its lack of (political, historical, and societal) contextualisation of these discourses – where were they articulated? By whom? To what audiences? – as well as limited examination of their internal logics.

To address this, I engage in an extended archival examination of three main case studies (Germany, Rwanda, and Serbia), followed by several smaller cases to demonstrate the broader applicability of my model. By building an extensive corpus of examples of dehumanisation, locating them in their historical and social contexts, and tracing their spread and impact, I develop a clearer account of the role of dehumanisation in genocidal violence.

I find that this form of securitising, threat-designating dehumanisation was remarkably consistent across a wide range of cases, and played a significant role in shaping violence. Distinctive views of the enemy – portraying them as diseases and vermin, existentially threatening to the body politic but also easily destroyed or 'cured' – were repeated across all three cases, and linked with distinctive violent responses. Based on the correlation between the incidence of dehumanisation and the forms of genocidal violence, as well as relevant social psychology scholarship, I argue that it was effective in promoting campaigns of mass extermination. I conclude by considering how these findings might contribute to genocide early warning regimes, by providing an account of a common precursor to genocide.

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Finally, I owe a great debt to the archivists, researchers, and survivors upon whose work this thesis is based. Studying genocidal violence is a difficult, often distressing, and taxing project, but one that hopefully contributes to the sacred and sometimes far-off goal of 'never again'. For all that I have found this a traumatic study to conduct, my experience pales compared to the experience of those who investigated, transcribed, and lived through the events it describes. I hope that, in some minute way, my work may contribute to and honour their lives, work and witness.

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PART 1: DEHUMANISATION IN CONTEXT

1. INTRODUCTION

What is genocidal dehumanisation? How does it differ across genocidal conflicts? When leaders, soldiers, journalists, and ordinary people refer to their enemies as ‘monsters’, ‘diseases’, or ‘vermin’, what role does this discourse play in their politics – and what role, if any, does it play in shaping the ensuing violence?

To illustrate, I offer three sets of examples.

In 1886, the German writer Paul de Lagarde wrote that Jews were ‘nothing but carriers of decomposition … trichinae and bacilli [to be] exterminated as quickly and thoroughly as possible’ (Savage, 2007, 417). Subsequently, in 1919, Hitler would describe them as ‘the racial tuberculosis of the nations’ (Levy, 1980, 88-90). Twenty-two years later still, Field Marshal Walther von Reichenau instructed his troops to deliver ‘severe but just retribution … to the subhuman species of Jewry,’ and ‘exterminate’ it (Mayer, 1988, 250), while Auschwitz camp officials began experimenting with the pesticide and disinfectant Zyklon B to kill Jewish and Soviet prisoners (Longerich, 2010, 281).

In Serbia, the epic poetry of the prince-bishop Njegoš described the need to destroy Turkish populations and Muslim converts as 'loathsome degenerates', 'a plague of mankind' that 'poisoned' the world, 'spew[ing] out the venom of their black souls'. This poem, written in 1847, was widely taught in schools up to the early 1990s. In late 1993 and early 1994, the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić warned of a 'toxic all-destructive Islamic octopus… irreconcilabl[y] poisonous toward the Serbian

Orthodox being' (ICTY, 2009, 54). In 1994 in Banja Luka – at a time when Bosnian Muslims were being killed or forcibly expelled from the city – local leader Radoslav Brđanin addressed rallies declaring that 'it is the obligation of Serbs over the next hundred years to wipe their feet from the foul non-Christians who have befouled this soil of ours' (ICTY, 2013b, 43739).

In Rwanda, in 1993, before genocide began, Hassan Ngeze discussed the Tutsi population in the newsletter *Kangura*, describing how 'a cockroach cannot bring forth a butterfly … a cockroach brings forth a cockroach' (Ngeze, 1993). Such vermin, he argued, would only perpetuate themselves if left unchecked. A year later, sexual and reproductive violence during the genocide often targeted Tutsi women as mothers, who reported their rapists as claiming that 'if you set out to kill a rat, you must kill the pregnant rat' (Nowrojee, 2007, 367).

The commonality of these metaphors – recurring across three vastly different conflicts over the twentieth century – is striking. Ethnic enemies were depicted as disgusting, as sources of insecurity and danger to the national community – almost literally to the 'body politic'. While the specific images varied, there is a clear set of recurring themes. *Génocidaires* did not use imagery of 'innocent' creatures like mice or cattle, nor even predators like lions or bears, but consistently depicted their targets as monstrous, verminous, and contagious threats. The 'internal logic' of these portrayals – the implications that would arise, by analogy to real-world phenomena – led to their own solutions. Vermin could be exterminated, and diseases cured. Violence would not only be directed against 'conventional' military threats, or to terrorise populations into compliance, but to destroy populations in their entirety. Indeed, these images and rationales were often cited by military and paramilitary figures during the actual commission of genocide. Based on this, there appears to be some form of causal connection between perceptions of threat, dehumanising discourses, and genocidal violence.

The patterns I observe in these vignettes may be suggestive of a causal link between particular forms of speech and particular forms of action. Even so, the social, political, and cultural mechanisms that link the two are not clear. In any case, the examples above represent only a handful of cases. What accounts for this pattern – a pattern that, as I examine later through archival and primary analysis, is consistently repeated across a range of cases? If the lives of a Rwandan coffee farmer in 1994, a Serbian psychotherapist in the late 1980s, and a German soldier in 1942 varied so much, why did they use such similar sets of imagery? How can analysing such patterns help us to understand better the forms taken by violence during genocide?

These questions are nothing new. Academic, practitioner, and popular scholarship on genocide widely acknowledges 'dehumanisation' as a key contributor to causing and shaping genocidal violence, amidst a range of other discourses and ideological factors that shaped people's perception of and judgements about the world.

Some writers adopt what I summarise as a 'materialist' perspective, where dehumanisation and other ideological approaches play little role in determining violence. Valentino, for instance, characterises genocide as the end point of a series of strategic escalations by elites during conflicts (‘a means of [last] resort’, Valentino (2004, 240), while Downes sees mass violence against civilians as an attempt to rapidly end a conflict that would otherwise become protracted (Downes, 2008, 249). Other writers focus on individual decision-making by perpetrators, as in Kalyvas’ focus on opportunistic and personal factors (like the need to 'settle scores or reshuffle land and properties' (Kalyvas, 2006, 373)) in a 'localistic and region-specific' account of violence, while Hayes highlights the economic and material benefits to groups like the SS in enacting the Holocaust (Hayes, 2017, 134-7). From this perspective, strategic, material or organisational concerns, not ideology or the supposed human/inhuman status of the victims, were most important.

Other writers suggest that dehumanising discourse did play a major role in violence, but mean very different things by that.

In some cases, ‘dehumanisation’ is used as a synecdoche for ‘racism’ or ‘ethnic hatred’ more broadly. This conflation of ‘dehumanisation’ and ‘prejudice’ is often found in media (Powell, 2017) and non-governmental organisation literature (Amnesty International, 2017; Remembering Srebrenica, 2017), but can also be found in academic literature (discussed in greater detail in my literature review), where it denotes a wide range of phenomena. Such an approach typically collapses disparate discourses together, or misattributes different causal mechanisms and political strategies to different outcomes. I refer to this approach as an ‘undifferentiated dehumanisation’ based approach – while such scholarship has provided valuable insight into discourses of ethnic hatred and animus, a more precise approach is necessary to accurately assess the causal role played by specific forms of dehumanisation in specific forms of genocidal violence.

Several writers recognise different forms or typologies of dehumanisation and related phenomena. For this thesis, I draw upon Savage's (2013, 156) categorisation of *legitimising dehumanisation* and *motivational dehumanisation*, which divides genocidal dehumanisation based on the type of non-human imagery used, and the intended rhetorical effect. In *legitimising dehumanisation*, violence is enabled by reducing its psychological costs, by portraying subjects as livestock, inconsequential creatures, or inanimate objects outside human moral obligations. In *motivational dehumanisation*, violence is actively encouraged by increasing its incentives, by portraying its victims as monstrous, verminous, or corrupting threats that must be destroyed quickly to fend off the threat they pose. While these two forms are linked, they have different uses and outcomes. Bandura describes concentration camp staff 'degrad[ing victims] to subhuman objects so that those who operated the gas chambers would be less burdened by distress' (Bandura, 2002, 109), but such lightening of distress through legitimising dehumanisation does not provide a strong motivation to kill. It is a facilitative technique. By contrast, Radovan Karadžić repeatedly warning about a 'toxic all-destructive Islamic octopus… irreconcilabl[y] poisonous toward the Serbian Orthodox being' (ICTY, 2009, 54) might not only make the actual act of killing another person a little easier for its audience, but would provide a powerful argument for participation in genocide. For the most part, academic discussion of dehumanisation has focused on the former phenomenon, neglecting motivational dehumanisation.

Other forms of dehumanisation could exist – exoticisation, ‘noble savage’ imagery, comparison to mythological entities, or characterisation as a machine or artificial inhuman intelligence, for example, each reflecting different anxieties about the nature of the foe and their relationship to the audience’s group, and implying different policy responses. Nonetheless, these are not as central to genocidal violence, or can be understood as examples of the broader category of ‘removing human traits’ and ‘adding threatening non-human ones’.

There are, therefore, several main characterisations of the role of dehumanisation in genocide. Materialist conceptions suggest that it is unimportant compared to questions of strategic or material interests. ‘Undifferentiated dehumanisation’ models mention dehumanisation but offer few specific accounts or evidence of the role it plays, or conflate distinct phenomena. Legitimising conceptions of dehumanisation suggest that it may be important, but primarily as a facilitator of violence by reducing objections to it.

I suggest that, as they stand, none of these approaches can explain the distinctive patterns observed at the start of this chapter. Materialist approaches have trouble accounting for how consistent the language of motivational dehumanisation was, as well as the intense, total forms of violence resulting from it (which was often out of proportion with the supposed strategic reasoning that led to it). The ‘undifferentiated dehumanisation’ approach is too broad and non-specific to account for the specifics of genocidal dehumanisation. While it is true that dehumanising speech did imply an 'othering', and an 'us vs. them' split, the same can be said for justifications for many inter-group conflicts; it does not explain genocidal violence in particular. Such an approach also ignores the rhetorical impact of dehumanisation: when perpetrators describe their targets as ‘cancer’, it is unlikely that their primary objective is to reduce human obligations to them (although this may play a role). Likewise, it is difficult to understand how referring to an enemy ethnic group as ‘packages’ or ‘bundles’ would lead to an urgent need to destroy them. In short, undifferentiated and legitimising dehumanisation fails to explain why imagery of *non-human threat,* rather than simple *non-humanity,* was so common.

A fourth approach focuses on motivational dehumanisation. Savage himself notes that merely placing a target population ‘outside the terms of moral reference’ does not give the audience incentive to kill them. Instead, ‘loathsome’ and ‘nightmarish’ (Savage, 2006, 23, 29) imagery – motivational dehumanisation – would do so. Neilsen describes the similar process of ‘toxification’, where targets are deemed ’not simply inhuman or inferior … but a toxic presence that must be cauterised and destroyed’ (Neilsen, 2015, 88-89), wherein the target was positioned as a non-human group that needed to be defended against. Such approaches do account for many of the features of dehumanising rhetoric, but are often limited by their brevity, and their lack of a systematic approach and focus on the political, social, and bureaucratic contexts in which dehumanisation occurred.

This thesis, therefore, attempts to offer a more detailed and systematic account of the form, extent, and effects of genocidal dehumanisation. As a complex, largely internal psychological phenomenon, it is difficult to investigate, and in any case is only one of a range of factors that shape genocidal violence – neither necessary nor sufficient by itself. Writers like Valentino, Hayes, Bandura, and Kalyvas identify genuine and important conflict dynamics, that do considerably contribute to the kinds of violence seen during genocide.

Instead, I suggest dehumanisation can serve as a bridge between 'materialist' approaches that stress concrete security rationales for genocidal violence, and 'cognitive' approaches that stress the role of discourse, emotions, and ideas. By examining how the distinct patterns of threat perception that arise from motivational dehumanisation condition, shape, and direct campaigns of extermination, I offer an account of how these approaches might be brought together to produce a more convincing account.

Security fears (which, as per securitisation theory, are not objective features of the world, but are constructed and perceived in the realm of political and military bureaucracies) about material survival, and vividly paranoid discourses likening one's foes to luridly described insidious monsters do not have to be thought of as distinct, opposing explanations for genocidal violence. They clearly overlap – I suggest that in many cases they are inextricable – and remain consistent in very different environments and case studies across history and the world. This thesis aims to explain how, and why.

1.1 KEY ARGUMENTS

In this thesis, I argue that dehumanisation – specifically motivational dehumanisation – does indeed play a distinctive role in directing and shaping violence during genocide.

Across a wide range of cases, political, military, and cultural elites have presented ethnic enemies (especially during periods of broader conflict) as uniquely and existentially threatening to the nation. The specific nature of the threat that these discourses describe – infiltrating, corrupting, and already part of the audience's communities – blends materialist/strategic concerns, and emotive/ideological ones. Were the enemy likened to a noxious predator, vermin animal, or pathogen, then this could either denote that they were literally some form of 'race poison', evoking a strong emotional reaction, or it could serve as a particularly powerful metaphor warning against strategic dangers such as fifth-column infiltration, or against inter-community solidarity along non-ethnic lines. It could also just as easily do both at the same time. In any case, these images of the enemy either implicitly or explicitly call for a specifically genocidal response, going beyond conventional military concerns about neutralising enemy combatants and holding territory, and instead advocating for the complete destruction of the target group. Thus, motivational dehumanisation serves as an intervening variable in the causal chain between the independent variable of perceived insecurity, and the dependent variable of specific forms of exterminatory violence. It provides a language and model with which the former can be articulated and extended (it did not merely express these perceptions of insecurity, but could also stoke them), and calls for, shapes, and directs the latter.

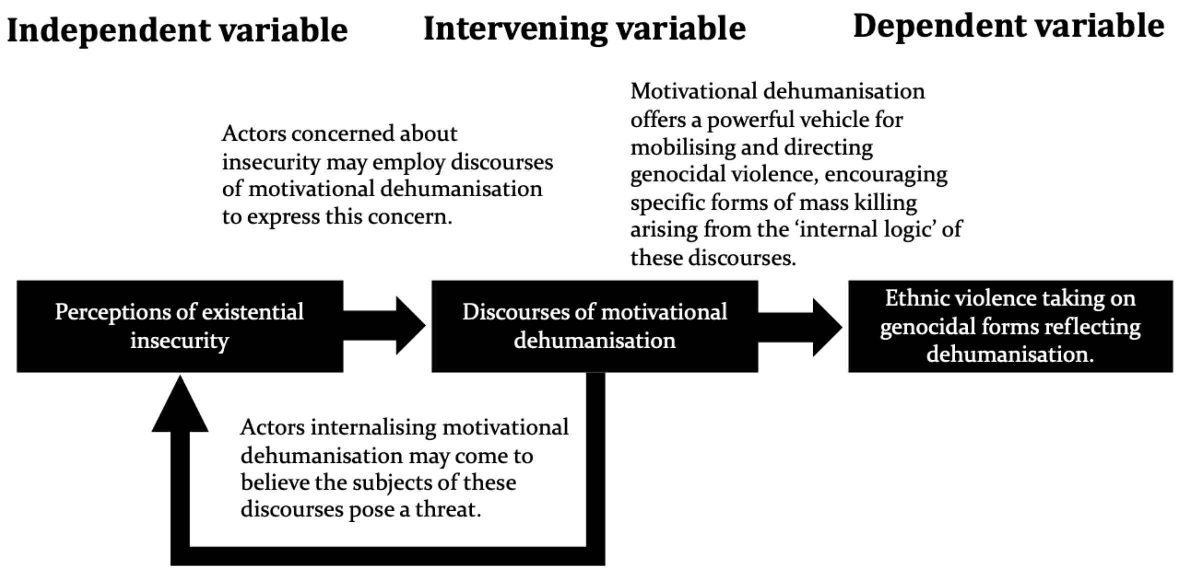
Independent variable
Intervening variable
Dependent variable
Actors concerned about insecurity may employ discourses of motivational dehumanisation to express this concern.
Motivational dehumanisation offers a powerful vehicle for mobilising and directing genocidal violence, encouraging specific forms of mass killing arising from the 'internal logic' of these discourses.
Perceptions of existential insecurity
Discourses of motivational dehumanisation
Ethnic violence taking on genocidal forms reflecting dehumanisation.
Actors internalising motivational dehumanisation may come to believe the subjects of these discourses pose a threat.

Fig. 1. Discourses of dehumanisation as intervening variable.

Understanding *how* it does this – what it involves, and how it is deployed – is therefore a valuable subject of inquiry.

Additionally, the causal chain can become dangerously self-reinforcing. As well as perceptions of motivational dehumanisation and perceptions of existential insecurity being mutually reinforcing, genocidal forms of violence can often create the very circumstances they were ostensibly enacted to prevent. Genocidal violence often immiserates or debases its victims, causing them to suffer from the exact contagions, pests, and vermin that motivational dehumanisation warns about. Confine a population previously stigmatised as typhus-carrying lice or tuberculous phlegm in an unsanitary detention camp or ghetto, and it is not surprising that outbreaks of infectious disease and visible evidence of pest infestation may occur. These seem to vindicate the original rhetoric and present 'evidence' of an immediately apparent public health danger. This causal cycle – of perceived threat leading to dehumanisation leading to genocidal forms of violence leading to dehumanisation leading to perceived threat – demonstrates some of the complexities of these causal chains, and might explain how they become so powerful.

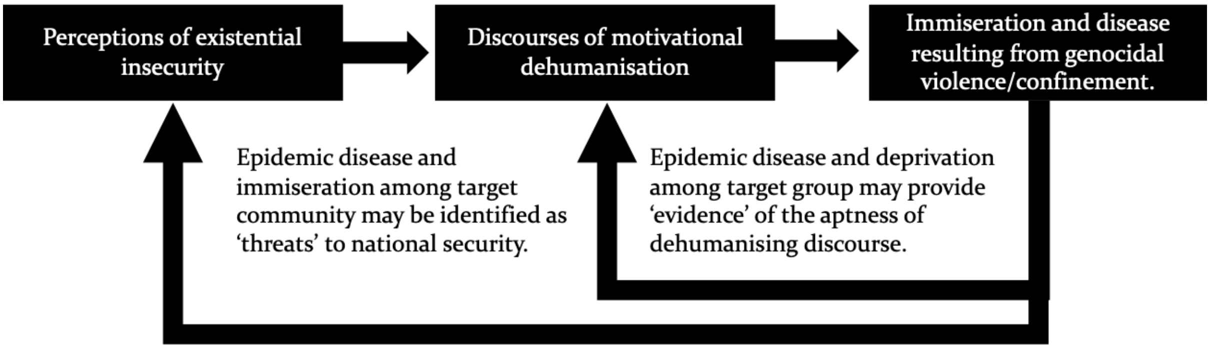
Perceptions of existential insecurity
Discourses of motivational dehumanisation
Immiseration and disease resulting from genocidal violence/confinement.
Epidemic disease and immiseration among target community may be identified as 'threats' to national security.
Epidemic disease and deprivation among target group may provide 'evidence' of the aptness of dehumanising discourse.

Fig. 2. Self-reinforcing motivational dehumanisation.

While not the only causal pathway to genocidal violence, it is an important one, clearly evident in paradigmatic cases such as the Holocaust and Rwandan Genocide. It is, therefore, important to investigate these discourses as part of the political, security, and cultural process that led to specifically genocidal responses to the supposed threat that had been identified.

In Chapters Three to Seven, I examine the degree to which these proposed causal chains are reflected in the historical record. Having assessed the historical evidence for them, I then begin to assess how changes in my independent variable led to different outcomes. In Chapter Seven, I examine internal variation across my three case studies. In Chapter Eight, I go beyond my core case studies to examine instances where discourses of motivational dehumanisation were less present, and where perceptions of insecurity manifested differently (if at all). By varying these, I can observe the degree to which changing conditions changed the character of the resulting violence. When discourses of dehumanisation were marginal, how did this affect the types of violence that arose? How did states that had not perceived themselves to be in existential danger in the pre-violence period differ in the kinds of violence they inflicted?

Such a course of investigation draws upon insights in the scholarship on security studies, on genocide studies, and social psychology. Taken together, these provide me with a robust theoretical framework to begin to understand motivational dehumanisation, and that points me in the right direction to address it.

Since I am concerned with the process by which ‘ordinary’ issues are made into ‘security’ concerns – and more specifically, the process by which a target is constructed as an existential threat that requires extraordinary action to fend off or avert – it is only natural that I first turn to the broader security studies concept of securitisation.

This idea – initially developed by Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde (1997), and refined by Balzacq (2010) – suggests that discourses of insecurity are a set of claims ‘that take politics beyond the established rules of the game and frame … the issue either as a special kind of politics, or as above politics’ (Buzan et al., 1997, 23). In other words, securitisation theory helps to understand how the idea of ‘threat’ is constructed in politics, and what the results of this construction are. To explore this, Buzan et al. examine ‘who securitizes [the ‘securitising actor’], on what issues (threats), for whom (referent object), why, with what results, and not least, under what conditions' (Buzan et al., 1997, 22). Balzacq offers a refined definition that captures this well:

> *[Securitisation is] an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilised by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions), that concurs with the securitizing actor's reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customised policy must be undertaken immediately to block its development. (Balzacq, 2010, 3)*

Motivational dehumanisation can easily be understood as an extreme example of this, that takes its targets' supposed 'aura of unprecedented threatening complexion', and the 'customised policy [necessary] to block its development' to their utmost conclusion – 'destroy[ing] them to save us', to quote Straus (2012).

Translated into the language of securitisation, motivational dehumanisation is therefore a set of moves by a securitising actor (the genocidal leaders) to securitise an entity (a target group, in its entirety) in the eyes of the audience (the national public, or, more specifically, military/paramilitary groups). It implies measures to avert the existential danger the referent subject allegedly poses to the referent object (the state or nation). Given the supposed urgency of the threat, and the fact that they are all seen as intrinsically threatening, dehumanising discourses lead to the conclusion that the only response is to destroy the supposed threat first. No ordinary 'political' response, or even a conventional military action, is possible.

This understanding of securitisation suggests a useful overlap between studies of genocidal mobilisation, and studies of how security threats are constructed. It offers a model by which I can better understand genocidal dehumanisation as a political process. Additionally, securitisation, as a theoretical model, bridges the gap between affective and cognitive approaches, and understandings rooted in material and rational security concerns.

If dehumanisation does function in the manner I describe above, then securitisation would be a useful approach and conceptual frame. It also suggests a useful set of spaces and contexts in which to look for where securitisation occurs – political leaders seeking to lay out their platforms to the public who might follow them or grant them authority to carry out their policies, military planners laying out the broader terms of ethnic violence, and state-aligned popular/influential media presenting narratives of threat and danger from the 'enemy within'. Dobrica Ćosić, the genocide-era Serbian intellectual, clearly illustrates this, describing the breakup of Yugoslavia as a 'terrible war of defence' (de la Brosse, 2003, 35) for Serbia, where extreme and violent tactics were necessary to prevent a 'new genocide' of Serbs by their dehumanised neighbours and members of their own communities.

While motivational dehumanisation might, therefore, be a spur to violent 'security' responses in general, I suggest that such discourses go further than what securitisation usually entails. Motivational dehumanisation contributes to the specific forms that genocidal violence takes, and makes them more specifically genocidal – that is to say, violence that targets (sometimes singling out) non-combatant women and children, that does not allow for any form of settlement or negotiation, and that often uses extremely violent or brutal methods of killing. I suggest two reasons for this. The first is a more ‘strategic’ explanation, emerging from the ‘internal logic’ of motivational dehumanisation. The second is a more ‘psychological’ explanation, suggesting that motivational dehumanisation taps into cultural and deep-seated affective dynamics in order to motivate specific forms of ‘purging’ or ‘cleansing’ violence.

This ‘strategic’ understanding of genocide responds to, develops, and expands recent scholarship on the distinctive ‘logic’ of genocidal violence. Straus argues that genocide is distinct from other forms of political violence. While ‘normal’ political violence ‘conforms to a logic of coercion and communication where the purpose is to force a change in behaviour or policy’, and thus seeks to use force for some instrumental or material gain, genocide is ‘different … about extinguishing human interaction, not seeking to shape it' (Straus, 2015, 18). It is categorical – aimed at a category of people - and often initiated to drive off a perceived dire threat that cannot be dealt with any other way (Straus, 2012, 555). Why might people resort to such a tactic? Genocide involves violence against non-combatants and other non-military targets, whose destruction seldom leads to significant material gain (and diverts resources from other strategic objectives). It also often invites external condemnation or intervention. Why attempt to carry out the genocide of an entire population, when other tactics – conventional warfare, targeted exemplary violence, discriminatory policies, and ethnic cleansing – are also available to leaders and elites?

Straus suggests that this move away from simple material and military logics has two distinctive components. First, he suggests based on his study of several genocidal (or near-genocidal) conflicts that there is some sort of ‘leap of imagination’ (Straus, 2015, 56) involved in genocidal mobilisation – an ideological commitment that goes beyond ‘ordinary’ considerations about whom amongst the target group are violent threats, to seeing them *all* (including civilians) as an inherently menacing group. In such an outlook, violence is justified against all of them. Second, he describes (and empirically illustrates) a ‘domination-vulnerability paradox’ perceived by state leaders. Genocide ‘requires the capacity to inflict violence across time and space using multi-agency coalitions [as well as] physical domination of target groups’ – it requires the state and its supporters to be powerful and in the ascendant. At the same time, the logic described above also requires the targets to be 'constructed as a dangerous, imminent, and future threat, which suggests that the authorities consider themselves not to have effective control over the populations in question' (Straus, 2015, 56). It requires the state and its supporters to be vulnerable to existential destruction. How can a state be at once highly powerful, and fatally vulnerable?

Motivational dehumanisation help explain this paradox. The notion of the state as menaced by an enemy that is at once existentially threatening, and lowly and weak compared to the state in question, is nearly identical to that offered by motivational dehumanisation, and that is readily apparent in human interactions with the natural and microbiological world. Dehumanising discourses present the enemy as akin to snakes, or poisonous microbes – simultaneously extremely menacing, and beneath notice. As such, motivational dehumanisation may help explain the kinds of genocidal phenomena described by Straus – the move away from ‘logics of coercion and communication’ towards ‘defensive’ violence against all members of a supposedly intrinsically threatening, distinctively characterised enemy. Dehumanising imagery provides a readily acceptable way to harmonise notions of the enemy as both pathetic and existentially threatening, helping to resolve the domination-vulnerability paradox.

Not only does motivational dehumanisation thus help justify the urgency of violence against a marginal community, but it also might help explain the forms that this violence took. Straus' observation that genocide is 'about extinguishing human interaction, not seeking to shape it' (Straus, 2015, 18) is clearly demonstrated here. If the target population are analogous to parasites or cockroaches, then there is no sense trying to reach any form of negotiated settlement – as a Nazi pamphlet noted, 'who believes that a parasite (e.g., a louse) can be improved or changed? Who believes that one can come to an agreement with a parasite?' (*Sprechabenddienst*, 1944). Nor could subsequent generations of the target group could be reconciled with the audience through cultural change or integration – 'a cockroach brings forth a cockroach', (*Kangura*, 1993, 416). If the threat the enemy group posed did indeed stem from their harmful, intrinsic essences, then it 'made sense' to prevent this from self-perpetuating by attacking non-combatant women and children. Motivational dehumanisation often uses the imagery of 'smashing the eggs' or 'removing the cancer', supposedly in order to prevent the regrowth of a stronger and more vengeful next generation. As such, those motivated by it would be likely to target those associated with reproduction of the next generation. This kind of violence is particularly difficult to explain otherwise, as the total destruction of such groups rarely serves a clear military goal that could not be achieved with less costly measures.

This does not entirely part ways with 'material' understandings of violence during genocide. For leaders, military decisionmakers, and populations who – at least in part – believed in the existence of a deeply entrenched, inherently hostile, and spiritually/physically corrosive fifth column, specific forms of exterminatory and indiscriminate violence 'made sense' as tactical and strategic decisions, especially when clothed in the language of scientific and medical authority. Exploring the strategic implications of dehumanising language, therefore, helps understand genocidal violence.

Motivational dehumanisation can also draw additional strength from the psychological and emotive power of the images that it employed. Likening targets to a monstrous or contaminating force can evoke powerful emotional responses, such as disgust, fear, and insecurity, just as the audience might have similar emotional reactions to insects, diseased tissue, monstrous creatures, or barbaric violations of social norms.

Given the highly distinctive nature of the images employed, I focus particularly on the psychological impact of disgust in the language employed by genocidal movements. Fears about contamination and disgust are not 'just another' emotion, or even just a negative emotion. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, social psychology research suggests that these kinds of aversion-based reactions to dirt, infestation, vermin and uncleanliness are relatively universal to human psychological functioning, and conducive to violence (Aarøe, Osmundsen, and Petersen, 2016). Schaller, in a review of scholarship on the topic, identifies a number of contamination-avoiding behaviours as part of what he describes as a deep-seated ‘behavioural immune system’, in which individual and social behaviours encourage the avoidance or expulsion of contaminating presences (Schaller, 2011), often on a ‘smoke detector principle’ approach to error management – erring on the side of swift, pre-emptive action on the grounds that false negative reactions to signs of contamination are much more costly than false positives (Schaller et al, 2015, 2). With co-authors, he finds significant evidence of this, and, while not explicitly addressing genocidal violence, does link such behaviours to xenophobia more broadly (Schaller et al, 2015, 3-8).

Additionally, Rozin and Royzman (2001) identify a broad-ranging ‘negativity bias’ across a wide range of emotional and cognitive processes, where negative presences, factors, or attributes are typically given much more weight than positive ones. They observed that this was particularly evident when looking at issues of contamination and contagion, where brief contact with a hated, feared, or disgusting substance could overwhelm any positive elements in a situation, but not vice versa. If motivational dehumanisation dealt heavily in images of disgusting, contaminating, or toxic enemies, then the combination of the deep-seated (relatively universal) ‘behavioural immune system’ and the negativity bias around contagion would suggest that it would be a powerful rhetorical tool, capable of affecting its audience on a (sometimes literally) visceral psychological level in a way that could trump other rhetorical devices or moral considerations. Furthermore, it is easy to see how such emotional responses could compound with others, like hate or fear – the objects of disgust could easily be hated, while audiences might fear that the disgusting entity had already, or was about to, contaminate their bodies.

This imagery, therefore, carries a range of connotations, meanings, and emotional responses that can be adapted to genocidal violence, drawing on deep-seated sentiments to spur action. Such analogies suggest certain behavioural responses. I characterise this as the 'internal logic' of motivational dehumanisation – the implicit or explicit arguments, attributes, and victim-perpetrator dynamics conjured up by such discourses, that often seemed to 'logically' follow when audiences accepted the initial equation of their targets with disease or vermin. Indeed, dehumanising images of target populations often seemed to inspire the form of the resulting violence. Tirrell, for example, finds a 'quite remarkable … direct and literal application' of snake-killing metaphors in the Rwandan genocide, as cultural practices relating to killing snakes were repurposed to killing Tutsi (Tirrell, 2012, 205).

Taken together, these theoretical approaches form the basis for my understanding of the role and form of genocidal dehumanisation. By likening their subjects to toxic, contagious, or verminous threatening forces, motivationally dehumanising discourses characterise them as both an existential security threat, and also as a marginal force that was much more lowly than the audience – as lowly as rats, snakes, or bacteria. This 'domination/vulnerability paradox' helped account for the targeting of the entirety of the target group, and helped reinforce the psychologically powerful vermin/infestation imagery described above. This conceptualisation of the target ethnic group also prevents any form of negotiation, designating the entirety of the target population as threatening, and characterises ethnic tensions as an urgent and desperate matter in which extreme measures are justifiable and necessary.

I argue that motivational dehumanisation is powerful, because it blends cognitive, cultural, and strategic considerations to create a versatile and highly effective framework that can be tapped to provide an urgent argument as to why violence should take place, and, moreover, why it should specifically be genocidal in character. In this, I follow Straus' 'synthesis between strategic and ideological arguments', focusing on how

> *preexisting ideological frameworks … shape how elites understand and respond to threats in acute crises, especially war … material conditions, such as the military balance of power and battlefield dynamics, matter for how threat is experienced, but ideological frames shape how elites understand the terms and stakes of a conflict. (Straus, 2015, 11)*

Dehumanisation helped elites – and genocidal members of the public and military – understand the terms and stakes of the conflict in broad emotional and ideological terms. At the same time, it also carried with it a number of implications for where the threat was (that is, amongst the audience's society, located in the bodies and particularly the reproductive capabilities of *all* of the enemy community), how resources should be deployed to respond to it (as much as possible, to mobilise populations against an imminent threat), and what forms the ensuing violence should take ('cleansing' violence aiming to destroy an entire population and prevent its future resurgence). The fact that it was so closely tied into both ideological/emotional and strategic understandings may explain its effectiveness as a discursive tactic.

This form of dehumanisation need not *always* be present (it is not a *necessary* condition for genocidal violence to occur) and is, equally, not the sole or primary reason for genocide (it is not *sufficient* for it). But not only necessary and sufficient causes matter. Motivational dehumanisation represents an important set of causal pathways that have consistently contributed to specifically genocidal forms of violence. Elite policymakers and 'ideological entrepreneurs' set policies determined by these dehumanised attitudes, and use their platforms to inculcate dehumanising ideas in groups involved in the killing – through political speech, media, and programmes of ideological training. Even if not all the recipients of this propaganda subscribed to the full extent of the metaphors employed, the broader notions of threat and insecurity could still give dehumanising discourses a wide appeal.

Additionally, not all the phenomena described by the term 'genocide' are the same. While both genocidal, the colonisation of the Americas featured very different forms of genocidal violence to the Holocaust, for example. Given how important perceived existential threats and a sense of urgency are to the causal chain and securitisation I describe above, I would not expect so much motivational dehumanisation in the drawn-out former case, but more in the latter; the two are different causal chains leading to different outcomes. By observing the cases where it seems to have been particularly common or effective, I can narrow down the kinds of conflict where motivational dehumanisation is effective.

Even so, I do not argue that motivational dehumanisation is the sole, exclusive, or primary motive for violence, even for these 'terrible war of defence'. In the cases I looked at, it coexisted alongside a wide range of other motives, both ideological and material, and was received, believed in, and passed on to widely varying degrees across society. Rather, I argue that it was one of a range of factors contributing to genocidal violence, and one that was adaptable, rhetorically capable of bolstering other reasons for genocide, heightening material security dilemmas and providing support for ethnic animus and hatred more broadly.

I therefore argue that motivational dehumanisation plays a major role in shaping genocidal violence. It is typically pervasive, rather than marginal, amongst genocide perpetrators, and presents a readily comprehensible, sound according to its internal logic, and emotionally resonant set of images and ideas that clearly describe an existential threat posed by the target group, and an impetus for very specific violence against them. By systematically charting what dehumanising imagery is used in genocidal violence, and how it spreads throughout society (through political speech, policy planning, education and ideological training, media, and norms of behaviour held by ordinary citizens), I seek to develop these insights to produce a more comprehensive account of how such ideas contribute to shaping and directing campaigns of exterminatory violence.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With the above in mind, I identify two major research questions.

RQ1: How pervasive is (motivational) dehumanisation during periods of genocidal mobilisation and violence, and what forms does it tend to take?

In order to investigate the role of motivational dehumanisation in shaping violence, I first need to examine and chart what it actually *was*. Who used it in their political speech and propaganda? What, specifically, did it claim? What contexts was it presented in, and what themes and images recur across different instances of it?

The need for such an investigation is occasioned by the state of the scholarship to date. As discussed in more detail next chapter, much of the existing work on dehumanisation is limited by its tendency to conflate different types of it, and ignore the specifics of what dehumanising discourse actually claims. Additionally, many existing accounts of dehumanisation are anecdotal or unsystematic. Any conflict is likely to yield some dehumanisation across a wide enough body of popular discourse and speech. As such, the examples I quote in my introduction might be unrepresentative or uninfluential illustrations of how génocidaires talked and thought about genocide, thus necessitating empirical and data-gathering work on dehumanisation.

To the issue of representativeness, I can add another question – that of consistency and context. The various intellectuals, soldiers, politicians, and farmers described above occupied very different social positions in the genocide – while each country differed significantly, more like-for-like and systematic comparisons are necessary to draw convincing cross-case conclusions. Rather than simply comparing across the entirety of each case, I will need to comparatively assess the ideological approaches of genocidal discourse across different cases. Doing so allows me to more effectively chart the causal chains at work in genocide, gaining a greater insight into how messages and conflict framings spread throughout bureaucracies and societies.

As such, I choose to examine four major social positions and ideological/political groupings to chart motivational dehumanisation across: the ideological precursors to genocidal dehumanisation (what sources could génocidaires draw upon); leaders and state elites (how did high-ranking members of the government with the power to set genocidal policy stir up dehumanisation); bureaucracies and militaries (how did military and paramilitary groups, and their social support structures, use dehumanisation when planning and enacting genocide); and mass media (how were dehumanising discourses circulated in society). While these are broad groupings, looking at these helps me to compare the spread and function of dehumanisation on a like-for-like basis, across different times and places.

On top of this, such focus on context allows me to investigate the chronology of motivational dehumanisation more effectively. *When* did it arise in different contexts – where did it start, and how did it diffuse throughout the state? Between the causal chain described above, as well as the broader securitisation-based logic that motivational dehumanisation operates in, would predict the following pattern of diffusion for these discourses:

- In order to be a valid securitising move, motivational dehumanisation would have to be at least comprehensible as a metaphor or analogy, in order for it to work as an argument. This could mean cultural precedents for such discourses (implying a longer timeline of emerging prejudice), or references to shared everyday experiences (implying a shorter one).

- I would then expect to see securitising actors – typically elites, whether political leaders, military officials, or possibly media figures – employing motivational dehumanisation to persuade their audience that their target did pose a threat, during conditions of political uncertainty or perceived insecurity.
- If successful, motivational dehumanisation would then diffuse throughout society, with decisionmakers and those who would be involved in genocidal violence (such as the military, and other related bureaucracies) being particularly likely to espouse it. I would expect these discourses to be particularly common *before* genocidal violence began, since they argued in favour of beginning violence.
- During the actual commission of genocidal violence, I would expect legitimising dehumanisation to become more prominent, since it focused on making the act of killing less psychologically taxing. Nonetheless, motivationally dehumanising attitudes would be unlikely to vanish, since they were closely bound up with the ongoing reasoning for violence. Additionally, since genocidal and military violence often produced the kinds of immiseration and disease that motivational dehumanisation accused its targets of embodying, motivational dehumanisation would be further reinforced during violence.

In short, it is worth looking at *when* motivational dehumanisation emerged, as well as *where*. By taking this into consideration when looking at the incidence of such discourse, I can provide a more fulsome account of its spread, further informing my account of the causal pathway ending in genocidal violence.

Finally, it is important to consider what I mean by 'pervasive'. An idea or conflict frame can be pervasive in the sense that many sources spread it throughout society, or pervasive in the sense that it was internalised to a greater or lesser degree among the population, motivating their behaviour. A discourse could be pervasive in the first sense without being pervasive in the second, as demonstrated by societies which were saturated by genocidal propaganda but saw significant levels of non-compliance, resistance, or non-participation. In rarer cases (as seen in Rwanda, in Chapter Four), a discourse could be somewhat pervasive in the second sense without being pervasive in the first, as the ideas and claims it made spread and were consumed beyond the context of the original propaganda.

I start by examining pervasiveness in the first sense - circulation figures and audience sizes are easier to gauge than internal cognitive processes, and studies of propaganda by genocidal states show that increased exposure to propaganda correlates to internalisation (Barber et al., 2019; Adena et al. 2015). While it is very difficult to determine the latter sense, especially across an entire society, I can at least identify how far genocidal organisations displayed dehumanisation in their internal and external records, and, from there, gain insight into how much they may have internalised it.

RQ2: Secondly, what effect – if any – does (motivational) dehumanisation have on the emergence of specifically genocidal forms of violence?

If dehumanisation was widespread, what impact did it have? Did it contribute to violence, and, if so, what forms of violence? While genocidal killing can take many forms, I follow Straus' observation above that it is distinctive in that it seeks to extinguish 'human interaction, not … to shape it' (Straus, 2015, 18). Rather than terrorising communities or gaining strategic advantage (which it may achieve as a by-product), violence that is specifically genocidal in nature is aimed at destroying a group, and would be associated with specific tactics such as targeting of non-combatants, 'hunting down' and annihilating a supposedly elusive target rather than simply driving them off, and specifically targeting the group's next generation. Having mapped the 'landscape' of dehumanising discourse in RQ1, I will investigate potential causal connections between genocidal violence and this discourse. By tracking variation in the intensity of motivational dehumanisation against variations in the intensity and forms of genocidal violence, I can investigate whether such a relationship existed.

Additionally, social psychology scholarship offers a way of identifying the role that motivational dehumanisation plays in shaping and directing genocidal violence. Experimental and observational research has shown that emotional responses such as fear, disgust, and insecurity do indeed have measurable and distinctive effects on behaviour, both at the level of individual behaviour and of entire societies. If I found that motivational dehumanisation was similar to imagery that (for example) evoked disgust in audiences, and that disgust was widely found to result in distinctive forms of behaviour – 'cleansing', 'expelling', or 'purging' the object of disgust in its entirety - then this would suggest that it would indeed have an impact, that manifested in the form of genocidal violence.

If increased levels of motivational dehumanisation were positively correlated with particularly genocidal forms of violence, and evoked emotional responses that social psychology scholarship associated with 'cleansing' and 'purging' behaviours, this would suggest that there was a relationship between the motivational dehumanisation and genocidal forms of violence. Other outcomes would also be interesting. If dehumanisation was present before and during genocides but without any clear causal or psychological link with genocidal behaviour, then this would suggest that it may have been an epiphenomenal by-product of another process, or a post hoc rhetorical justification for other policies. If social psychology scholarship suggests motivational dehumanisation *would* lead to outcomes such as genocidal violence, but there was no clear correlation between levels of motivational dehumanisation and campaigns of extermination, then this might mean that it did not have a significant causal impact, or that its impact was overshadowed by other causal factors.

Thus, I do not seek to identify a single macro-level cause for genocidal violence (it is a 'massively complex social phenomena that incorporate many moving parts at all levels of analysis' (Owens et al., 2013, 70), and any monocausal explanation would be reductive), nor at the level of individual behaviour (which, likewise, is highly multicausal, and difficult to investigate or generalise about). Rather, I aim to investigate and explain the impact of dehumanisation on the tactics and direction of violence. Why did it take particular forms when enacted against target populations, and why did it target certain groups? How did leaders, demagogues, and military/paramilitary officers incorporate dehumanising ideas when targeting, deploying, and selecting particular types of violence (whether at the levels of 'grand strategy', or when deciding how to attack a specific community)?

RQ1 is an empirical, archival, and mapping exercise, investigating the scale, nature, and details of motivational dehumanisation as a phenomenon both before and during genocide. By establishing a more systematic and extensive evidence base, I can better examine the 'internal logic' of genocidal dehumanisation, have a better basis for my causal investigation, and am better equipped to comparing like for like across roughly equivalent groups in different cases (a much more significant finding than simply locating similar examples from across the entirety of each case).

Having established this, RQ2 seeks to investigate what effect motivational dehumanisation might have, building on RQ1 to determine whether it helped to shape the incidence of violence and the forms that it took, across my case studies. Based on my theory about its 'internal logic', the way it disseminates through chains of command, and the way it appeals to deep-seated human psychology, I suggest that these dehumanising discourses play a key role in shaping genocidal violence. Following an approach akin to Balzacq's (2010) framing of securitisation theory, I argue that motivational dehumanisation encourages perpetrators to enact brutal 'defensive' violence against civilian groups, evoking powerful emotional reactions and creating an internally consistent logic that encourages particularly brutal exterminatory violence.

I choose to characterise these as 'research questions' to be explored, rather than 'hypotheses' to be tested. RQ1 is a mapping project, aiming to gather, sort, and explore primary source materials to provide a clear knowledge base for the rest of my thesis, rather than a causal investigation. Given the existing literature's unsystematic and sometimes relatively sparse handling of the phenomenon, inductively refining my understanding of what motivational dehumanisation actually involves will be useful and provides a much stronger empirical base to assess RQ2. As discussed in my methodology section below, a basic positivist approach to investigate RQ2 is not ideal. It is not feasible to simply attempt to quantify varying levels of dehumanisation and varying levels of violence to find a statistical relationship between them, or rely solely on process tracing between dehumanising discourse and specific massacres. Instead, by leaving myself open to a more holistic, historically informed approach, drawing on a wide range of research methodologies and approaches to investigation, I am better placed to unpack this complex and often difficult-to-assess topic.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

How would I go about demonstrating the role of motivational dehumanisation in genocidal mobilisation and violence? I adopt a two-part methodology, drawing on methods of discourse analysis and comparative history, in line with my two research questions. In doing so, I will conduct a descriptive and causal analysis.

I will begin by carrying out a descriptive mapping of dehumanising discourses across my three case studies: gathering examples of dehumanisation, conducting discourse analysis on them, and placing them in their proper context. Such an approach is a necessary foundational step. The academic focus on legitimising and undifferentiated dehumanisation has left motivational dehumanisation under-theorised, and under-studied from an empirical perspective. As such, an important first step will be to gather examples of this phenomenon, charting its incidence and 'internal logic' across each case, gaining better insight into its boundaries, how to identify it, and so on – before attempting to identify variation and identify the scope of my study. It is necessary to help inductively refine what motivational dehumanisation actually *is*, clarifying its borders, definition and function, to avoid falling into the same traps identified earlier. To investigate this, I need to be clear what I am discussing. Doing so does not demonstrate causal conclusions by itself. These recurring patterns, however, may be relevant to different causal interpretations of dehumanisation in genocidal contexts.

Having done so, I will then adopt a mixed methodology approach to determine the role of motivational dehumanisation in causing and shaping genocidal violence. Because of the complexity of the field (genocide is a multicausal phenomenon; 'exposure to motivational dehumanisation' is a surprisingly complex variable to measure; the particular forms of violence are difficult to clearly categorise, and perpetrators have a wide range of conscious and unconscious motives; and so on), I will have to draw upon a range of measures to gauge the relationship between my independent, intervening, and dependent variables.

This will include conventional positivist social science approaches, wherein I track variation between the three. By holding political, strategic, and temporal factors roughly constant across a single case study, I could seek to identify changing levels of exposure to dehumanising propaganda and conceptions of threat, and changing forms of specifically genocidal violence. If I found that exposure to dehumanising propaganda or attitudes was associated with particularly intense or distinctive forms of violence, then this correlation would suggest that there was a strong link between the two. In addition to this, however, I will also add a range of other approaches – limited examination of causal links between the two via causal process tracing, comparative history methods, and identification of relevant social psychology models that provide a laboratory or experimental basis for a causal link to exist.

Thus, I identify a range of approaches that, when taken together, provide a *preponderance* of evidence – but not, I acknowledge, a definitive proof – that motivational dehumanisation did indeed shape genocidal violence, and that only explanations including it can account for specific elements of mass killing.

1.3.1 RQ1 – INVESTIGATING THE FORM AND PERVASIVENESS OF GENOCIDAL DISCOURSES OF DEHUMANISATION

To answer RQ1, I will carry out a discourse- and content- analysis-based approach to archival records of genocide. By examining the degree to which motivational dehumanisation was expressed across my cases, and the distinctive ways it was handled by different groups (by ideological forerunners, by political elites, in military structures, and popular media), I can provide a much stronger basis to answer RQ2, establish the extent of motivational dehumanisation, and identify patterns that have previously been missed.

The most appropriate mode of discourse analysis is what might be characterised as ‘mid-level’ approach. Owing to the nature of the material being analysed, neither a ‘high-level’ qualitative examination of society-spanning systems of power relations (as seen in critical discourse analysis) nor a ‘low-level’ quantitative content analysis of how often certain phrases were used, provides useful insights into the context, role, and extent of dehumanisation. Instead, I seek to tease out the ‘internal logics’ of claims made about target groups, to (as far as possible) ascertain what they meant to their audiences, and to determine their extent and context.

I do not plan to engage in ‘high-level’ critical discourse analysis. Van Dijk, for example, describes a ‘macrolevel’ approach that examines ‘societal and cultural stratification and reproduction … [how] groups, group relations, institutional and political systems are unthinkable without their associated modes or genres of discourse and communication’ (Van Dijk, 1998, 8). Key discourse analysts like Wodak (Wodak, Titscher, Meyer, and Vetter, 2000, 147) and Fairclough focus specifically on the examination of ‘discursive aspects of power relations and inequalities’ (Fairclough, 2010, 8) and the denaturalisation of large-scale discursive structures that underpin Western, capitalist, and neoliberal societies (Fairclough, 2010, 26). This approach is too broad-ranging to analyse the impact of dehumanisation speech on genocide effectively. By attempting to analyse the entirety of Nazi conceptions of power, society, or race, as opposed to the more specific subject of how Jews were portrayed as non-human threats, my analysis would lack the specificity needed to draw convincing conclusions about dehumanisation. Such an approach would also risk moving too far away from examining the individual metaphor choices and arguments that underpin dehumanisation.

A low-level content analysis (such as the 'linguistic approach' to content analysis outlined by Roberts (1989)), that quantitatively examines texts at a sentence or word-by-word level, encounters different issues, surrounding forms of evidence and translation difficulties. I use a wide range of evidence types – film, pamphlets, images, and speeches – each with their own grammar, style and authorship. This diversity makes it difficult to quantitatively compare and assess meaningful low-level differences or code particular phrases or tropes across such a wide range of material, or numerically measure 'the extent' of dehumanisation. Worsening this issue is the fact that the survival and accessibility of different kinds of evidence varies widely – speeches by political leaders are much more likely to survive than the diaries of individual génocidaires, if they even wrote them - meaning that it is not possible to clearly quantify how common dehumanisation was.

Additionally, even using individually faithful translations, the wide range of documents by different translators limits the analytical weight I can place on individual translated words or phrases. Where this is unavoidable, I return to the untranslated source material, examine specialist literature to clarify its meaning, and draw upon a large amount of material to develop a broader evidence base from which to work.

Instead, the mid-level approach I follow draws upon the methodology of writers like Milliken (1999), Doty (1993), and others (Åhäll and Borg, 2012). These focus on examining what meanings and attributes dehumanising texts predicate (that is, what do they deliberately assign through their use of metaphor and framings) and presuppose (that is, what ‘background subject knowledge’ do they expect their audiences to bring to the topic) about their targets, and what kinds of subject-positioning do they encourage (what implicit or explicit metaphorical relationships between subject and audience do they outline) (Doty, 1993, 305-309). Put simply, when a *génocidaire* calls their target a 'rat', 'snake', or 'tumour', what does this seem to suggest about the target, beyond simply being a generic slur? What kinds of experience of pests and disease do such speakers draw on and expect their audiences to be familiar with, to give such arguments meaning? If the similes and metaphors used to describe a target group are seen as applicable, then what kind of reactions and behaviours are the audience then expected to show? The act of calling a group a ‘cancer’, for example, predicates ideas of lethal decay and uncontrollable internal growth and subversion to them. It presupposes awareness of cancer, and the suffering of relevant others living with and dying from the disease, as well as methods of treatment. If the audience is persuaded that they are living with the metaphorical 'cancer' of the targeted group inside their own bodies (or body politic), then they should 'cut them out', and destroy them in their entirety, lest they grow back like a recurrent tumour. Conducting such an analysis helps me to go beyond the 'dehumanisation as extreme hatred' and 'dehumanisation as legitimating facilitator' arguments described above. If I find consistent patterns of predication, presupposition, and subject-positioning, dealing with threat and existential danger, I suggest that something more is going on here.

As per the approach taken by Skinner, I intend to examine this propaganda and supposed claims regarding subject relations initially on their own terms; accepting them, at least initially, as more-or-less sincerely meant. Such an approach avoids the dangers he highlights of a 'familiar but condescending form of interpretative charity' (Skinner, 2002, 41) by which seemingly alien concepts are reinterpreted to suit the reader's sensibilities, where analysts 'fail … to identify some local canon of rational acceptability' (Skinner, 2002, 38). Working out and identifying these internal logics and the 'rationality' in which they operated – the way dehumanising discourses may have made sense to those who used them – is an important goal for this thesis. While not rejecting the idea that dehumanisation might be an instrumental strategy by its authors, I begin by assessing it as potentially genuine in the context of the time. While this perhaps goes without saying – this is not by any means an endorsement of their message, or an attempt to 'justify' what these writers were saying. Instead, I seek to better understand *why* genocidal states thought what they did. The purposes of prevention and early warning are better served by a clear understanding of the tactics genocidal thinkers and states used, rather than a gloss that indicates what we assume they said, the suggestion that they were unintelligibly evil.

Such an approach represents a more narrowly focused discourse analysis-based approach, but I am also interested in gauging the 'extent' of motivational dehumanisation, something that more quantitative content analysis is more well-suited to address. If I find examples of motivational dehumanisation, how do I demonstrate that they are indicative of a wider trend in public and private discourse? To some extent, this is impossible. As mentioned above, I cannot engage in a systematic examination of all public and private speech from my case study. Even if it was all written down and accessible to me as a researcher – which it is not – then the wide range of formats, lexicons, and styles would make it impossible to cover the entire corpus of texts and speech with a consistent analytical approach. I employ two methods to mitigate and address this issue.

First, while it is not possible to simply gather enough individual examples of dehumanisation to demonstrate that a given example was representative, or a certain discourse was common, I suggest that providing a wider range of examples can help demonstrate that they were pervasive enough across different strata of society for the population to be familiar with them. Two or three examples might be cherry-picking, and would not demonstrate this, but twenty or thirty, especially ones from primary sources that have not so far been examined in the academic literature, might reach the threshold to be called 'pervasive' in the sense that it was widely spread throughout society.

Secondly, I suggest that it is the political salience and context of a given dehumanising speech act, rather than merely the number of times that it was uttered, that is most important when considering it as an example of motivational dehumanisation. A statement that planned out the exterminatory stages of the Holocaust (such as at the Wannsee Conference), or was read by millions of Nazi party members, for example, would have more ability to influence state policy than an off-hand remark between colleagues in an informal setting. Likewise, a sergeant or low-level officer expressing dehumanising sentiments to those under their command, as a spur to genocide, would be more influential in changing behaviours than the same remarks uttered by one of their individual soldiers to a comrade. As such, it makes sense to examine the context of dehumanising discourses, and focus on gathering such 'pivotal' examples where possible. Such a focus on context – the potential audience (and their reaction), the political position of the speaker, whether or not dehumanisation was articulated at a key moment to decide policy – helps me to reduce the problem of 'pervasiveness'. By focusing on how common it was specifically among those who had the power and position to determine the targeting and form of violence, I am better able to explore how much motivational dehumanisation was able to direct that targeting and formation.

In short, I incorporate both discourse analysis and content analysis approaches to this project, adapting them to fit the material being examined. Purely quantitative, micro-level examination of 'incidence', or purely qualitative macro-level of social discourses, are of limited value. By combining the two approaches, I can examine both the internal logics and extent/salience/influence of motivational dehumanisation in genocidal states.

Finally, I return to securitisation as another set of methodological pointers for research into dehumanising rhetoric, and, importantly, into dehumanising rhetoric as a political force capable of bringing about political change. Balzacq encourages scholars to look at the ‘metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.' (Balzacq, 2010, 3) deployed in support of dehumanisation. In particular, he notes that securitising actors needed to shift their audiences away from an initial unsecuritised state to a securitised one, with ‘the claims of public officials … generally be[ing] ascertained against clues coming from the "real world"' (Balzacq, 2010, 26). In other words, securitising actors had to convince their audiences that they had a more informed or accurate picture of the world than how their audiences had previously interpreted their lives. This approach is particularly apposite for motivational dehumanisation, which often used analogies to the real world and these 'clues' from people's own lives, attempting to persuade them that dehumanising rhetoric was simply an extension of those experiences. For this reason, I pay particularly close attention to instances where speakers appealed to the everyday experiences of non-human entities that audiences encountered in their daily lives, or deployed scientific terminology or socially recognised expertise that they claimed supported their assertions.

Balzacq notes, however, that simply looking at the textual content of dehumanising speech acts is not enough. Instead, it is important to consider how ‘threat images are social facts which acquire a status of objectivity within the relationship between the securitising actor and the audience’ (Balzacq, 2010, 27). Scholars should examine and consider how securitising actors enjoyed 'influential positions in the security field based on their political capital, and have a privileged access to mass media', as well as a relationship with their audience that assumes them to have 'knowledge (a kind of cultural capital), trust, and … power position (political or symbolic capital)'. In very basic terms, Balzacq's 'sociological reformulation of securitisation' is a reminder of the importance of political context – something understudied in dehumanisation scholarship. Following Balzacq, investigating the institutional position and trust accorded to dehumanising speakers, and considering how this context contributed to their message, is therefore particularly important, and gives an alternative to a solely quantitative understanding of numerical extent.

Taken together, therefore, my 'mid-level' discourse analysis approach seeks to unpack the semantic content of the metaphors, images, and framings of the conflict used by those who incited and enacted genocide. It investigates what the *meaning* of dehumanisation was – what logics, arguments, and required treatments lay behind such utterances, and how they related to everyday life. In doing so, I also seek to put these discourses in context, examining the role of status, position, and contemporary events in making dehumanising discourses more convincing, and spreading such beliefs.

By definition, the kind of discourse analysis that I discuss above requires a thick and detailed body of primary archival evidence, including examining and scrutinising significant quantities of work. It is not feasible to conduct a survey of all speech or discourse in a genocidal country, however, even if such records existed. As such, any examination of discourse faces serious issues regarding representativeness and selectivity. At the same time, selecting a handful of contextless examples, or picking out individual media, political, or military figures to stand in as lone representatives of these discourses, would also fail to provide a convincing basis for discussing the scale of dehumanisation. In the former case, it is likely that many societies harbour extreme racist fringes that employ dehumanising language, but do not immediately or inevitably enact systematic genocidal violence against their targets. Searches for racist discourse on the internet today (see, for instance, Johnson, 2009) can easily confirm this. Instead, I must investigate whether individual examples formed part of a broader, consistent pattern of dehumanisation. I would need to demonstrate that they were present throughout the society of my case study, and enacted by people in politically important locations.

To conduct such an investigation, I primarily draw on two sources of information.

The first is pre-existent archival collections of relevant material, texts, and sources of discourse. For Germany, I use sources such as Domarus' *The Complete Hitler* (2007), which gathers extensive public and private speech by the leader, as well as Bytwerk's German Propaganda Archive (2014), which compiles a wide range of political speech and key texts from *Der Stürmer*, the foremost antisemitic Nazi newspaper, as well as its associated publishing house. For Rwanda, I use the collected archives of *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* and *Kangura,* a radio station and newsletter respectively that were heavily involved in the incitement of genocide. While complete collections are not readily accessible, an extensively translated, largely complete, and digitised archive can be gathered by collating a range of university, national, and practitioner collections. For the former Yugoslavia, I predominantly use the court records of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. As discussed later in my section on case selection, this is well-suited to further analysis, since it provides an authoritatively collected, critically checked body of information and political discourse gathered for many of the principal actors involved. Additionally, compilations of political speech and discourse such as the *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* are also a useful source for the public speech of Serbian leaders.

These primary sources are bolstered by the secondary literature, which I use to identify further relevant collections of material where appropriate. Many writers have conducted their own investigations into specific forms of dehumanising or threat-framing media (see Herf (2008) on Nazi public posters, for example), while others usefully contextualise and link other archival collections into individual accounts (such as those in Thompson, 2007). This approach is less systematic and pushes me towards already discovered material. It does, however, allow me to assess it in a fresh light. Between this, and other primary material gathered as required throughout my research, I have a strong basis to carry out fresh descriptive enquiry.

1.3.2 RQ2 – INVESTIGATING THE IMPACTS OF GENOCIDAL DISCOURSES OF DEHUMANISATION

I suggest that a mixed positivist-interpretivist approach is most effective, drawing on a wider range of methodologies, tests, and theoretical approaches to demonstrate that it is highly likely that dehumanisation played a role in shaping violence. Individual approaches might be limited by incomplete evidence, difficult-to-observe causal mechanisms, or diffuse treatment effects. I suggest that, taken together, however, these can offer a ‘balance of the evidence’ in favour of, or against, dehumanisation having an impact.

To illustrate this, I offer three main methodological approaches to understand how (and whether) dehumanisation affected the forms that political and ethnic violence took, and thus helped shape genocidal violence:

- **In-case variation:** My observations regarding the difficulty encountered by variation-based approaches notwithstanding, it is still possible to observe some examples of this in each case study. While data about the spread of ideological indoctrination, training, and behaviour of perpetrators is often extremely patchy due to the informal organisation of genocides, flight or death of perpetrators (Straus, 2008, 98-99), deliberate destruction of records (USHMM, 2010) or politically-motivated sealing of archives (Suljagic, 2008, 188), making variation is hard to gather, there are some cases where such documentary traces do exist, and can be mapped onto changing forms and intensity of violence. In some cases, elites and media sources did push dehumanising images of the enemy more in one region than another, expressed it more or less at one point of the genocide than another point a few days later, or, in cases where multiple groups were victimised during the genocide, singled out one group much more than another in dehumanising discourse. In such circumstances, I can make limited statements about variation in the intensity of genocidal dehumanisation while other circumstances remained more or less the same. If I compare cases where this variation occurred and find that cases with more dehumanisation saw violence increasingly take forms that were distinctively genocidal, categorical, or otherwise reflecting dehumanised ideas, then this would imply that it did have an impact.

- **Causal chains:** Dehumanisation was a largely internal, cognitive phenomenon. Combined with patchy records and the complex set of motivations for participating in campaigns of extermination, this makes it difficult to fully engage in process tracing and uncover a chain of causal mechanisms and relations responsible for unambiguously shaping genocidal violence. These may not be entirely absent, however, and I should not rule out uncovering these direct causal links between the two phenomena. If key dehumanising interventions in the policymaking process were reflected in later violence, in ways that would not occur without such interventions, then this would be an example of such a causal chain. Alternatively, if perpetrators directly and credibly ascribed their participation in genocidal violence to their exposure to dehumanising discourse, then this would also count. If I can find such cases, then they will provide evidence of dehumanisation playing an observable causal role in genocidal violence.
- **Psychological microfoundations:** As described in my literature review, social psychology research into dehumanisation strongly suggests it can engender highly negative feelings towards its subjects. On a society-wide scale, if such conditions were present, then this would suggest the same would true of genocide, too. This psychological approach is, in fact, the only real experimental testing available on

> whether or not dehumanisation has an impact on behaviour – allowing us to 'look inside people's heads' and examine the impact of cognitive processes. Such an approach also offers insight into the internal psychological states of those involved in genocide, by shedding light on the behaviour of individual actors and the internal logic of what motivated them.

Individually, each of these methods and approaches may only offer indicative clues about the role of dehumanisation in shaping violence, or a handful of examples insufficient to build a broader case on alone. Taken together, however, these approaches offer a stronger foundation for determining what role dehumanisation might play. If they largely align in suggesting that it played a role, then this would suggest that motivational dehumanisation did indeed have a significant impact on the form and incidence of genocidal violence.

In RQ1, I thus seek to establish whether dehumanisation was *coherent* in past genocides (whether or not it was a distinct phenomenon that would encourage and be linked with genocidal violence, about which I can make descriptive statements that hold across cases) and whether it appears *possible* that dehumanisation may have contributed to violence (whether or not it was sufficiently pervasive across different strata of society to have had an impact, and whether it was expressed as part of pivotal decision-making on genocide). In RQ2, I assess whether it was *plausible* that dehumanisation did indeed contribute to genocidal violence (using social psychology literature to assess whether similar attitudes of dehumanisation, under laboratory conditions, led to violent, aggressive, or cleansing actions). Furthermore, I assess whether there are any instances where it had a *demonstrable* effect (that is, where specific examples clearly illustrate it having an impact or being causally linked to genocidal violence).

If I find that all of these were indeed the case – that dehumanisation having a role in genocide was *coherent, possible, plausible,* and at least sometimes *demonstrable* – then the balance of the evidence would suggest that dehumanisation did indeed play a role in causing and shaping genocidal violence. Even if the specific features of the case make it difficult to find a clear and unambiguous confirmation or disproof of the role of dehumanisation in genocide, the accretion of several such indicative 'straw in the wind' tests could provide a stronger argument one way or another.

1.4 CASE SELECTION

As my primary case studies, I assess three instances of genocide – the Holocaust in Germany, the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and genocidal violence committed by Serbia in the former Yugoslavia (primarily against Bosnian Muslims by the Republika Srpska) 1992–1995.

Sometimes, the definitions of these cases are straightforward. The Rwandan genocide is widely recognised as having begun on 7 April 1994, the day after the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana, and ended on 18 July (Prunier, 1998, 298–299). In other cases, the temporal bounds are less clear. The Holocaust ended on 8 May 1945, with the liberation of Theresienstadt, but did it begin with the January

1942 Wannsee Conference, the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, or the opening of the Dachau concentration camp in 1933? While the violence in Bosnia had indeed begun in April 1992, with massacres such as the Bijeljina massacre on 1 April and the collapse of the Lisbon Agreement on 28 March, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) noted a general 'state of fear' and 'mistrust', with sporadic violence and plans to take advantage of conflict being laid in for years before this (ICTY, 2006, 16–50).

To address such ambiguities, I examine the entire period that genocidal governments held power. This approach allows me to address decision-making, bureaucratic, and military processes (as well as escalating violence) during genocidal mobilisation. Thus, my case studies are:

- the Holocaust: January 1933 to May 1945, for the duration of Nazi German state;
- the Rwandan Genocide: May 1991 to November 1994, for the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development as it existed after the reintroduction of multiparty politics (extremist MRND elites would be closely involved in prosecuting the genocide);
- the war in the former Yugoslavia: May 1989 to November 1995, starting with Milošević taking the Serb Presidency and ending with the Dayton Agreement. I focus mainly on the situation in Bosnian Serbia, and the conflict between Serbs and Bosniaks, since this is the most clearly genocidal conflict within the broader set of the Yugoslav wars.

I could have started earlier. Genocidal movements do not emerge whole cloth against ideologically arbitrary targets. Kaufman notes that the ‘myth-symbol complex[es]’ on which ethnic violence is often built ‘typically ha[ve] deep roots in history and culture,’ citing Slobodan Milošević’s use of Serbian myths ‘popularised by the nineteenth-century linguist Vuk Karadžić and promoted by nineteenth century Serbian governments’ (Kaufman, 2006, 50–51). Beginning with Milošević’s 1989 presidency would miss this. At the same time, looking back hundreds of years before genocide across multiple cases would be highly ambitious – when would I stop looking?

To compromise, I examine these cultural factors only as far as they were developed or actively perpetuated during the above periods. Milošević actively re-emphasised nineteenth-century imagery in his 1989 'Gazimestan speech', while Nazi propagandists like Streicher drew upon longstanding accusations of Jewish ritual murder. Rather than attempting to write a comprehensive cultural history, historical references thus become tools to understand my case studies. This risks overlooking unspoken culturally ingrained ideas, but I suggest that these are evident from my discourse analysis.

Beyond the fact that each of the three cases has been widely noted for the presence of dehumanisation, as seen in my literature review (see, for example, Semelin, 2007), two main factors render these case studies apt: primary source accessibility, and theoretical impact.

Accessibility of archives is a significant factor in selecting my cases. I have sought to compile a considerably more comprehensive and systematic body of examples of dehumanisation than other writers on the topic, and this means that I need to look at cases where there is not only a significant quantity of contemporary documentation (particularly by perpetrators) but where this is easily accessible. While this does lead to problems of non-random sampling, it can be mitigated by taking care when generalising my conclusions.

There is a wealth of primary material for these three cases. In addition to academic archives and documentary collections, as noted above, the major internationally supported trial processes for each case provides a wealth of primary documentation produced by both defence and prosecution. This material is often digitised (increasing its accessibility), scrutinised by hostile lawyers (increasing the suggestion of its authenticity), and is particularly concerned with tracing individual responsibility.

As an additional benefit, many of these tribunal processes operated in English or French, easing the burden of translation. While much Rwandan primary evidence is in Kinyarwanda, many translated versions exist (including some versions which were produced by the perpetrators themselves). While not ideal, use of translated material rather than original-language expertise – in English and French (which I speak), as well as German, multiple dialects of Serbo-Croat, and Kinyarwanda (which I do not) for my primary case studies alone – is necessary for wide-ranging comparative work. A case selection strategy that reduces the need for this expertise – together with methodological approaches de-emphasising word-by-word translations in favour of substantial evidence bases and a focus on imagery – makes Germany, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia more appealing. Such an approach does risk selection bias. I would need to be careful that the translated (primarily court) documents did not represent a skewed sample of material – but this is a problem common to any non-comprehensive documentary collection, and so not uniquely difficult if approached carefully.

Furthermore, my collection of case studies helps to introduce some degree of variation and establish the relevance of my theory. By examining two very different, but still paradigmatic cases of genocide in the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide, I can assess the degree to which dehumanisation is at work in each one. If these two cases – widely separated by geography, time, and the shape of the killing structure, but similar in terms of genocidal ambition – displayed similar discursive structures of dehumanisation, then this would suggest that this was a distinctive and significant phenomenon. By comparing this with the former Yugoslavia, a conflict where genocidal violence was mixed in with interstate and inter-community conflict, I can see if dehumanisation was less prevalent in conflicts with less categorically eliminationist goals, thus introducing some variation.

While my approach is more geared to a detailed exploration of my three primary case studies than a broader comparative study, I proceed – in Chapter 8 – to iterate my approach onto a selection of smaller case studies. These are chosen to fill out the continuum identified above, and examine how dehumanisation and genocidal violence were (or were not) linked in other circumstances beyond my three core cases. With this in mind, I examine the following additional examples:

- the 1915 Armenian Genocide and the 1975–1979 (auto)-genocide in Cambodia as other 'conventional' examples of genocide;
- the 1965–1966 Indonesian mass killing of communists and ethnic minorities and the 1978–1983 genocide of Ixil indigenous people in Guatemala as Cold War examples of mixed politicidal and genocidal violence;
- the settler genocides of Native Americans in the colonisation of California and Aboriginal Australian peoples in Australia as examples of genocides enacted as part of colonial expansion (rather than 'defensive' conflict by genocidal movements);
- intense anti-Muslim prejudice in the US, UK and Canada in the early 21st century, as well as the 2012 anti-African race riots in Tel Aviv, as examples of cases where there was extensive motivational dehumanisation but no genocidal violence.

By following a similar approach to my main three case studies, and comparing the links between violence and discourse, I can begin to assess variation across the universe of cases, and identify patterns about how dehumanisation works in practice. By treating this thesis as a first step towards a more comprehensive theory, and developing it incrementally, I can thus use my main three cases as a productive foundation for further theorising.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE ARGUMENT

It is important to emphasise what this thesis does *not* argue, due to limits of space, methodology, and the topic, and any resultant weaknesses.

To begin with, I examine *specific* causal processes identified within genocide, not *all* the causes of genocide. These include motives such as opportunism, desire for resources, and a desire to terrify populations believed to be harbouring rebel groups. I hypothesise that dehumanisation does have a strong causal link with genocide, but do not suggest that motivational dehumanisation is a necessary precondition for genocide. I also do not suggest that genocide is an inevitable consequence of dehumanisation. Owens et al. note the importance of moving away from generalising explanations 'of genocide and mass killing as holistic events' that had single causes, and were roughly interchangeable between each other, and towards an understanding of genocides as 'massively complex social phenomena that incorporate many moving parts at all levels of analysis' (Owens et al., 2013, 70). Instances of resistance, rescue, and non-compliance were present across each genocide – with some Hutu, as Fujii notes, participating in both acts of killing *and* acts of rescue (Fujii, 2014) – suggesting that, even if dehumanising messages were pervasive throughout genocidal societies, this did not neatly translate to genocidal ideas pervading *all* of the minds of the people in it.

Secondly, I only address three primary case studies, meaning that generalising my findings may be difficult. Together with the above observation about the multicausal nature of the phenomenon, this makes it difficult to produce the conventional 'two by two' square common in social science-based analysis, where I compare cases where dehumanisation was present and absent, and cases with and without genocidal outcomes. The in-depth nature of each case study, combined with the fact that I am only looking at one of a set of important causal factors, makes it that it is difficult to divide cases into these four neat categories. That said, in Chapter 8, I test my findings against a broader range of other cases (including negative ones) in to introduce some discussion of variation in cases. With these additional case studies, I am able to produce an indicative ‘two by two’ square, that helps me set scope conditions, describing under what circumstances my model of genocide and dehumanisation applies.

Thirdly, dehumanisation is challenging to study. Evidence of dehumanisation often takes the form of inference about internal cognitive or emotional states, based on partial archival evidence; this is trickier than identifying more straightforward statements of policy justified in terms of material or security concerns. Additionally, the inferences linking cognitive and emotional factors and specific material actions are also highly complex. These difficulties should not deter attempts to study it, but do require me to assemble a wide range of sources from which to draw inferences.

Finally, there may be no single causal story across different case studies. Where this is the case, then, rather than trying to impose such a narrative, I will instead attempt to provide a theoretical framework that can handle these different findings, improve their conceptual clarity, and potentially account for their differences.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

Having laid out the argument and approach that my thesis adopts, I proceed in three parts.

The first part, comprising this chapter and Chapter 2, establishes the basis of my argument, and the context for later discussion of dehumanisation. In Chapter 2, I examine existing literature on genocide and dehumanisation, laying out the three competing characterisations of dehumanisation discussed earlier, as well as the foundations of the alternative approach I take.

In the second part, comprising Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I go on to examine my three case studies – Germany, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia – by mapping out the incidence and context of motivational dehumanisation in each. Gathering these empirical foundations to my work, before inductively developing a detailed theory based on them, is an important part of my approach. If, as I suggest in Chapters 1 and 2, genocide scholarship suffers from a failure to truly grapple with internal logic and context of such discourse, then I need to return to the original archival documents and primary sources first, in order to address this. These chapters will survey, contextualise, and draw out key trends and features of the use of dehumanisation in each of my three case studies; they are, as such, necessary to theory generation.

Having established these empirical foundations, I then move into my third part, where I inductively draw my findings together to build a theory and model of genocidal dehumanisation.

In Chapter 6, I draw these case studies together to comparatively evaluate the forms and locations of motivational dehumanisation across each one. In doing so, I inductively develop an overall account of the phenomenon, that holds across all three cases. I also attempt to account for any differences between them.

In Chapter 7, I assess the causal role of motivational dehumanisation. While difficult to assess using positivist methods, I nonetheless identify multiple forms of evidence that suggest that motivational dehumanisation does have an impact in shaping and directing genocidal violence.

In Chapter 8, I assess the model generated in Chapters 6 and 7 by applying it to eight other cases. By looking at how far the model 'travels' – how it applies in similar cases, what circumstances it does and does not apply in, and how it changes (or does not change) in other cases, I examine how far it can be generalised.

Finally, in Chapter 9, I sum up my theoretical conclusions and assess the potential both for further research and for practical impact on policymaking around genocide prevention.

2. EXISTING PERSPECTIVES ON DEHUMANISATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, I identified four broad sets of alternative approaches to the role of dehumanisation in genocide.

'Rationalist' approaches suggest that dehumanisation is not (particularly) important – genocidal violence and mobilisation emerges from material calculations by elites or decisions by ordinary *génocidaires* and bureaucracies to engage in violence. This is not to say that genocide is 'rational'; rather, it emerges from an assessment of material and strategic costs, benefits, risks, and opportunities. Dehumanisation might occur on an epiphenomenal basis – as a by-product of other causal dynamics – but would not play a significant role in the causal process.

Three other approaches, by contrast, see dehumanisation as an important strategy in the repertoire of genocidal states, using intense ethnic animus or other emotional arguments to encourage, direct, and shape violence.

What I refer to as 'undifferentiated' approaches see 'dehumanisation' as a synecdoche for 'ethnic hatred' more broadly, with its specific features elided or passed over in favour of a broader conception of the link between non-human imagery and 'prejudice' conceptualised more broadly. This is more common in non-academic contexts, but I also observe a similar phenomenon in the academic literature, where evidence of motivational dehumanisation is cited as evidence of legitimising dehumanisation, and the 'internal logic' and psychological role of such discourse largely ignored. Thus, different phenomena are collapsed into a single undifferentiated whole.

‘Legitimising dehumanisation’ approaches see dehumanisation largely as a phenomenon that facilitates genocide. If humans owed certain moral obligations to each other that made killing difficult, then arguing that one’s enemies were not human would lessen these moral obligations. On its own, however, legitimising dehumanisation does not imply an argument *in favour* of genocidal violence – rather, it reduces arguments *against* violence.

‘Motivational dehumanisation’ approaches include some legitimising elements, but focus instead on recasting the enemy group as a threatening non-human entity that needs to be destroyed in order to avert the threat it poses. In doing so, such approaches bear a surprising amount in common with ‘material’ accounts of genocidal violence – they attempt to explain why states took certain security responses in response to (admittedly distorted and fabricated) views of threats. Nonetheless, I treat it as a separate approach in this analysis, since many of the rationalist scholars in the field explicitly distance themselves from incorporating this kind of cognitive and discursive approach.

I focus on the motivational dehumanisation approach in my own work, developing the existing psychological and political discussion of this form of dehumanisation in genocide and conflict studies.

In this chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the literature on these four positions, before moving on to my own analysis in subsequent chapters. Studying existing scholarship on threat-framing and genocide provides conceptual and analytical clarity, additional empirical detail, and useful terminology. Given the lack of specificity and lucidity in much of the non-motivational literature so far, these are particularly important when addressing genocidal dehumanisation. Additionally, given the breadth of the field – touching on literatures of genocide, ideology, emotion, and ethnic violence – it is particularly important to understand what areas of the literature are missing or under-developed, and address them with greater clarity.

2.2 RATIONALIST ACCOUNTS OF GENOCIDE AND DEHUMANISATION

Before examining how cognitive, ideological, and discursive phenomena like dehumanisation influence decision-making, I will first examine what 'rationalist' accounts say about the origins of genocidal violence. By engaging with them, identifying the predictions they make, and comparing them to historical studies about the actual dynamics and processes of such societies, I can identify the gaps in such accounts and what a motivational dehumanisation-based account might bring.

One such rationalist account – covering similar case studies to mine – would be Valentino's approach. This argues arguing that 'ethnic mass killing occurs when leaders come to believe that large-scale violence is the most practical way to accomplish a policy of ethnic cleansing' (Valentino, 2004, 155), and is enacted by 'small but powerful groups [who] often play a determining role not only in instigating but also in physically carrying out this violence.' (29) He suggests that mass killing is 'rarely a means of first resort' (240) but is used to realise strategic ends like dispossessing an enemy group, or continuing a coercive conflict, rather than ideologically- or emotionally-motivated hatred. While acknowledging the 'strong intuitive appeal' of emotional and cognitive explanations, he suggests their impact is too unclear, they are too common in non-genocidal societies, and 'need not be unusually severe to play their part in the causal process leading to mass killing' (28).

These conclusions are severely undercut by his limited examination of country-specific work on genocide. He glosses over the intentionalist-functionalist synthesis in Holocaust studies, for example, that has extensively addressed the relationship between bureaucratic and ideological factors (167–168), and the empirical study of how genocidal politics actually emerged. Kershaw, for example, outlines a 'synthesis' position between belief-based and structure-based explanations of the Holocaust, seeing the pragmatic, strategic, and bureaucratically-shaped motivations of the Nazi state as complementary to Nazi ideology and Hitler's 'charismatic' rule, with both contributing to 'escalating radicalisation' (Kershaw, 2008, 270). Likewise, Valentino spends less than a page examining ethnic ideology in Rwanda (Valentino, 2004, 185–6). Given the historical debate over the role of the 'small but powerful groups' in the Holocaust and mass participation in genocide in Rwanda, this is a significant gap in his account.

Nonetheless, arguments that genocide mass violence are an outgrowth of 'ordinary' interest-based calculations, rather than of 'extraordinary' ideological or emotional factors, find significant support in literature on violence and armed conflict.

Downes, studying several twentieth century conflicts (albeit not genocide specifically) reaches similar conclusions – that mass violence against civilians is often an escalation of ‘normal’ warfare. Early in conflict, he describes violence as typically ‘bloodless’, involving military struggles over priority targets. As conflicts wore on, the pressure to reduce one’s own casualties and decisively win the war eroded protections against non-combatant groups (Downes, 2008, 243). Also contributing to mass violence were factors including protracted/attritional warfare, a desire to compel an early resolution to a conflict, specific configurations of military hierarchies (244–252) and, perhaps most strikingly, the assessment of civilian populations as internal threats in conquered territory. He suggests that military planners often saw them as ‘a fifth column capable of rebelling at any moment in the rear and causing a two-front war’ (243), who, if unchecked, could shelter or become sources of guerrilla violence. This need to extirpate an internal, infiltrating threat will recur when looking at discourse of dehumanisation later, though on a more metaphorical basis than Downes pursues.

While Downes studies violence against civilians more broadly, rather than genocidal conflict, he argues that discourses of ethnicity have little impact on atrocity violence. The expected effect of seeing one’s enemy as barbaric, and not subject to the norms of conflict, would presumably be easier with non-state opponents rather than states. His dataset of conflicts shows the converse, however – more deliberate targeting of civilians in interstate than intrastate ones (249). Likewise, he finds little evidence that increased cultural difference (potentially associated with demonisation) is linked to heightened civilian violence. The proxies he uses are not particularly convincing – as he admits, ‘demonisation … is not based on objective differences among groups of people' (249), meaning that it could be complicated by cultural constructions – but it does suggest that if ethnicity plays a role, its impact is diffuse and complex.

Kalyvas' analysis of civil war also touches on mass ethnic violence, explaining it in terms of strategic and tactical considerations. Kalyvas explicitly focuses on civil war (as bilateral violence not intended to destroy its targets), rather than genocide, which has already 'been subjected to rigorous social scientific scrutiny' (Kalyvas, 2006, 33). Even so, several cases he examines as cases of civil war do have implications for studying conflicts others might describe as genocidal. On violence in Guatemala, for example, he questions how far it was genocidal and how far ethnicity was 'the main casual factor', citing the tendency of violence to centre on areas of high insurgent activity (regardless of ethnicity), but not on areas with significant minority populations but few insurgents (136–7). In Rwanda, and Serbia, he notes that levels of violence varied widely, reflecting opportunistic and personal factors, like the need to 'settle scores or reshuffle land properties' (373), that largely accounted for this variation.

These observations suggest that strategic calculations, whether in terms of war-winning strategy (for elites) or individual self-interest and score settling (for low-level perpetrators), rather than ethnic hatred, were responsible for this large-scale violence. Kalyvas finds violence to be 'localistic and region-specific', 'not necessarily informed by impersonal cleavage-related grievances but often by local and personal conflicts' (371). Indeed, he suggests that invoking ethnic hatred to explain ethnic violence is circular, since both are produced by it as well as producing it. Instead, as per Durkheim, he argues the importance of examining the roots of ‘social phenomena’ through ‘the social facts preceding them’, rather than ‘their manifestation among the states of individual consciousness’ (34).

Arguments stressing the importance of interest-based strategic calculation among elites and low-level perpetrators are also present in several country-specific accounts.

While acknowledging the widespread nature of Nazi antisemitism, as well as hatred and pathological insecurity (Aly, 2014, 3–7), Aly draws upon contemporary accounts to suggest these stemmed from material factors such as envy over the tangible results of Jewish emancipation (27), the financial benefits of expropriation of Jewish property to Nazi fiscal policy, private German citizens, and state budgets (Aly, 2008, 186–190). Thus, the Holocaust made a significant contribution to German financial aims, and accrued material benefits to individual German *génocidaires*. Material concerns also underpinned broader strategic, economic, and population policy - Hans Frank, Governor-General of the General Government in Eastern Europe, suggested that genocidal eastward expansion would allow the General Government to ‘become much richer and happier, and it will receive much more support, and above all, it will be de-Jewed’(Aly, 1999, 161). Aly suggests that genocidal policies – such as the ghettoisation of Jews, the subsequent cheaper forced labour and extermination approach (Aly, 1999, 170)), population transfer, and working-to-death and extermination of those with less perceived economic value – is more explicable when examined under this material and economic lens.

Similarly, Hayes argues that money recouped from confiscation, plunder, company fees for forced labour, and low-upkeep costs meant that genocide was not excessively costly, and occasionally lucrative for the German state. Indeed, camps like Auschwitz occasionally ran a profit (Hayes, 2017, 134–136). The same was true for logistics; contrary to claims that Jewish death camp transport was a major drain on German rolling stock, at the expense of support for German soldiers on the Eastern Front, he finds that 'the shares of German railroad equipment and activity devoted to the Holocaust were tiny, both in total and at any particular time' (136), and thus not costly. Hayes similarly notes the staffing of many camps with 'Hilfswillige', 'volunteer helpers' paid much less than SS guards, further underlining the fact that the Holocaust was not a costly operation but instead brought material benefits to its perpetrators (135).

This suggests the Holocaust served the interests of the German state and of private citizens, and also that it did not significantly tax resources vital to the war effort. Both arguments lend themselves to a strategic and interest-based approach to the Holocaust.

Other writers have argued that other conflicts are also rooted in materially political, opportunistic, or strategic factors. Gagnon contrasts the failure of ethnic hatred to mobilise much of the population in Yugoslavia with the instrumental way ethnicity was deployed to strengthen state power bases (Gagnon, 2006, 87), and the economic/electoral origins of many ‘ethnic conflicts’ (181–7). Mueller similarly finds limited ethnically motivated engagement among Serbian paramilitary units. Rather than ideologically committed *génocidaires*, they were instead ‘common criminals recruited for the task … enticed by the prospect that they could “take whatever booty you can” [and] released for the war effort’ (Mueller, 2000, 49) to terrorise political opponents. In these cases, insecurity and opportunism, based in material and political concerns rather than ethnic hatreds, were pre-eminent.

There is, therefore, ample literature arguing in favour of rationalist/interest-driven explanations for genocide that largely ignore dehumanisation and ideology more broadly. While sometimes allowing some causal role for ideology, these accounts emphasise how genocidal violence often served the material interests of those involved, whether through elite strategic calculations, or the accrual of material or social benefits among perpetrators.

There are two main critiques of interest-based explanations of mass ethnic violence, however. The first examines the specifics of these case studies, suggesting that rationalist explanations do not properly account for the forms or cross-case recurrence of particular forms of dehumanising discourse, or ethnic violence. The second comes from literatures on emotions and organisational processes, which both suggest that rational and strategic calculation cannot easily be separated from considerations of emotion, perception, cognition, and ideology.

First, while strategic situations varied greatly, the conflict frames, rhetorical devices, and strategies of violence used in each case were much more consistent than that would suggest, suggesting that they were not solely making calculated responses to their immediate environment or strategic context. If they were, then a wider profusion of discursive framings might be expected, in line with the different priorities of *génocidaires*. Instead, this consistency suggests that there is some common phenomenon that recurs across cases – either some epiphenomenal process that emerged irrespective of local conditions as part of a repertoire that rationalised violence, or a cross-cultural social and cognitive process that led to similar imagery.

A similar point is raised by Kaufmann's discussion of 'symbolic' politics, suggesting that nationally-shared and emotive 'group mythologies' are a major factor in shaping ethnic conflict (Kaufman, 2006, 52), either on their own or together with strategic calculations (84–85). He notes that 'politicians put so much effort and so many resources into making symbolic appeals, and … successful symbol-manipulators often gain the support of people whose tangible interests are harmed by their policies' (85). Why would 'group mythologies', and the politics emerging from them, be adopted at the expense of strategic policy goals, unless they fulfilled some other value or need?

Indeed, this is a point indirectly addressed by Hayes. Even if the Holocaust was not particularly financially costly, he details a number of psychological costs incurred by perpetrators and the costly-to-morale coping mechanisms used to offset them (soldiers getting drunk to deal with trauma and needing additional nursing time both required military resources), as well as the widespread fear that German war conduct was inviting a demand for reprisals 'that will never be appeased' (Hayes, 2017, 155). This, together with the ideological commitment to extermination as a goal in its own right by many Nazi officials (138), significantly weakens claims that the Holocaust was an expression of economic or strategic calculation alone. While possibly the case for some organisations and individuals in specific situations, it does not seem widely true.

Similar conclusions can be reached regarding targeting of non-combatants in the Rwandan genocide. In interviews, Straus asked perpetrators why women and children (who were not a strategic military threat) were targeted, and received answers that similarly de-emphasised strategic calculation in favour of killing as an important end in its own right. Answers primarily couched in strategic or rationalist terms were less common (to 'win the war' (12.9%); to 'prevent survivors from avenging, identifying killers, or reclaiming property' (6.7%); to 'take property' (1.3%)) than answers that were more categorical (24.4% stating that 'all Tutsis had to be killed', while 5.1% justified violence in terms of the need to kill whole families) or unknown or unclear (28.2% either not knowing or giving unclear answers) (Straus, 2008, 166). While these responses cannot be directly used as proxies for 'rational'/'ideological' motives for violence, they do suggest that categorical or difficult-to-untangle psychological reasons played a key role.

Several writers claim that excessive, non-combatant-targeting and dehumanising violence makes strategic sense for killers. Levi, for example, recalls that victims were 'degraded' so that 'the murderer will be less burdened by guilt … [this] is the sole usefulness of useless violence' (Levi, 1989, 101). Lang suggests that excessive violence is strategically useful because it is self-aggrandising, enabling 'the realisation of absolute power [which] demands excessive violence' (Lang, 2010, 240) and can 'confirm and strengthen one's commitment to the group' (239). Although these arguments still present a strategic account of ideologically motivated violence reaping instrumental benefits by reducing psychological costs and furthering military goals, this undermines a purely rationalist view. Expanding the category of 'rationalist/strategic motivations' to all human behaviour that ultimately leads to a strategically useful end goal dilutes the usefulness of the category, and makes the specific insights from emotional, cognitive, and ideological approaches difficult to separate from it.

Indeed, much of the literature on emotions, inter-group hostility, and mass violence supports the notion that emotions and rationality are difficult to separate.

Suny, for example, argues that emotional factors are central to group behaviour. He encourages researchers to recognise 'the complex ways in which reason is affected by emotion, and how emotions are often "rationalised" [and] made reasonable' (Suny, 2004, 41). He cites a wide range of neurological, cognitive, and other experimental studies of decision-making (11–14) to argue that emotions 'give direction to our actions, stimulate us to act in various ways, help us form preferences and goals, and, most importantly, give meaning to our lives' (13) (many of the key functions of ideology). If emotions have such a major effect on how people behave – including their 'rational' behaviour – then it makes sense to consider them when studying emotionally laden subjects like genocide and ethnic violence. He identifies a number of potent emotional narratives at work: 'fear', for example, 'prepares an individual to seek safety;

hatred to act to right a historic wrong, resentment to deal with status or self-esteem discrepancies' (26). With the help of these more distinct analytical categories, he provides a detailed analysis of the Armenian genocide, drawing together material/security-based and emotional/ideological factors to explain genocidal mobilisation.

Ross, studying affect in pre-ethnic conflict Rwanda and Serbia, comes to a similar conclusion about the importance of emotions and cognition in genocide. While finding that perpetrators and witnesses rarely explain violence in terms of 'fear' or 'hatred' (Ross, 2014, 93–94), he finds that these 'raised thresholds of tolerance for violence within Yugoslav society' (100), producing a 'circulation of affect'. Fear and material concerns, he finds, bolstered and confirmed each other, taking on new meanings and escalating as they were remade in response to specific incidents, events, and social trends (96–102). Like Suny, he also draws upon psychological and neuroscientific evidence to bolster his claims, citing studies of memory, rhetoric, and psychology of emotions to argue they play a key role in ethnic violence (104–112). Leaders, he asserts, play an important role in framing conflicts using emotive and fear-inducing language, but operate in a larger social context that amplifies their words in often-unexpected ways.

Literature on organisational psychology has also drawn links between the 'rational', interest-led functioning of organisations, and the importance of ideology and other cognitive factors.

In Thad Allen's survey of SS bureaucratic functioning around the concentration camp system, for example, he finds that ideological cohesion and consensus was vital to Nazi genocidal policy, especially in the fragmented 'polycratic' Nazi state, where it cemented together organisations and individuals with conflicting interests and approaches. 'Ideological' and 'rational' managerial styles 'did not contradict but rather reinforced each other' (Thad Allen, 2005, 159), with dehumanising and hate-laden ideologies contributing particularly to the bureaucratic functioning of genocide. He cites Mennecke, the camp doctor at Gross-Rosen, who combined 'eugenic … categories of health, criminality, race, and industrial efficiency' in his work (126). By contrast, he finds 'those individuals who acted most out of 'material self-interest' or mere cupidity were consistently the most ineffectual' (112).

Thad Allen focuses on a specific SS agency – the WHVA – operating in a single, distinctive polycratic state structure – Germany under Nazi rule. While he does extend his conclusions into a broader discussion of the relationship between bureaucracy, modernity, and ideology (11–12, 274–284), how far do his conclusions hold elsewhere? Bloxham builds on the work of writers including Thad Allen to argue that state bureaucratic structures provide a particularly strong legitimating ideological role in mass violence (Bloxham, 2008, 230). Across four case studies (the Holocaust, as well as the Armenian and Rwandan genocides, and Soviet purges), he finds the presence of 'ideologized activist core[s]' playing a major role in effectively galvanising bureaucratic structures involved in mass violence, suggesting that both filled essential roles (230). This suggests that ideology and effective bureaucratic functioning were closely linked.

From this, I find that purely rationalist or interest-based accounts of genocidal violence, though important, are insufficient in explaining such behaviour. While they do highlight some instances of genocidal violence being of material benefit to perpetrators, such instances were often materially and psychologically costly in ways that were not necessary to achieve material goals. As I show throughout this thesis, many perpetrators also claimed unequivocally to have been motivated by other factors. Finally, 'rational self-interest' and the ideological and cognitive processes that shape it are inextricably linked – suggesting any convincing account of genocide must draw on both approaches.

2.3 GENOCIDE SCHOLARSHIP: 'UNDIFFERENTIATED', 'LEGITIMISING', AND 'MOTIVATIONAL' DEHUMANISATIONS

Dehumanisation is often referenced by scholars of genocide and ethnic conflict, although often without much clarity in definitions.

In this section, I will examine how *comparative* and generalist literature has examined genocidal dehumanisation. I find that scholarship tends towards a mixture of 'undifferentiated' and 'legitimising' understandings of dehumanisation however, with only a small amount of coverage of motivational dehumanisation (I examine those writers who directly focus on legitimising or motivational approaches, separately, later). The following chronological survey of a wide range of major writers over the past thirty years illustrates how widespread these approaches are, and how they address dehumanisation.

Kuper (1983), for example, begins his discussion of dehumanisation by observing how it can justify 'dealing with other human beings as one would treat dangerous animals' (Kuper, 1983, 85–86), a clear example of motivating dehumanisation, but claims this as evidence of legitimising dehumanisation – that this 'denial of human individuality and significance' and 'exclusion from the community' (87) makes violence easier. His evidence is similarly mixed - sometimes seemingly supporting motivating dehumanisation ('diseases which strike horror or repel, and … call for radical surgery' (88, 90–91)), and some emphasising the stripping away of reservations against killing (86, 120, 133).

Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) cite imagery of 'parasites, viruses, or loathsome creatures … a parasitic force [that] corroded and would ultimately destroy the cultures of their host nations' (Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990, 339), seemingly an example of motivational dehumanisation, to illustrate how it might increase 'the perceived gap between the people and the outgroup' (28–29) – a legitimising argument. Fein (1993) notes vermin/pest imagery ('bitches', 'animals, insects, "nits"' (Fein, 1993, 81)) but discusses dehumanisation only in terms of the 'exclu[sion of its targets] from the perpetrator's universe of obligation'. Naimark (2001), while noting genocidal use of disease and vermin imagery, likewise sees dehumanisation as diminishing sentiment for victims (rather than stigmatising them) (Naimark, 2001, 33), as do Gellately and Kiernan (2010). Such an approach reflects an 'undifferentiated' approach to dehumanisation.

More recent scholarship has increasingly adopted a reading based more in motivational dehumanisation. Weitz (2005) cites the centrality of 'biological metaphors' in genocidal discourse: Jews as 'maggots', 'parasites', 'sexual predators', and 'bacilli' (Weitz, 2005, 105), Bosnian Muslims as 'dogs' and 'mucus (222–223), as well as other microbial (Weitz, 2005, 106, 108, 154, 168), debased sexualised (192), or alien threats (73). Save for a brief but insightful discussion of how it called for 'purging' and 'cleansing' of targets (239), however, he does not operationalise the impact of this on behaviour. Additionally, Weitz elects not to study Rwanda (13) in favour of his own area of cases with 'Nazi and Soviet influence' (11–13), restricting his ability to identify common issues across cases.

Others make similar observations. Mann (2005), for instance, highlights imagery of 'parasites … threatening and dehumanised enemies infecting the people, requiring cleansing' (Mann, 2005, 322) and the 'life-or-death' struggle against dehumanised leech-like 'anti-races' (199). He explains how its effect, however, in terms of increased perceived distance from humanity. Chirot and McCauley (2015) argue that, along with reducing psychological costs through desensitisation to killing (51), dehumanisation also played on concerns about security, by linking it to images of 'dangerous infection' or 'vermin' that must be 'expelled or obliterated' (84). In each case, however, these receive limited attention. Luft, in a recent study of dehumanisation, does two distinct models of dehumanisation – one where 'those doing the killing do not see their neighbors as people anymore … eliminat[ing] constraints that would otherwise prevent civilians from joining in mass violence', and another where enemies were depicted as 'threatening, dangerous, and deserving of death' (Luft, 2015, 151). Thus, she clearly disaggregates legitimising and motivational approaches, respectively; later in her study, however, she returns to an account of dehumanisation as a kind of consolidation and growing familiarity with eliminationist violence, which is much more akin to legitimising dehumanisation.

While this literature does all contribute to discussions of the importance of dehumanisation, it often lacks clarity or specificity, confusing evidence of what I would identify as motivational dehumanisation with a framework of legitimising dehumanisation. This weakens its analytical clarity in favour of a broad-brush concept of dehumanisation. If a genocidal speaker refers to a marginal group as a 'bloodsucking toxic octopus, lurking amongst us', then the internal logic of the statement implies that there is something more going on than simply a denial of their humanity. What does it mean to call the target group 'toxic'? Why would they be said to suck blood (something that octopi do not actually do)? Why, specifically, are they likened to octopi, as opposed to lobsters, jellyfish, or sharks? Why does it matter that they are hidden within the audience's group? This requires further investigation.

2.4 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY LITERATURE ON LEGITIMISING AND MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION

The mechanics and functioning of dehumanisation are given greater attention by social psychology literature, which often adopts a legitimisation-based approach.

Haslam, in an influential account, while touching on 'organism metaphors' of 'parasites that infect the social body', adopts 'animalistic' and 'mechanistic' understandings of dehumanisation. These both focus on the denial of victims' unique humanity and agency, enabling 'the removal of normal restraints on individuals' aggression' and 'extremely negative evaluations of others' (Haslam, 2006, 255). His experimental research on dehumanisation presents a similar model (Haslam, Kashima, Loughnan, 248–258), of dehumanisation *facilitating* violence rather than *advocating* it.

Similarly, Kelman, after a brief discussion of dehumanisation, finds it an unconvincing *motivation* for genocidal violence, arguing it 'weaken[ed] moral restraints' (Kelman, 1973, 38). In other words, legitimising dehumanisation – stripping human identity and agency – made violent treatment of victims much easier, resulting in massacres where 'the victims are converted into means in the most ultimate sense possible … the desirable end [of] their systematic destruction' (50). Kelman thus understands dehumanisation as reducing violence's psychological costs, rather than increasing motivation for it.

Bandura likewise understands dehumanisation as 'selective moral disengagement', describing how, by euphemistic labelling, displacement of responsibility, and denial of empathy, perpetrators could view victims as 'no longer … persons with feelings, hopes and concerns but … sub-human objects' (Bandura, 2002, 109). Alongside this, Bandura makes some observations pointing to motivational dehumanisation. In one experimental study, he found dehumanisation had a markedly greater contribution to increasing violent aggression than other 'disinhibitory' factors (such as masking of individual responsibility), suggesting that it played a role beyond merely reducing incentives against violence (Bandura, 1975, 266). Nonetheless, he ties this to the greater ease by which dehumanising subjects could offer 'self-absolving explanations' (262) – reducing the costs of violence, rather than providing incentives. Similarly, while recognising that genocidal dehumanisation often involved monstrous imagery – 'savages', 'despicable wretches', 'satanic fiends', 'degenerates' or 'worms' – he subordinates this to legitimising, rather than motivating, dehumanisation, citing accounts of Nazi camp-staff 'degrad[ing victims] to subhuman objects so that those who operated the gas chambers would be less burdened by distress' (Bandura, 2002, 109).

Opotow sees dehumanisation as placing victims 'outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and consideration of fairness apply' (Opotow, 1990, 1), but identifies supposedly separate phenomena that more closely resemble motivational dehumanisation. These include 'disparaging and denigrating others by regarding them as lower life forms or inferior beings – e.g. barbarians, vermin' ('derogation'), and 'fear of contamination'. She groups them together as a concept of 'moral exclusion', however, defining this using a more legitimising-based understanding as opposed to one that has motivational elements. This is the placing of targets outside the domain of moral obligations, rendering them 'undeserving, expendable, and therefore eligible for harm' (13).

While this approach to dehumanisation is influential in social psychology, several writers do adopt an understanding closer to motivational dehumanisation.

Bar-Tal, for example, discusses 'delegitimisation', the 'categorisation of a group or groups into extremely negative social categories that are excluded from the realm of acceptable norms and/or values' (Bar-Tal, 1990, 5). Within this, he emphasises the description of target groups as 'subhuman creatures such as inferior race[s] and animals', or 'negatively evaluated superhuman creatures such as demons, monsters, and satans' (67–8). This practice not only makes violence easier, but justifies it by appealing to simple, reflexive fear and judgements about threat perception (67–8).

Young-Bruehl offers a psychoanalytic typology of prejudices touching on similar issues. Challenging the notion of a single homogenous phenomenon of 'prejudice', (Young-Bruehl, 1998, 44), she identifies several psychological types. The definition for one – 'obsessional prejudice' – is strikingly similar to motivational dehumanisation, containing

> *conspiracies of demonic enemies everywhere, omnipresent pollutants, filthy people, which the obsessionally prejudiced feel compelled to eliminate – wash away, flush away, fumigate, demolish. The obsessionally prejudiced attribute to their victims a special capacity for commercial or economic conspiracy and diabolical behind-the-scenes cleverness, and they both envy this capacity and, acting imitatively, turn the fruits of this cleverness … on their victims. They imagine the conspirators as having the capacity to penetrate them, get into their bowels and their privacies. (33–34).*

This concept – identified primarily in Nazi Germany and violent 'anti-Muslimism' in the former Yugoslavia (30) – contains a number of distinctive elements that recur across my case studies, and captures the essence of motivational dehumanisation well. While Young-Bruehl's theory-building is difficult to integrate into a conventional social science or security studies account – she draws on psychoanalytic and Freudian observations, rather than conventional empirical approaches (210) – it is still insightful. She notes how these terms are designed to evoke particular senses of insecurity so as to spur unusually vehement actions (217–218) (a similar concept to the notion of securitisation), and outlines how her framework might serve as the 'cautiously and flexibly built up' map for future work. In 'obsessional prejudice', she offers an account of motivational dehumanisation and genocidal sentiment that closely mirrors empirical findings, and links dehumanisation to other phenomena.

Social psychology literature thus offers a more detailed approach to dehumanisation, and how it works, often illustrated by experimental evidence. This scholarship however, tends to stress the role of legitimising dehumanisation, with writers like Kelman dismissing intense hatred as a causal factor in genocide. Again, however, this literature does not explain for the specific forms often taken by dehumanisation; why do media, state, military, and popular discourse so often draw on imagery of existentially threatening serpents, parasites, diseases, and vermin, as opposed to lowly, deindividuated masses to whom no moral obligations were owed, or livestock? While the legitimising/facilitative understandings of dehumanisation may be a significant contributor to genocidal behaviour, it does not explain the forms or dynamics that recur across many examples of it, because it only accounts for the lack of moral obligations owed to the dehumanised subjects, not the threat that they were consistently accused of posing. Writers like Bar-Tal and Young-Bruehl (and Opotow, albeit using different terminology) do offer an explanation of how this might operate, but are limited in the empirical and historical evidence they employ.

As I explore in greater detail in Chapter Seven, legitimising dehumanisation - based approaches are particularly lacking in their treatment of *disgust*, a key component of genocidal dehumanisation. Academic literature examining this emotion has proliferated in the last ten years, with writers like Curtis (2011), Davey (2011), and Tybur et al. (2013) arguing that disgust is rooted in disease avoidance behaviour, with deep-seated evolutionary and cognitive roots. Such research identifies powerful emotional responses to 'disgust elicitors' such as obviously diseased people, vermin, and blood, and identified how these can change individual and social behaviour. This sort of imagery *does* explain the imagery of existentially threatening serpents, diseases, and vermin discussed above. For the most part, however, social psychology literature on disgust does not address genocidal dehumanisation, often mentioning it in passing, or discussing a kind of broader 'xenophobia' that encompasses but does not specifically address many of the distinctive features of, genocidal ideology (see, for example, Faulkner et al., 2004; Curtis, 2011).

A key goal of this thesis, therefore, will be to attempt to bridge these gaps, exploring the links and productive similarities between the organisational/political/historical literature on genocidal state behaviour, and social psychological discussions of emotional responses such as dehumanisation and disgust.

2.5 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION IN ACADEMIC LITERATURE ON GENOCIDE

While much influential scholarship on genocide has employed the concept of dehumanisation without deep conceptualisation or theorisation, some writers have explored the distinctions identified above.

Savage, while partially treating dehumanisation as a means of placing animal-like victims ‘outside the terms of moral reference’ (Savage, 2006, 264), notes this is insufficient to provoke audiences to violent action. Instead, across a range of cases, he highlights the tendency to use ‘loathsome’ (29), ‘nightmarish’ (23), and ‘horr[ifying]’ vermin imagery of plague-bearing rodents, blood-sucking insects, and snakes (28–42) to evoke a defensive response to ‘cure’, ‘cleanse’ or ‘purify’ the state of ‘tiny but powerful agents corroding the [national] body’ (Savage, 2007, 409). Thus, not only did motivational dehumanisation incite violence, but it also implied its own ‘methods of implementation’ (404), including cutting out the entirety of the imagined ‘diseased tissue’, or otherwise destroying it *en masse*. A common element of much of this imagery – alluded to implicitly by Savage (2006, 273) – is that it specifically taps into feelings of aversion and disgust, rather than merely fear or threat. The examples he cites are disgusting examples of corruption, rot, decay, infestation, and bodily parasitism, provoking emotional responses that were exacerbated by the formats they were presented in, such as extended metaphors, visual propaganda, and films.

Neilsen – drawing partly on Savage’s work – develops this further. Like Savage, she notes that (legitimising) dehumanisation may make an enemy easier to kill but does not explain the intense hatred associated with it, or the focus on targeting women and children (Neilsen, 2015, 87). Instead, she adopts the idea of toxification, that enemies are 'not simply inhuman or inferior … but a toxic presence that must be cauterised and destroyed' (88-89), whether 'maggots', a 'noxious bacillus', or 'cockroaches' (89). This, in turn, 'signals the creation of a security dilemma in the minds of the perpetrators, wherein the exigencies of survival triumphed a zero-sum game: kill, or be killed' (89). This concept corresponds very strongly with motivational dehumanisation.

Semelin's idea of 'an imaginaire of death' (Semelin, 2007, 17) that is used to justify genocide is likewise replete with ideas about purity and security. He describes the linking of ideological and bodily 'purity' to enable 'purifying' responses' (38), and the need to surgically eradicate dehumanised 'dirty, foreign, corrupt, and treacherous' (39, 338–340) vermin from inside the state – a 'purely hygienic matter of housekeeping', nipping threats in the bud before they could 'turn into an epidemic' (38-9). In this, the enemy's presence as an outgroup *outside* moral obligations is less important than the fact that they were a verminous presence *inside* society.

Smith, in his extended study of dehumanisation, makes analogous observations. He notes how Nazi propaganda 'seamlessly elided images of physical filth and disease with concepts of moral impurity' (Smith, 2011, 146), how the Khmer Rouge argued that 'what is infected must be cut out' (150), and how Hutu propaganda called for 'pregnant rats' to be killed in order to prevent their reproduction.

This specialised genocide studies literature on dehumanisation offers a much clearer perspective on motivational dehumanisation and explores how it works. Rather than seeing it as lessening restraints on violence against minorities – as per Kelman – it convincingly argues that much dehumanising rhetoric was more concerned with elaborating a distinctive kind of threat. This literature, however, has several limitations on its practical and theoretical usefulness.

Firstly, it often lacks systematic, in-depth, or cross-case comparison. Livingstone (2011), Semelin (2007, 82–89), and Savage (2006) move rapidly and thematically between several examples, the latter from nearly two hundred years and five continents. Neilsen consciously limits herself to a few cases to offer 'foundations for more robust empirical studies' in future (Neilsen, 2015, 90), while Savage's later work (2007) offers a light, non-systematic comparison of four cases. While useful for model development and illustration, this comes at the expense of richer analytical and comparative understanding.

Secondly, much of this literature focuses on dehumanising literature as texts, rather than 'speech acts', with the limited consideration of the political context, audience, and reception these faced. Bar-Tal pays more attention to the practical impacts and audience effects of dehumanisation, but his conscious focus on a broader theory of delegitimisation (Bar-Tal, 1990, 73), rather than detailed historical or archival work (Bar-Tal, 1989, 169–180), does impede our understanding of dehumanisation in practice. Without a practical context of the material functioning of dehumanisation – seeing what images were used in what ways to produce the effects that Bar-Tal observes, for example – it is harder to draw real-world conclusions about the impacts of his work.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Several key conclusions can be drawn from this review of the literature on the four approaches to dehumanisation that I identified in my introduction. Material concerns about security and self-interest play a key role in causing and directing genocidal violence, but do not provide a convincing explanation for it alone. Explanations based on them often fail to account for many features of genocidal conflicts (such as the costly nature of the targeting and forms of violence, and the use of recurring imagery and framings). Other factors seem to be at work. I suggest, based on the literature, that one such factor is dehumanisation, and closely related emotional, cognitive, and perception-based phenomena. By examining discursive framings of the 'ethnic enemy', and the emotional responses they evoke, I can better understand genocidal violence.

The literature on genocide, however, has its own problems. Much of this conflates and confuses different phenomena such as legitimising dehumanisation (discursive framings that encourage genocidal violence by removing its psychological costs) and motivational dehumanisation (discursive framings that encourage genocidal violence by increasing its urgency and desirability). By conflating these phenomena – grouping them together under the broader category of 'dehumanisation', without paying much attention to the specific phenomena and dynamics underlying them – much of the current literature has missed important features and dynamics of motivational and legitimising dehumanisation as a process.

Specialised scholarship on dehumanisation has its own drawbacks. Social psychologists of dehumanisation more broadly, though providing useful experimentally backed evidence about cognition, often ignore motivational dehumanisation in favour of examining discourses and psychological processes aimed at reducing the 'costliness' of participation in violence. Research that does specifically examine motivational dehumanisation has, moreover, typically failed to explain how and in what contexts it has an effect. While the scholarship on disgust offers a potential explanation for this, it has not engaged closely with the politics and social organisations associated with genocidal violence.

This thesis aims to address these issues. First, I intend to identify the common elements of motivational dehumanisation more clearly and highlight the relationships between these and the security-centred understanding detailed above. Then, I will examine the complex causal linkages between genocidal dehumanisation and violence.

PART 2: MAPPING DEHUMANISATION

The past two chapters have unpacked the concept of genocidal dehumanisation. I have chosen to focus primarily on Savage's concept of 'motivational dehumanisation' that focuses on portraying the enemy as monsters, vermin, and diseases, increasing audience incentives for genocide.

As part of this, I seek to examine and establish the context in which dehumanisation took place. The social role of motivational dehumanisation in different military, bureaucratic, and popular contexts has gone largely under-studied, as has the growth and spread of motivational dehumanisation throughout these different environments. Who were the original authors of these ideas and formulators of these policies? What frames and 'reservoirs' of ideas, images, and cultural scripts were available to draw upon? What methods did they use to disseminate them throughout their societies, and to what sorts of audiences? How, and under what circumstances, did these messages develop?

As suggested in my literature review, dehumanisation seems to be an important component of genocide, and one worthy of study. Along with a cluster of similar emotion-based factors, it helps to explain the occurrence of violence (and the forms that that violence takes), in ways that an explanation solely rooted in strategic calculation or rationalist approaches cannot do; while not the sole causative factor, it is well-placed to have a significant effect. Motivational dehumanisation in particular sits at a nexus of several key emotional reactions identified in the literature – fear, hate, disgust, and a desire for retribution – and so is particularly key, while also tying closely into materialist accounts of insecurity and state survival. It evokes a direct threat to the integrity of the nation state, permitting and mandating 'mass categorical violence' to defend it from subversion and destruction (Straus, 2015, 61). Since the enemy is cast as intrinsically and wholly threatening, negotiation or compromise with them is foolish, only a total attempt to destroy them would be effective; at the same time it relates to its audience (who would be familiar with vermin and disease) on a visceral and deep-seated level. By tying 'rational' concerns about defence to this kind of evocative imagery, leaders, and members of the media, armed forces, and general public in genocidal societies, are able to stir up feelings of threat and disgust against their targets, and thus direct killing that was specifically genocidal in form and targeting.

As such, in the next three chapters, I will undertake a detailed archival examination of dehumanising propaganda and discourses in genocidal and pre-genocidal states. It is not possible to gather even a fraction of *all* speech, public and private, during a genocide and the years running up to it – meaning that attempts to determine whether a sample is representative or not will face difficulty – but I will nonetheless attempt to collate and identify a wide range of politically and socially significant examples. By 'significant', I here mean articulated by politicians or other figures with platforms or institutional power to shape their audience's preferences and attitudes, military leaders involved in drafting and implementing policies key to genocidal killing, print or visual media that reached a wide and receptive audience, and other similar material. By paying attention to this important point of context, I can avoid relying on off-hand statements by minor politicians with little influence on decision-making processes, or broadcasts that a fraction of the population were exposed to, and instead focus on statements and documents with greater ability to determine and shape behaviour.

In doing so, I will not only be able to refine my typology of motivational dehumanisation – identifying key recurring themes and images amongst the most significant examples of dehumanising rhetoric – but I will also be able to identify patterns of repetition and influence between different groups in the same society. This in turn can give me a limited indication of the causal impact of these discourses. If the same metaphor – first outlined by a high-ranking military figure – was repeated in a pro-genocide broadcast, then by a member of a paramilitary group responsible for taking part in the killing, then this is a strong indication that it had an impact, since it was least was at least internalised enough by those who heard it to echo it in this way. Likewise, links between dehumanising metaphors and imagery, and the form that violence took, can also indicate the influence and importance of dehumanising imagery. If, in a culture where snakes hide in tall grass around the outside of villages, genocidal killers made a point of checking the same tall grass and beheading their victims, or if, in a culture with a fear of infectious disease, areas were 'sterilised' of victim populations, then this might indicate that the dehumanising metaphors were having an effect.

By tracing these trails of influence and repetition, I hope to be able to tentatively link up the possible causal chain of dehumanising language and imagery active in genocidal societies. Genocides develop from the pre-existent available conflict 'frames', to ideological entrepreneurs (often in media and government) who pioneered dehumanising imagery and discourses, to the methods by which they disseminated these images to national publics (including both media and speeches), to the publics, military, and paramilitary groups themselves, and finally to the actual sites of violence. In practice, difficulties in gathering evidence will mean that it is often difficult to fully 'reassemble' these chains, and I will instead only be able to identify shorter and circumstantial causal chains within them, but these still allow me to identify some key patterns.

Taken together, this allows me to provide an account of genocidal dehumanisation that improves on previous ones. Rather than simply observing a selection of instances of dehumanisation that happened to take place in genocidal societies, I will pay attention to context and like-for-like comparisons, the better to develop a common model of genocidal dehumanisation that can be used across case studies.

To summarise:

- I will examine dehumanisation on a more systematic basis, across different levels of the society, identifying differences or similarities between actors.

- I will adopt a more rigorous comparative approach, comparing like-for-like instances of propaganda from similar political levels between different case studies.
- I will pay more attention to context – not merely citing the wording of individual pieces of propaganda, but, where possible, providing indications of their social context: their provenance, distribution, similarity to other pieces of propaganda, and reception by their audience. While this will not be possible in all cases – due to limited information – and will not elevate this to a 'representative sample' of genocidal speech at the time, it will still provide useful indications that these examples of dehumanisation were not niche aberrations, and help set the groundwork for subsequent process tracing and examination of their impact.
- Finally, I will also attempt to identify and draw out the key rhetorical/psychological strategies, subject-object relations, and imagery employed in genocidal dehumanisation. By clarifying what motivational dehumanisation claims in each case, I can identify common elements between cases, and thus begin to develop a more detailed and accurate theory of dehumanisation.

Together, these should will allow me to identify common themes and concerns between the different case studies, and thus build a coherent concept of what motivational dehumanisation is, and what it does.

3. GERMANY 1933–1945

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

I begin by examining the Holocaust. This was part of a complex campaign of violence that, while primarily targeting Jews, attacked several other groups as well. Romani and Slavic people, leftist political dissidents, disabled people, and a wide range of other groups were all also attacked. While recognising this broader victimisation, I will focus on the persecution and extermination of roughly six million Jews, given that they (albeit sometimes identified as a broader 'Judeo-bolshevism') typically represented the biggest perceived threat. From early antisemitic violence and intimidation before Hitler took power, antisemitic violence escalated from increasingly institutionalised state terror and mass incarceration during the 1930s, to ghettoisation and extermination via military units such as the *Einsatzgruppen*, to mass murder in death, concentration, and labour camps, as the Nazi German state systematically tried to exterminate the European Jewish population.

One of the main (long-running) historiographical debates about how to interpret the Holocaust would be the 'intentionalist-functionalist' debate. 'Intentionalist' points of view stressed the role of top-down ideological direction of the Holocaust. Advocates like Hillgruber suggest that 'the conquest of European Russia [was] for Hitler inextricably linked with the extermination of these 'bacilli', the Jews … the racist component of Hitler's thought was so closely interwoven with [this] central political element of his program'. As such, genocidal sentiment was inextricably linked in with Nazism's 'political, strategic, economic, and demographic underpinnings', from Hitler downwards (Hillgruber, 1981, 51). Other writers, like Goldhagen (1997), saw German society as set on an ideological commitment to genocide from an early stage in its history. Functionalist writers saw the Holocaust as the product of bureaucratic processes, whether arising from individual bureaucracies jockeying for resources and position (as per Aly (2014)), or an uncoordinated 'crooked path' of muddled ideological actions and commitments across the 1930s (Scheleunes, 1970, 92). More recent writers have offered compromise positions. Kershaw, as noted above, outlines a 'synthesis' position where ideological Hitlerite and bureaucratic Nazi policies led to 'escalating radicalisation' (Kershaw, 2008, 270). Browning – despite his focus on demonstrating the role of 'ordinary men' in enacting the Holocaust – still assigns significant importance to the role of emotion and ideology, describing how Hitler's beliefs 'permeated the entire regime', activating true believers, technocrats, careerists, and race theorists alike, since such beliefs were versatile and could appeal to a broad range of people (Browning, 2014, 425).

This thesis adopts a primarily intentionalist approach, charting the emanation of dehumanising discourse principally from Nazi military, media, and political leaders. I do, however, draw from structuralist and synthesis accounts, taking the role of low-level individuals, groups, and structures seriously in examining how genocidal Nazi ideology had an impact. Rather than seeing motivational dehumanisation as a simple set of ideas inherited whole-cloth from Hitler, I instead recognise the role played by cumulative radicalisation, and how the 'internal logics' of dehumanisation allowed it to influence policy as it spread, and appeal to a wide range of ideological, emotional, material, and everyday interests of many Germans, in many cases developing further because of this.

3.2 IDEOLOGICAL PRECURSORS TO GENOCIDE

To begin with, I examine the history of violence and prejudice against Jews in Germany. This had a long history, with medieval Jewish communities and individuals being associated with crimes such as spreading the Black Death, well poisonings (Trachtenberg, 2002, 102), ritual murder (Trachtenberg, 2002, 102, 125ff.), and usury (Trachtenberg, 2002, 102, 189ff.), typically in order to justify prelude to pogroms and other violence against them. While Nazi leaders and elites certainly took advantage of this long-standing culture of anti-Jewish cultural images and persecution, I suggest that they drew upon a very particular tradition of antisemitism for the ideological 'raw materials' for the Holocaust. As mentioned in Chapter 1, dehumanisation carried with it distinctive sets of ideas, connotations, and ways of framing the enemy, that render 'undifferentiated' explanations unsatisfactory. By identifying how a specific set of discourses portraying Jews as possessing an existentially threatening and inhuman intrinsic essence emerged from a broader set of prejudices (that 'merely' saw them as religiously deviant or spiritually impure), I can provide a more specific genealogy for genocidal Nazi ideas. A specifically dehumanising tradition of antisemitism had existed during early modern German history, but it was during the nineteenth century that antisemitic writers began to circulate ideas (supposedly based on scientific and expert observation) that Jews were in some way akin to diseases, vermin, or other pest animals that threatened the safety of the German 'body politic'. It was these authors, I argue, that had a key demonstrable influence on Nazi policy.

Several writers identify two currents in early antisemitism, which was not homogenous. Some patterns of thought were more clearly implicated in anti-Jewish genocide (rather than mistreatment and violence more broadly).

Probst distinguishes a 'non-rational' anti-Jewish prejudice from an 'irrational' one (Probst, 2012, 17–19). The former was primarily theological and religious, targeting Jews for supposed barbaric religious practices, such as usury and 'Christ-murder'. The latter saw them as possessing an intrinsically malign nature. While the former could nominally be (violently and coercively) 'corrected' through conversion or forced integration, the latter was closer to motivational dehumanisation on account of its belief in inherent difference. Both, Probst suggests, existed in early modern Europe (Probst, 2012, 5).

The theological work of Martin Luther clearly demonstrates this latter type of antisemitism, rife with dehumanisation and revulsion . He referred to Jews as 'nothing but a venomous basilisk who poisons and kills people' (Chazan, 2016, 228), 'filth … that comes out of the belly', 'full of shit', 'sow Jews', and 'Judas piss' (Probst, 2012, 50), clearly characterising Jews as contaminating and disgusting entities who needed to be ‘cleansed’. This material, however, received a ‘mixed reception’ – Probst notes that the influence of this particular material ‘appears to have been rather uncertain until at least the late nineteenth, or perhaps the early twentieth century’ (Probst, 2012, 58), when Nazi and pre-Nazi writers revived it to prominence.

As such, there were several phenomena at work. Dehumanising antisemitic imagery certainly had a long history, but existed alongside religiously motivated prejudice that did not make the same claims about the intrinsic nature of the supposed threat. As alluded to above, this changed over the course of the nineteenth century, with thinking about race and ‘Germany’ as a national entity changing dramatically over this time. Several academic, political, and *Volkisch* antisemites during this period began to develop a distinctive biologically rooted dehumanising antisemitism, that was directly cited by later architects of Nazi genocide.

Bein observes an increasingly ‘scientific’ and ‘biological’ approach to antisemitism ‘towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century’ which occurred in line with the increasing public regard in which the natural sciences and questions of public hygiene were held. Wilhelm Marr described Jews as inculcating ‘the cancerous tumour of usury’ in an 1879 pamphlet (Bein, 1964, 6), while Eugen Duehring claimed that ‘whenever [a Jew] settles in the flesh of the people, as his kind does, and shows his contentment, then the people should be heedful of their own health’ (Bein, 1964, 12). C.H. Pfaff, a

German scientist and self-described liberal active during the 1880s, described Jews as a 'rapidly growing parasitic plant that winds round the still healthy tree to suck up the life juice until the trunk, emaciated and eaten up from within, falls mouldering into decay' (Katz, 1982, 150). As noted in Chapter 1 in 1886, the German writer Paul de Lagarde claimed that Jews were 'nothing but carriers of decomposition … trichinae and bacilli [to be] exterminated as quickly and thoroughly as possible' (Savage, 2007, 417), that they were a 'mass of decay' that sought to destroy the 'poor sucked dry Germans' (Bein, 1964, 32) and warned that they were 'aliens in every European state … harbingers of decay' (Bein, 1964, 12). Some of these dehumanising writers were specifically influential in Nazi thinking. Lagarde, for example, suggested forcibly resettling Jews to Madagascar, a policy that was considered early during Nazi rule as a solution to the 'Jewish problem' (Ullrich, 2016, 666–667).

Wilhelm Bölsche, a self-taught German naturalist and later head of the German Society for Racial Hygiene, would go on to be influential in cementing dehumanising antisemitism in Hitler's own writing (Maser, 1974, 245–246). In his *Vom Bazillus zum Affenmeschen* ('*From the Bacillus to the Ape Man*'), he did not describe Jews directly, but did describe how bacteria and pathogens were similar to the 'most consequent enemies of the state', launching 'mass invasion[s]' of the body, and using 'cannon of bacterial poison from an eternal ambush'. King notes that 'the bacillus as anthropomorphic yet alien invader is a well-known formulation of the time' (King, 2014, 112), and it is clear that such a framing had much in common with the kinds of imagery described above that *did* explicitly target Jews.

Another early writer who was directly cited by Nazis themselves was Houston Stewart Chamberlain. As part of his broader discussion of racial conflict in his *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Chamberlain also warned about how 'the powers of darkness are ever stretching out their polypus arms, clinging to us with their powers of suction in a hundred places, and trying to drag us back into the Night out of which we were striving to escape' (Chamberlain, 1912, 3). The powerful and vital audience is contrasted with the tentacled, strangling threats that – despite being lowly and inferior – still posed a mortal danger. To address this threat, Chamberlain suggested that Aryans should watch against the 'encroachment' from 'racial others', enacting the 'annihilation' of the 'State without a nation', the 'purging … of all the poisons of that Chaos' (Chamberlain, 1912, 327). Elsewhere, he referred to Jews more explicitly – they were a 'disgusting worm' and a 'devil's brood' from whose 'claws' Germany – and the 'pure Germanic spirit' – had to be rescued (Rhol, 1999, 207). Intermarriage with Germans could lead to 'a herd of pseudo-Hebraic mestizos, a people beyond all doubt degenerate physically, mentally and morally' (Chamberlain, 1912, 331). Based on this, it is easy to see how his reading of history could be interpreted as a call to arms against a perceived Jewish threat. Chamberlain's work was well received among Germans (by 1938, the *Foundations* had sold over a million copies, predominantly in Germany (Shirer, 1991, 107)), particularly among the far-right/conservative elite. The Nazi newspaper, the *Volkischer Beobachter*, described him as the 'gospel of the Nazi movement' (Shirer, 1991, 109), while both Hitler (Hitler, 1943, 269–270) and Alfred Rosenberg (Hecht, 2000, 285–304) cited him as an influence on their work. Indeed, Yahil argues that Rosenberg saw himself as an heir to Chamberlain's intellectual legacy, with a huge impact on early Nazi ideas of ethnic geopolitics (Yahil, 1990, 42-43).

Thus, I identify a shift in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century towards antisemitism based on supposed intrinsic essences and inhumanity (although antisemitism rooted in supposed Jewish cultural practices had by no means disappeared). It described Jews as – simultaneously – a great threat to the audience, but also lowly. Chamberlain depicted the 'forces of darkness' as a lesser force than the glorious Aryan future, while Lagarde and others saw them as parasites and microscopic creatures. Repeatedly, Jews were not portrayed as mighty foes; but as subversive, poisonous, or otherwise dragging down Aryan Germany. This seemingly contradictory 'dangerous yet lowly' dynamic is one that will occur repeatedly throughout this thesis. It clearly recalls Straus' notion of a 'domination-vulnerability paradox', in which genocidal states need to have the sufficiently uncontested power to build and enact a genocidal plan, but also need to portray their opponents as a sufficiently dangerous present or future threat that they need to be destroyed immediately (Straus, 2015, 56).

Overall, this distinctive form of antisemitic discourse was much more amenable to genocidal readings. If Jews were seen as innately harmful to the new German ‘body politic’, in ways that undermined and corrupted its vigour and strength, then this would encourage organised violence to destroy this threat (rather than forcibly convert or segregate it). There was, therefore, a clear wealth of well-established metaphors and dehumanising images for Nazis to draw upon that made later eliminationist propaganda understandable and convincing. This was not inevitable, as Goldhagen (1997) argues, but allowed for a clear resource for genocidal states to draw upon.

3.3 LEADERS AND STATE ELITES

As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, characterisations of the enemy as threatening or dehumanised do not arise from nowhere, but are articulated and emphasised by securitising actors, to given audiences. The role of such individuals is particularly important when they are high-ranking state leaders, or other elites, possessing both the platform to disseminate these discourses, and the authority to make policy based on them.

As such, I will begin by examining the incidence and specifics of dehumanising speech among a number of leading Nazis responsible for setting policy on Jews. That leading Nazis *were* deeply antisemitic is obvious, but in this section, I seek to unpack *how* they were antisemitic. By interrogating and investigating their use of motivational dehumanisation, I identify key repeating patterns in their speech, identify specific details in their stated beliefs that could correspond to particular policies, and chart how pervasive such beliefs were. In doing so, I can also go beyond arguments that dehumanisation was deployed solely as part of a broader, undifferentiated hatred, or that it was used simply to facilitate other policy moves. Instead, motivational dehumanisation carried a set of key rhetorical and policy connotations of its own.

To begin with, we should start with Hitler's early writings. Doing so helps illustrate that dehumanisation was a consistent part of his outlook on Jews. It was not adopted and discarded on a whim, but reflected a consistently dehumanising character as he took power and as the Second World War progressed. Maser, in his collection of Hitler's letters and notes, suggests that dehumanisation as a 'particularly virulent strain of antisemitism' is less evident in Hitler's early (pre-*Mein Kampf*) letters than in his later private and public speech. He ascribes this to Hitler drawing most of these ideas from the 1921 edition of Bölsche's *From Bacillus to Anthropoid Ape*, which depicted the world as a combat between worthless, harmful, and undeveloped 'germs' and modern humanity (Maser, 1974, 245–246).

Even in some of Hitler's earliest political writing, however, we can see a clear foundation for motivational dehumanisation. In September 1919 Staff-Captain Karl Mayer asked Hitler, his subordinate, to brief him on attitudes towards Jews in the Socialist Party, which Hitler had been monitoring for the army staff. Hitler's response, however, veered away from the task at hand (investigating left-wing politics), and towards a set of policy prescriptions that right-wing Germans should enact against Jews. That he delivered this opinion to an military superior, not really addressing the socialism he had been instructed to condemn, in favour of an anti-Jewish diatribe – suggests that Hitler subscribed to these attitudes from an early stage, and was willing to espouse them even when they were not directly elicited. He referred to Jews as 'an alien people in [the] midst' of another race; a 'leech on the … people' of an autocratic state, and the 'racial tuberculosis of the nation' in a democratic one (Maser, 1974, 215). To defend against this, Hitler recommended 'the total removal of all Jews from our midst', as opposed to the non-systematic pogroms of 'emotional antisemitism'.

This letter was part of a clear pattern of dehumanising views. Hitler espoused them in public over the next few months in public speeches to the German Workers' Party (later the NSDAP). His private notes for these speeches described Jews as being responsible for the 'moral erosion', 'political corrosion' (Maser, 1974, 219), 'sapping morality', and 'slow throttling of the people' (Maser, 1974, 227) of Germany, only resolvable by a 'healthy national policy' (Maser, 1974, 219). The 'Jew as leech' metaphor was repeated (Maser, 1974, 229), with Jewish-organised starvation accused of 'destroy[ing] physical strength and health and addl[ing] the brain' (Maser, 1974, 239). Jews, by their 'economic parasitism', 'only flourishing as foreign bodies [with] effects like those of creepers', were persecuted and hated 'not because the nations [they were resident in] were bad but in self-defence' (Maser, 1974, 241). Thus, from the beginning, Nazi ideology was rooted in claims that Jews needed to be subjected to total violence because of the supposed insidious threat they posed.

These metaphors proliferated in *Mein Kampf,* Hitler's ideological manifesto. Amidst geopolitical and historical material, Hitler extensively portrayed Jews as non-human creatures, typically using motivational dehumanisation. They were a 'swarm of rats … in filth and offal' (Hitler, 1943, 302), 'parasite[s] in the body of other peoples' (Hitler, 1943, 304–305), a 'ferment of decomposition' (Hitler, 1943, 447), 'rats [that] politically poison our nation [and] gnaw [at its] heart' (Hitler, 1943, 37), a 'poisoning [and] contamination of the blood' (Hitler, 1943, 562) and 'leeches' (Hitler, 1943, 217). Extended, viscerally disgusting sickness metaphors were also often employed: a 'maggot in a rotting body [in an] abscess' (Hitler, 1943, 57), 'poisonous abscesses … a continuous stream of poison being driven into the outermost blood-vessels of this once heroic body' (Hitler, 1943, 154). These images went beyond portraying the enemy as disgusting, but also emphasised their supposedly insidious and sapping nature. Jews, Hitler argued, 'undermine and paralyse the strength of later generations' (Hitler, 1943, 669), and more resemble tuberculosis than the Black Plague: they were a slow, insidious threat that was worse because it was not easily detected, rather than a dramatic and obvious force that invites opposition (Hitler, 1943, 232). Hitler described how the simple acts of recognition and a medicalised response could resolve the supposed problem. A 'probing knife' and 'sudden light' could blind the Jews (here likened to maggots) (Hitler, 1943, 57), whereupon a cure undertaken with 'utmost determination' could remove the 'slow process of putrefaction' and the 'symptoms of decay' (Hitler, 1943, 232–233).

By presenting the enemy as intrinsically and universally threatening, degrading, and poisonous to the body politic, and by offering a ‘cure’, *Mein Kampf* provided a neat encapsulation of motivational dehumanisation. The way that Hitler conjured an invasive threat, and then suggested a violent response to it that was patterned after the original metaphor used, is a highly distinctive strategy, that I identify not just in Hitler’s work, but across Germany and beyond.

The message of *Mein Kampf* was widely disseminated across German society, with sales ballooning after the Nazis came to power, and six million copies sold by 1939 (Shirer, 1991, 73–4). Shirer rightly cautions against using sales interchangeably with readership, noting that many ‘Nazi stalwart[s] complained that it was hard going [and admitted] in private that they were never able to get through to the end’ (Shirer, 1991, 74). Nonetheless, this still represents an extensive dissemination of dehumanising thought across the entirety of German society.

Hitler continued to employ dehumanising imagery, in public and private, across his career. In his speeches, broadcast on state media on important occasions, imagery of Jews as a parasitic and blood-sucking threat was common. They were ‘parasites who drank at the well of the despair of Vaterland and Volk’ (Domarus, 2007, 1142) and an ‘overbearing … burden … [for which] the nation is no longer willing to have its life blood sucked out of it’ (Domarus, 2007, 1153) (1938), ‘parasites’ to be ‘eliminated’ (1942) (Domarus, 2007, 2591), and ‘bacteria’ or ‘plague bacilli’ that would kill a person unless they pulled themselves together, stopped ‘assimilating’ them, and ‘removed [them] by force’ (Domarus, 2007, 2872).

In the ‘*Table Talk’* – a rough transcription of Hitler’s private monologues delivered to his inner circle, between 1941 and 1944 – Hitler’s dehumanising rhetoric is still evident, if slightly less ubiquitous. While Russians were described as non-human animals (‘wild horses’ and ‘rabbits’, evidence of legitimising dehumanisation (Cameron and Stevens, 2000, 4, 34)), Jews were described in distinctly different ways: ‘subhuman creatures … the ferment that undermines the state’, ‘dirty … diabolic corrupters’, a ‘pest’ (Cameron and Stevens, 2000, 79), ‘parasites’ (Cameron and Stevens, 2000, 495) and ‘vermin’ to be ‘exterminated’ (Cameron and Stevens, 2000, 639). He suggested, again, that once the world recognised their threat it would be a short step to destroying them (Cameron and Stevens, 2000, 289, 235), describing ‘the discovery of the Jewish virus’ (which was the root of ‘many diseases’) as ‘one of the greatest revolutions that have taken place in the world’, akin to the work of biologists like Pasteur and Koch (Cameron and Stevens, 2000, 332). While we should be cautious about the *Table Talk’s* accuracy – Kershaw notes that Hitler was ‘conscious[ly setting] out to impress his opinion on his guests, perhaps at times to gauge their reaction’ (Kershaw, 2001, 32) – it does demonstrate a consistency across Hitler’s public and private discourse about Jews as a viral, contaminating force, rather than suggesting it was instrumentally deployed.

Hitler's attitudes had – unsurprisingly – a considerable ability to direct policy. As the leader of an authoritarian state with print and radio infrastructure dedicated to disseminating his views, his dehumanising discourses had space and platform to be absorbed by a wide range of ordinary Germans. The structure of the Nazi state further contributed to this. Kershaw describes the notion of 'working towards the Fürher' (Kershaw, 1993, 530), wherein Hitler's loose style of rule encouraged increasingly radical policy suggestions from those under him seeking to mimic his political style. If intense motivational dehumanisation was characteristic of Hitler's politics, it would make sense that others would express similar beliefs.

Joseph Goebbels, the Reich Minister of Propaganda, consistently employed dehumanising antisemitic imagery across his life. In his semi-autobiographical *Michael*, published in 1929, the main character muses about how 'Jews make me physically sick … [they] raped our people, soiled our ideals, weakened the strength of the nation, corrupted morals [and are the] poisonous eczema on the body of our sick nation … either [they] destroy us, or we destroy [them]' (Ginsborg, 2014, 315). In public political speeches, Goebbels likened Jews to a 'TB Bacillus' and a 'devilish ferment of decomposition (Goebbels, 1943a)', describing them (to shouted agreement from his audience) as an entity that 'destroys nations and peoples … just like a potato beetle destroys potatoes' (Goebbels, 1943b). His contention that they were 'human … merely in the sense that a flea or a louse or a bug is an animal – only not a pleasant one … [that] pricks and tortures us' (Aronsfeld, 1985, 12) demonstrates the distinction between legitimising and motivational dehumanisation. Jews were not merely equated to animals, but to singularly *malign, insidious, and life-destroying* animals.

Having identified Jews as a dehumanised threat, Goebbels' proposed solution closely reflected his 'diagnosis'. In his 'Sportpalast Speech' on total war in February 1943, he claimed that Jews – through a combination of 'mimicry' of German identity that 'put their host peoples to sleep, paralysing their defensive abilities', and their 'deep infect[ion]' of the national spirit – had circumvented Germans' sense of national self-preservation. This needed to be recognised and utterly destroyed before it was too late, with this act of realisation being a key part of any response. Bytwerk notes that this point received enthusiastic applause from the carefully selected, but very large, live audience (Goebbels, 1943a). Goebbels expressed similar views in a leading July 1941 article in *Das Reich*, a weekly journal that Herf notes had a circulation of 800,000 of 'both the Nazi faithful and a more sophisticated and politically astute readership than … mass-circulation newspapers' (Herf, 2008, 21). He concluded that now Germany and Europe had 'awakened' to the danger posed by Jewish 'racial filth' and 'seed of destruction', Jews could no longer engage in 'mimicry' or fade into the background, which had hitherto been their main defence (Goebbels, 1941a). Once awakened to this Jewish threat, Goebbels suggested that a medicalised response was required, and in a November 1941 article in *Das Reich*, proclaimed that 'racial, national, and social hygiene' was necessary. 'The only effective measure' against this 'parasitic race that feeds like a foul fungus on the cultures of healthy but ignorant peoples' was to 'cut them out' (Goebbels, 1941b). This article had a particularly wide audience – Bytwerk notes that it was read on national radio, while Howard K. Smith, an American journalist in Germany, described how copies were bundled with ration cards at the time (Smith, 2000, 198).

Robert Ley, the head of the German Labour Front, also engaged in extensive dehumanisation. In a 1941 pamphlet – of which two million copies were printed and disseminated among German workers – he identified Jews as an existential threat to Germany. Referring to their 'parasitic character', their 'ruin[ing of] blood', their status as the 'anti pole to all races', he claimed that 'the Jew sucks the marrow of the peoples' (Ley, 1941), arguing fiercely that 'the international Jewish polyp' was the biggest threat to Germany's continued existence, particularly the wellbeing of German workers. This pamphlet was not uncharacteristic of his work; in 1942, he argued in another Labour Front pamphlet that 'Jews, the prototype of racial decay', would destroy any 'national body' they participated in, especially if it was already weakened' (Ley, 1942). In 1944, Ley published *The Pestilential Miasma of the World*. Discussing the natural characteristics of parasites – both the threatening way they 'devour their hosts … fall like locusts on them, suck their life away, destroy them', as well as their own weakness and frailty outside of their hosts – this book engaged in an extended discussion of how this applied to 'damaged', 'more degenerate', and 'decayed' Jews, who 'value ritual murder … to drink the blood of [their] host peoples'. Ley even included caricatures of inhuman, rat-like Jews floating in specimen jars to emphasise the point. He concluded that Jews, as the 'counter-race of humanity', linked by their 'common bond of criminality and sickness' (Ley, 1944), were more innately threatening than could be described 'through mere human laws, words, or rules'. Ley's writing, therefore, contains an forcefully delivered argument that Jews were a monstrous and threatening parasitic force, and reached a wide institutional audience.

Alfred Rosenberg, one of the chief Nazi ideologues, extensively drew upon dehumanising imagery. His *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* – which saw over a million sales between its publication in 1930 and 1942 (Bein, 1964, 21–22) – described Jews as a 'Phoenician pestilence', and a 'parasite' with 'tentacles' (Chapoutot, 2016, 76). This took on a highly 'scientific' tone, with him likening Jews to:

> *parasitic occurrences in the life of plants and animals. The sacullina pierces the rectum of the common crab … it sucks away its vital forces; the same process occurs when the Jew invades society through the open wounds of the people, consuming their creative forces and hastening the doom of society. (Bein, 1964, 22)*

This – in the specific use of biological imagery and terms – was an attempt to claim indisputable scientific authority (rather than disputable moral claims), while also evoking a disturbing image of blood-sucking and quasi-sexualised violation of the body. This particularly recalls Young-Bruehl's observation that obsessional prejudice often invoked the notion of an enemy with 'the capacity to penetrate them, get into their bowels and their privacies'

(Young-Bruehl, 1998, 34), lending national security-focused propaganda an alarmingly personal tone.

Similar themes were present in Rosenberg's public speaking, specifically in his ideological instruction. At a 1943 *Gauschulungstagung* in Trier (a training programme for local politicians), he described the 'biological necessity' of 'purging Europe of the plague of Jewish murderers' (Aronsfeld, 1985, 44), as well as the 'clean, biological humanitarianism' of 'after two thousand years of parasitical activity, [liberating Europe] from Jewish leprosy' (Schrafstetter and Steinweis, 2015, 97). Since this was delivered as part of the inculcation and indoctrination of Nazi values, it had an audience who were present specifically to learn from Rosenberg's approach, and the messages he promoted.

It is difficult to survey all public speech by leading Nazis, but these examples from leading figures – the propaganda minister, the chief philosopher, the head of the German workforce, the Governor-General of the Nazi occupied territory in which most Jews died – demonstrate a distinctive, internally coherent, and consistent vision of Jews as a strong-but-weak infiltrating and parasitic threat. In doing so, they reflected an ideology that Hitler had continued to promote, in public and private, from the beginning of his political career. Nazi use of dehumanisation was not sporadic, instrumentally deployed, or 'merely' an expression of 'us vs them' prejudice more broadly, but a clearly elaborated belief system with its own implications for Nazi genocidal policy towards Jews. This – as well as providing strong evidence for their internalisation and dissemination through Nazi elites – also shows how these views were poised to be effective throughout German society, by shaping national policy.

3.4 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION IN BUREAUCRACIES AND THE MILITARY

In the previous section, I showed how German elites extensively employed dehumanising imagery in their public and private rhetoric. How far was this repeated by the military groups and bureaucracies involved in enacting the Holocaust?

It is not possible to gain a complete understanding of 'the attitudes of the Nazi military', or even one that is necessarily representative. The total enlistment of German armed forces (including both the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS) was approximately twenty million, not including state, policing, and other bureaucracies supporting them (Wette, 2006, 178). Even if only a fraction were directly involved in the Holocaust, this still represents a vast swathe of people to sift through. Instead of trying to sample across the entire structure, I instead attempt first to identify key points of influence and significant documents that would have had a disproportionate affect across a substantial proportion of the German armed forces. This will include directives from high-ranking officials involved in determining policy and actions towards Jews, as well as training materials that, by their very nature, would be disseminated to large numbers of personnel with the express intention of shifting and influencing behaviour. Then, I will examine a selection of the statements and claims made by individual troops involved with actually carrying out antisemitic violence that included instances of dehumanisation, to see how they adopted and used dehumanising language. While the latter may introduce some selection bias, based on the selections I draw upon, it does at least allow me to observe how specific ideas, frames, and discourses spread through German society.

To begin with, there is evidence of dehumanisation patterning very high-level military policymaking. During the 1941 Wannsee Conference, convened to develop a 'complete solution to the Jewish problem' (and thus formalise exterminationist policies), Heydrich emphasised the need for total, rather than selective, extermination, justifying this particular form of violence using dehumanising logic. After using forced labour to kill the majority, he suggested that 'the possible final remnant will, since it will undoubtedly consist of the most resistant portion, have to be treated accordingly, because it is the product of natural selection and would, if released, act as the seed of a new Jewish revival (see the experience of history)' (GHDI, 1942). The term 'seed' ('keimzelle', literally 'bud cell' or 'gamete') is not *inherently* dehumanising as a reference to the potential ability of Jews to repopulate, but the notion of Jewish 'resistance', and the closeness to epidemiological/evolutionary concepts, evokes the notion of a disease that needed to be stamped out lest it returned, worse (inadvertently prefiguring notions of antibiotic resistance). By drawing on such imagery, Heydrich – the highest-ranking attendee – directed the planning of the

Holocaust towards categorical and genocidal, rather than simply mass, violence. Similarly, Josef Bühler, deputy governor of occupied Poland, argued that such action should take place soon. Jews, he claimed, posed 'immense danger [as] carriers of epidemics'. While not directly describing Jews *as* an epidemic, as some Nazis did, the notion of a disease-carrying, threatening enemy that needed to be separated from one's territory clearly invokes dehumanising dynamics. Much of the Wannsee conference concerned logistical and bureaucratic processes, making this heavily ideologised use of imagery stand out more.

Elsewhere in military bureaucracies, other high-ranking decision-makers also used dehumanisation to articulate their policies. Field Marshal Walther von Reichenau, in 1941, issued the 'Severity Order', which authorised the mass murder of Jews as partisans. The order called for 'severe but just revenge on subhuman Jewry' and the extermination of the 'Asiatic-Jewish danger', instructing the German Sixth Army to deliver 'severe but just retribution … to the subhuman species of Jewry,' and 'exterminate' it (Library of Congress, 1946). Again, in the midst of a largely organisational/policy document, Reichenau invoked dehumanising imagery to direct and justify a policy for nearly three hundred thousand members of the Sixth Army, who were responsible for extensive genocidal violence during the invasion of the Soviet Union.

Thus, military policymakers employed motivationally dehumanising views of Jews, that shaped their policies towards exterminatory forms of violence. These attitudes were often elaborated on in training media and propaganda designed to inculcate such views within armed forces.

One example of this would be *Kampf dem Fleckfieber* (‘*Fighting Typhus’*), produced by the Wehrmacht’s Army Film Unit (*Heeresfilmstelle*) in 1942. This served as both a hygiene training video and a potent piece of antisemitic propaganda, mixing clinical discussions of inoculation and the spread of disease, close-up shots of squirming colonies of lice on human skin, and emphatically framed footage of naked and clothed Jews in unsanitary ghetto conditions (USHMM, 1942bcde). That the Nazis were responsible for these conditions went unspoken. It urged that soldiers be warned ‘of the invisible danger threatening them in the Jewish quarters, right in the midst of the dirtiest possible surroundings’ (Chapoutot, 2014b, 514–5) (again touching on familiar themes of invisible/insidious threats observed earlier).

In addition to the obvious use of dehumanisation – portraying Jews as plague-bearing and unsanitary, and cross-cutting footage of them with footage of insects – the film made implicit references to other propaganda. Wildly magnified pictures of lice recalled Nazi posters and book covers depicting similarly giant lice with stereotypically ‘Jewish’ heads. The first scene of the film depicted the mould-like spread of typhus across the world with visuals very similar to depictions of the historical movement of Jews in *The Eternal Jew*, a 1940 propaganda film I will discuss in more detail later. Indeed, Chapoutot notes how similar the imagery, themes, and cinematography of the two were

(Chapoutot, 2014a, 96). The film then zooms in on Poland, then on Polish Jews living in ghettos. By cutting between these different images – the creeping spread of disease across the world (with even the metaphorical depiction of this appearing unsanitary), footage of Polish Jews in dirty environments, and lice – the film appears to have blurred the lines between these three features of the German occupation, inferring that all three were part of some broader horror. The 'medical solutions' outlined in the footage – intensive delousing and disinfection resembling the process of extermination of the Jews, together with the insistence that 'just one louse' could still pose a threat – clearly echo dehumanising notions of the importance of destroying the target in its entirety. While not explicitly instructing its audience to do the same to Jews that it showed being done to typhus-carrying lice – chemically purging them, and destroying them in their entirety – the implicit message was clear.

How widely watched was *Fighting Typhus*? While viewership figures are not accessible, in the months after *Fighting Typhus* was shown by the Military Medical Academy across the Eastern Front, Weindling notes how 'demand exceeded supply' for typhus vaccinations, with different branches of the military and occupation authorities clamouring for limited supplies of the vaccine and yearly booster shots. He also describes how this agitation for some sort of counter-typhus medical treatment escalated to the point of a '*fleckfieberpsychose*', or 'typhus psychosis', as German service members became anxious about it (Weindling, 2000, 343). The vast, hotly competitive struggle to fill this need (with government, industry, multiple military branches, and civil society all involved) led to the formation of a programme that Kurt Blome – Deputy Reich Health Leader – described as a ‘German Defensive Wall against Epidemics’. This was intended, in Weindling’s paraphrase, to ‘defend Western civilisation against Eastern barbarism’ (Weindling, 2000, 344–7). While material and public health explanations clearly played a major role in this policy, its racialisation as a public health issue among units particularly involved in the commission of genocidal violence is striking. Its audiences were informed, with scientific authority, that this was a Jewish problem, spread among Jewish communities, and in some ways akin to the Jews themselves. This would together suggest that the demonisation and dehumanisation of Jews using disease-related imagery played a significant role in shaping military policy and violence in Eastern Europe.

German soldiers were also ‘trained’ and ‘entertained’ with a wide range of other antisemitic propaganda. Uziel notes that Goebbels’ propaganda ministry supported commanders in showing films like *The Eternal Jew, Jud Süss,* and *Die Rothschilds Aktien von Waterloo* to military units, and also provided antisemitic reading materials to mid-ranking military leadership to ‘properly ‘educate’ the soldiers under [their command]’ (Uziel, 2001, 48). Thus, even if it is sometimes difficult to precisely ascertain how popular and widely believed dehumanising propaganda was among troops, this propaganda was widely consumed and well-positioned to be influential.

Another example of training material would be the pamphlet *The Jew As World Parasite,* published in 1943, and distributed to soldiers, schools, and German society more broadly. It acknowledged that, late in the war, Jews had largely been removed from public life in Germany, but continued to warn against 'the Jewish world parasite in the bloodstream and organs of the Peoples … the creeping poison' (Otto, 1943), amidst references to the antisemitic conspiracy theory text *Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* Stewart Chamberlain, and other more conventional examples of antisemitism. Noting that Jews both could – and sometimes could not – conceal themselves amidst Germans, it bade its audience to beware the 'asocial, criminal, sick, degenerate, and rejected … counter race [leading a] rootless, parasitic life'. It was not possible to 'come to a satisfactory agreement with [such] parasites'. Germans had 'recognised that the Jew has crept in like a parasite', and were doing their best to root them out, but the same was not true in other countries that Germany was at war with, especially America. The impact of this pamphlet is difficult to gauge. It saw considerable support among educators and teachers (Weindling, 2000, 266), but SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*, the SS intelligence agency) reports suggest it had a limited impact amongst everyday Germans, who gave 'politically correct' and expected responses to it, rather than heartfelt support (Musolff, 2013, 65); and there is no record of its reception amongst the Wehrmacht. Even so, this shows that, even late in the war and the course of the genocide, when millions of Jews had already been killed, significant efforts were still undertaken to spread dehumanising messages.

It is therefore clear that discourses of motivational dehumanisation, initially expressed by leaders, permeated throughout the German policymaking structures and military bureaucracies responsible for enacting the Holocaust. Films, pamphlets, policy documents, and military orders all disseminated images of Jews as strength-sapping parasites or contagions, and often seemed to have shaped and directed Nazi military policy.

How far were these echoed amid low-level perpetrators? As seen above, their orders were often influenced by motivational dehumanisation, meaning that they were indirectly enacting it – but it remains to be demonstrated that these foot soldiers internalised this ideology, rather than passively receiving it or ignoring it. As noted above, the scale of the German military, together with the conditions under which killings took place and difficulty in sourcing diaries or other documents from front-line perpetrators, makes it difficult to get a 'representative' account of the internal cognitive state of millions of soldiers. However, it is still possible to gain insight into whether such views had any resonance among them.

One compilation of diaries and letters by German soldiers by Klee et al. presents a somewhat different outlook from the training materials described above. Many of the accounts from frontline soldiers offer detached descriptions of violence against Jews, seemingly lacking intense hatred, disgust, or fear. Dehumanisation present was primarily legitimising, presenting Jews being killed as a deindividuated mass of livestock or flesh. Felix Landau, a Hauptscharfurher in the SS, wrote in his diary that the Jews were like ‘pigs whimpering horribly’, ‘pouring out of the entrance’ (of a prison), ‘streaming out of the citadel completely covered in blood’ (Klee et al., 1997, 91), and his description of methods of killing Jews rendered them clinically as body parts, with a near-total and seemingly deliberate omission of references to the victims as individuals (Klee et al., 1997, 97). Gebeitskommissar Gerhard Erren, in his 1942 situation report, describes the local Jews as ‘unnecessary mouths to feed’, who needed to be ‘cleansed’. Other writers quote Nazi soldiers making similar claims. Lewy, for example, notes that ‘some killers on trial indeed testified that these nude animal-like bodies were easier to kill’ (Lewy, 2017, 31). Thus, where dehumanisation did take place, much of it focused on downplaying Jewish humanity and making violence easier, rather than portraying Jews as monsters.

This does not mean, however, that motivational dehumanisation was absent in the documentary collection. A 1941 report by Stahlecker, a head of Einsatzgruppen A, for example, describes Lithuanian ‘spontaneous self-cleansing actions’ and ‘mopping up work’ against ‘the pests in their country, that is, the Jews and the Communists’ (Klee et al., 1997, 24). A report by Bothmann, the deputy commandant of Chelmno camp, referred to the Jews as ‘the plague boils of humanity’ (Klee et al., 1997, 217), alongside other statements and quotes from low-ranking Germans that reflect similar attitudes. Fritz Jacob, a Meister der Gendarmerie in Poland, recalls in a letter that he ‘saw such frightful Jewish types’, and was glad to ‘see this mixed race for what it is … sick with venereal disease … not humans but ape people’ (Klee et al., 1997, 159), while a poem by an unidentified SS Garrison Commander described how although the ‘murder … sadism [and] vile deeds’ of Jews had ‘tainted’ Ukraine, ‘he who has seen this pest with his own eyes stands firm for ever more’ (Klee et al., 1997, 124).

Other document collections also include ample evidence of motivational dehumanisation in letters and diaries. Lewy quotes one non-commissioned officer, who wrote that Jews were ‘swine in human form [and that the Wehrmacht would] free mankind from this pest’, while another referred to Jews as ‘parasites of the human race [who] have to be extirpated’. Another referred to them ‘oozing filth’, while yet another wrote in to *Der Stürmer* to describe how his time on the Eastern Front had opened his eyes to the threat posed by Jews, and that ‘extirpation and annihilation are the only appropriate remedy’. A soldier in the Minsk ghetto referred to ‘the pest … being annihilated’ (Lewy, 2017, 49), while Fritz Klein, a camp doctor at Bergen Belsen, related that he felt a medical compulsion to remove the Jews – a ‘purulent appendix in the body of Europe’ from the continent (Lewy, 2017, 127). Again, these are individual examples, but clearly reflect now-familiar themes – Jews as foul parasites on society, that needed to be recognised as such, and could only be dealt with by brutal excision.

Given issues with representativeness, it is difficult to draw generalised conclusions from these, but it is noticeable that lower-ranking soldiers used legitimising dehumanisation to describe the actual act of killing. This seems to reflect attempts to minimise the psychological costs of killing Jews by making them seem less human, or detaching themselves from having killed another person. That said, there are still many examples of motivational dehumanisation being used when discussing violence against Jews. The similarity of parasite and 'plague boil' imagery to elite discourse on the same topic suggests that soldiers were repeating imagery that they had picked up elsewhere.

To conclude, genocidal dehumanisation was indeed pervasive across the armed forces of Germany, as well as amongst its leadership. While not a universal or inevitable motivating force to encourage participation in genocide – it was not pervasive in the sense that everyone had internalised it - it appears to have spread from high-ranking military policymakers, through the training, education, and indoctrination structures present throughout military groups, and thence to line soldiers. Significant numbers of German troops were following orders informed by motivational dehumanisation, operating according to training that incorporated it, or directly expressing it themselves. This would suggest that – while not the only factor promoting genocidal violence – dehumanisation does indeed play a significant role both in encouraging and shaping it, at least in this case.

3.5 DEHUMANISATION IN MASS MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE

As well as propaganda distributed through political speeches, books by leaders, and instructional material within military institutions, the Nazi state used a wide range of other channels to saturate the national media landscape with dehumanising and other propaganda.

Propaganda pervaded the Nazi state. Herf, discussing the 'Word of the Week' billboard campaign (which often summarised speeches by Nazi leadership), quotes Goebbels' intention to have them displayed in 'all means of transport … above all in market squares, as well as in the windows of businesses … factories … offices of the state, cities, the party, banks, payroll offices, welfare offices [and] post offices' (Herf, 2008, 31). He also notes the thousands of orders of publications containing dehumanising material by the German Labour Front, physicians' organisations, and the hospitality industry. It is impossible to fully survey the discourse and cultural output during this period. Instead, I will examine two influential strains of Nazi propaganda that clearly illustrate important themes of dehumanising rhetoric: *Der Stürmer*/the Streicher media empire (representing one of the more vehement and extreme sources of Nazi dehumanisation that permeated both popular culture and state education systems), and visual material in the form of cartoons and cinema (which used visceral depictions of vermin or disease to increase their impact). While there is some risk of selection bias, I will attempt to mitigate this issue by paying close attention to how far each piece of evidence was disseminated, or how influential it was amongst its audience. If a piece of evidence can be demonstrated to have had a wide audience, to have been influential in shaping policy, and to have formed part of a larger rhetorical strategy, then this would increase my confidence in using it as evidence of Nazi German policy and the motivations of those enacting it.

3.5.1 *DER STÜRMER*/STREICHER MEDIA EMPIRE

Julius Streicher, and his tabloid newspaper *Der Stürmer* (together with its broader publishing company) was one of the more notorious examples of Nazi genocidal dehumanisation. At the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, he was described as 'Jew Baiter Number One', and indicted and convicted 'for his twenty-five years of speaking, writing, and preaching hatred of the Jews [to the point of] incitement to murder and extermination' (International Military Tribunal, 1946). By examining the rhetorical strategies he (and his employees) used, as well the audience's response, we can examine the key themes and how effective they were.

Der Stürmer was published from 1923 to the end of World War Two. While not an official Nazi state newspaper, it enjoyed significant favour among the Nazi leadership. Bytwerk cites a wide array of glowing endorsements of its 'deadly efficiency … everywhere' from Hitler (who shielded Streicher against political controversies and enemies (Bytwerk, 2001, 32–33)), Himmler, Ley, Amann, and other Nazi leaders, and describes how extensive Gestapo resources were put at its disposal (Bytwerk, 2001, 59–60). As such, it was one of the key Nazi programmes to stigmatise and aid in the destruction of the Jews.

Dehumanising antisemitism was a staple of *Der Stürmer.* Characteristic of often luridly pornographic descriptions of Jewish sexual violence was the account of the 'devilish power' of Louis Schloss, a Jewish man who had been accused of being 'human swine' who 'raped [his victims] like an animal and displayed ape-like genealogical traits (Bytwerk, 2001, 150–1). Such mixed-race relationships contaminated Aryan women with ‘the transfused poison of foreign blood’ (Bytwerk, 2001, 158). Letters to the newspaper – which, at the height of its popularity, were claimed to receive hundreds a day – also engaged in dehumanisation. In one, a student wrote in that ‘there is no one I hate or despise more than this devilish Hebrew trash … World Jewry is the Devil in human form. Rip the mask of falsehood from their ugly faces’, clearly showing characteristic emphasis on monstrous, threatening-yet-lowly forces hiding behind a mask of seeming humanity (Bytwerk, 2001, 173). While these letters were certainly selected by *Der Stürmer’s* editors in line with its policies, and some may have been written by the newspaper’s staff themselves, they at the very least (as Koonz suggests) ‘contributed to a frenzy of denunciations’. Letters were used as pretexts by the Gestapo for investigation, and in some cases the newspaper published the names, home addresses, and phone numbers of Jews subject to accusations (Koonz, 2003, 230).

Der Stürmer also routinely employed disturbing and striking illustrations to stir up revulsion against Jews. Most front pages displayed a near-half-page illustration by the in-house cartoonist, Philippe Rupprecht (‘Fips’). Adopting a deliberately clear and tabloid style, Fips presented bold, shocking images of threatening Jewish figures. These took many forms, few of them human. Over the course of *Der Stürmer’s* print run, Jews were presented as squat and idle frogs ensnaring those who approached them (*Der Stürmer*, 1933), a bloated spider squatting in a web surrounded by desiccated corpses (labelled 'the sucked dry') (*Der Stürmer*, 1930), vampiric exsanguinators (*Der Stürmer*, 1934a), a worm that 'creeps up on what he wants' (*Der Stürmer*, 1934b) or emerging from rotting fruit (captioned 'where something is rotten, the Jew is the cause') (*Der Stürmer*, 1931), a whole range of poisonous serpents (*Der Stürmer*, 1935; *Der Stürmer*, 1944a), a drooling bat-like monster (*Der Stürmer,* 1937), a giant hairy maggot (*Der Stürmer*, 1944b), a dragon-like creature (*Der Stürmer*, 1942), and 'livestock' (*Der Stürmer,* 1930s). Except for these last two, it is possible to identify a clear pattern. The images chosen were disgusting, contaminating, strength-draining, and ugly, capable of posing an existential threat but *not* contesting Aryan superiority. These monsters were typically depicted with grotesque, stereotypically 'Jewish' features – long-nosed, fat, unshaven, with leering faces – to evoke an unsettling mixture of human and subhuman features. Photography was used to support this. Koonz highlights a 1933 article entitled 'Animals, look at yourselves!' which included retouched and edited photos of Jewish critics of Nazi policy, and notes how the piece stressed its subjects' 'exaggerated physiognomy' in order to expound a link 'between inner depravity and outward appearance' (Koonz, 2003, 232). Much of this was reinforced by the way these 'Jewish' creatures were depicted – either as threats, astride the world, on the march, or crowing over defeated or parasitised Aryan bodies, or as beasts about to be destroyed, dragons about to be slain, or fruit being cut open to reveal the worm. In one early prefiguring of Nazi killing methods, rats are exterminated by pumping a 'disinfectant' poison gas into their nest; once the 'vermin' are driven out, the caption suggests, the tree of Germany will be green again (*Der Stürmer*, 1927). Genocidal norm entrepreneurs did not simply depict their targets as non-human animals, but painted them as revolting and horrifying creatures, encouraging readers to purge or destroy them.

Was this material widely read – and if so, how was it regarded? While *Der Stürmer* initially had limited reach in the mid-1920s, it rapidly increased its readership over the course of the late 1920s and 1930s, from a 14,000 weekly sales circulation in 1927 to nearly 500,000 by 1935, to around 700,000 by the end of the decade (Bytwerk, 2001, 56–7). It sharply declined to two hundred thousand in the 1940s, a fact that Bytwerk ascribes to paper shortages and fewer Jews in public life – *Der Stürmer's* stock in trade – due to the Holocaust (Bytwerk, 2001, 63).

This seemingly suggests that *Der Stürmer* was a niche publication, with limited influence – 700,000 weekly copies was less than 1% of the German population in 1939. In addition, its shocking approach often lost it support. While it was never directly deprecated by Hitler, Koonz notes that it did 'epitomise … the uncouth style [and] disreputable origins … from which [he] distanced himself as he sought approval from well-educated Germans and foreign powers' (Koonz, 2003, 228), showing how its tactics limited its audience. Raw circulation figures, however, under-state its reach. Multiple readers might read a single copy. SA members and local Nazi groups erected large-scale display-cases in public spaces to increase the newspaper's reach, spurred on by competitions for the best display (Koonz, 2005, 299). In the Hartberg district of

Austria (a mid-level municipality of 370 square miles), fifty new displays were erected within a few weeks of the *Anschluss*, showing how quickly this kind of material could be disseminated, how much priority was placed on this dissemination, how culturally pervasive it was, and how engaged people became with it (Bytwerk, 2001, 163). The prominence of large, lurid cartoons on the front pages also worked well with this strategy. Additionally, there is also the question of *who* was reading it – as Koonz notes, readership was strongly encouraged by elites in the German Labour Front and SS, and 15% of each print run was disseminated free of charge to official causes and organisations. As such, even if it did not reach all levels of German society, it was read by *génocidaires*, and had a broader reach than might be expected.

Der Stürmer was not Streicher's only product. *Stürmerverlag* – his publishing house – distributed a range of other dehumanising media, including children's books by Ernst Hiemer, the editor of *Der Stürmer* and Streicher's long-time ally and defender. In 1938, Hiemer published *Der Giftpilz* ('*The Poisonous Mushroom*') (Hiemer, 1938), which aimed to teach children about the 'Jewish threat' in a simple, easy-to-understand way. Amidst familiar situations from its audience's everyday life, it drew upon a familiar repertoire of antisemitic imagery – Jews were the eponymous 'mushroom … the most dangerous in existence [leading] to the most dreadful calamity … misery and distress, illness and death'. Other stories described the 'repugnant, sweetish smell' of Jews, their 'revolting crimes', referred to them as 'Devils' and 'an evil plague', and warned of their status as a 'murderer of the peoples and polluter of the races'. This metaphorical imagery was supplemented by literal imagery – illustrations by Fips were included throughout, depicting a variety of caricatured and leering Jewish men. Throughout, Jews were referred to with the familiar language of veiled, dehumanised, toxic threat.

Der Giftpilz went to great lengths to depict Jews as seemingly innocuous, noting how 'just as it is often hard to tell a [poisonous] toadstool from an edible mushroom, so too is it often very hard to recognise the Jew as a swindler and criminal', and how 'they came from the East, dirty lousy' – despite 'dress[ing] very well, [they were] once a Jew always a Jew'. There is a seeming contradiction here between the notion on the one hand that Jews were hiding, and that 'millions of non-Jews do not yet know the Jews', and on the other the message that Jews were clearly physically distinct from non-Jews with 'louse-infested beards … filthy protruding ears … supposed to be men', where protagonists 'could tell immediately that he was a Jew'. Nonetheless, this underlines a distinctive element of motivational dehumanisation – that the enemy is at once a near invisible and threatening infiltrating force, and a weak and easily identifiable foreign element that can be readily dispatched once recognised.

Hiemer's later work would refine this theme. *Der Pudelmopsdackelpinscher* ('*The Poodle-Pug-Dachshund-Pinscher'*, 1940), for example, was ostensibly a collection of fables about the natural world, aimed at young readers, complete with antisemitic and often eliminationist 'morals'. The stories concerned 'drones, cuckoos, hyenas, chameleons, locusts, bedbugs, starlings, mongrel dogs, poisonous snakes, tapeworms, and bacteria' (Hiemer, 1938, 96), with each story including a short coda explicitly mapping animal interactions in the natural world to Jewish/non-Jewish relations, with subtitles such as 'the idlers', 'the bloodsuckers', and 'the poisoners of the people'. Each followed a fairly simple plot: a curious young person or naïve adult suggests that the animal is harmless, innocuous, or part of the natural order ('see how tired and sad the cute snake looks. Maybe it is sick! We have to help it!'), only to be proven wrong as the animal displays its venomous, corrupting, or infectious nature ('when the snake notices the mouse, it is suddenly transformed … the eyes, formerly so dull, become bright … the poison enters the blood of the startled animal') and is finally overthrown, extirpated, or destroyed ('one must make their offspring harmless. One must hunt them down without pity and exterminate them in all the nations of the world. If we do not kill the poisonous snakes, they will kill us'). The second part of each chapter, too, draws on familiar themes – Jews are explicitly likened to fecund bacteria and 'infectious diseases', that 'bring plague and decline to the peoples they infect … by poisoning the blood', and must be 'fully [got] rid of' to avert the 'danger of falling victim once again to the Jewish plague'. Antisemitism was repeatedly naturalised, linked to the course of youthful discovery, and given an urgency in the supposed life-or-death struggle against predators.

Other material took similar approaches. *Trust No Fox in the Green Meadow and No Jew on his Oath* – a picture book aimed at younger children –

juxtaposed illustrations of Jewish men with leering foxes (USHMM, 1936a), filthy, dishevelled Jewish travellers (USHMM, 1936b), and terrifying goat-like devils with stereotyped Jewish features and Jewish figures clutching onto them like lice (USHMM, 1936c). Elvira Bauer, the author, described Jews as 'pests', with hostile forces and 'Satanic blood' 'under the skin of every Jew' (and thus innately hostile – 'once a Jew, always a Jew!'). They allegedly sold filthy meat and served as poisoners; believed that Gentiles were subhuman, treating them 'worse than many a beast' and 'like a dog' and showed a 'disgusting picture … so dirty and wild' (Bauer, 1936). Again, dehumanising antisemitism was expressed through picture book imagery.

Fritz Fink's *The Jewish Question in Education* (Fink, 1937), published by *Stürmerverlag*, exhorted teachers to teach similar material on 'the racial and Jewish question' as part of the core curriculum. Fink suggested that unindoctrinated children naturally possessed 'uncorrupted racial senses, healthy racial instinct [and] a dislike and disgust' for Jews, that was eroded by corrosive Jewish-influenced teachings of 'pity and brotherly love'. To counter these ideas, he employed examples from the natural world, including invading insects trying to infiltrate the mound of an industrious termite hive, using their innocuous appearance to murder the queen and destroy the hive – and segues from this to a similar discussion of how 'swarms [of Jews] came from the East'.

Similarly, Ernst Dobers – a leading Nazi educationalist and professor of racial science – published *The Jewish Question: Subject Matter and Treatment in* *the School* in 1936, with a third edition coming out in 1939 (not published by *Der Stürmer,* but covering extremely similar content). While this focused on economic and historical considerations, Dobers still laced his work with motivational dehumanisation. He warned of Jews as a 'parasite and destroyer' (Wegner, 2014, 87), and against a 'total capitulation before the parasitism of foreign bloodlines' (Wegner, 2014, 97) and discussed what Wegner summarises as 'a particularly grave threat to the German body politic since [migration of Jews from Eastern Europe] mixed mongoloid and east-Baltic bloodlines' (Wegner, 2014, 93).

These represented clear attempts to include dehumanising content amidst educational material, so that students would learn both. How effective were they?

If nothing else, Fink and Dobers' efforts were extremely well-placed to have an impact. The former saw wide circulation and heavy promotion in *Der Stürmer,* including a Braille edition to increase its impact (Bytwerk, 2001, 60), while the multiple editions of Dobers' work suggest that it was successful enough to warrant several updated reprints; both were also well-timed to take advantage of a significant restructuring of Nazi textbooks and curricula in 1937. The Nazi education system was particularly effective in instilling extreme anti-Jewish ideas during this period. Wegner cites American military surveys indicating that 'those between the ages of fifteen and nineteen … those pupils who once attended elementary schools in the Third Reich, reflected more antisemitic attitudes than any of the other age groups' (Wegner, 2014, 420); indeed, such effects are still statistically visible (Voigtlander and Voth, 2015, 7931–7936). Fink and Dober's work may only have formed a part of these attitudes, but they were popular and well-placed to have an impact.

Children's books also found a considerable audience. *Trust No Fox*, for example, went through seven editions and boasted a circulation of 100,000 (National Holocaust Centre, 2015). Two contemporary observers noted that *Trust No Fox* came highly recommended officially, and was disseminated alongside the educational primer *Rhineland Children* as one of 'the first book[s] that the child out of kindergarten sees' (Mann, 2014, 56–7). Hiemer's work was somewhat less popular, but still saw a fairly considerable circulation. *The Poisonous Mushroom,* for example, ran to four re-prints and 40,000 copies sold, while *The Poodle-Pug-Daschund-Pinscher* saw limited printing due to paper shortages (Bytwerk, 2001, 63). While both were critically received as vulgar and excessive (Hiemer, 1938), Bytwerk notes how they were 'widely used by Jew-baiting teachers in the classroom' (Bytwerk, 2001, 63). Despite being targeted at children who would only grow to military age by the end of the war, children could still exert significant impacts on parents' behaviour and beliefs, showing that such propaganda could still have an impact on the politics of adults (Bytwerk, 2001, 173).

Thus, while *Der Stürmer*, its publishing work, and similar projects may have had limited reach, they did have a considerable impact. *Der Stürmer* reached more people than its circulation might suggest – especially extreme antisemites, who stoked their own fears of 'Jewish outrages' in its letter pages. While it is difficult to precisely gauge the success and reach of Nazi state-supported educational propaganda, it did encounter considerable demand and was effectively disseminated throughout potentially receptive audiences such as schoolchildren.

3.5.2 VISUAL MATERIAL – POSTERS AND CINEMA

As discussed above, visual media were particularly powerful in presenting dehumanisation. Rather than simply *describing* visceral horrors, they could directly *depict* them using lurid, disturbing imagery. Nazi media depicted Jews as disease, vermin, and other strength-sapping creatures – analysing this, we can further identify the key motifs of motivational dehumanisation and the ways these could be effective.

Public health campaigns – as with *Fighting Typhus* – used this extensively. One poster in Germany-occupied Poland depicted a Jewish man crawling with lice, with a bold red title exhorting local non-Jewish Poles to 'protect yourself from typhus, avoid the Jews' (USHMM, 1941a). Other posters suggested that Jews '*are* [my emphasis] lice; they cause typhus'. This showed a leering half-skeletal Jewish face with a louse – itself bearing weeping red sores – super-imposed atop it, clearly fitting many hallmarks of motivational dehumanisation, using bold imagery to invoke visceral disgust in its audience (USHMM, 1941b). This propaganda could be self-fulfilling – injunctions to isolate, stigmatise, and place Jews in ghettos with poor sanitation were likely to cause the spread of diseases like typhus, 'legitimising' the propaganda, justifying further 'defensive', 'purifying', or 'hygienic' violence against them.

This was not limited to Eastern Europe. One handbill in occupied France stated that 'tuberculosis, syphilis [and] cancer are curable … we must finish with the greatest of scourges: the Jew!' It depicted a heroic doctor peering into a microscope, to see an angry red mite-like creature with stereotypical Jewish features sinking its pincers into flesh (USHMM, 1942a). Other cartoons from the Nazi-puppeted Institute for the Study of Jewish Questions described immigrating, 'louse-ridden' Jews as 'the canker which corroded France' (USHMM, 1940a).

Blood-draining and anaemia were also widely depicted as a Jewish threat. Elsewhere, a 1938 cartoon by Josef Plank displayed an octopus (with the face of Winston Churchill and a Star of David above its head) strangling the globe and seemingly either smothering it with ink, or draining its blood (USHMM, 1938). This image was repeated on the front covers of the comic magazine *Lustige Blatter,* where a 1943 cover – titled 'the polyp' – showed a Jewish octopus with its tentacles snared around the Allied powers (*Lustige Blatter*, 1943), while another cover depicted a capitalist, using a hammer-and-sickle-labelled pump to extract blood from the world into a bucket with a Star of David on it *(Lustige Blatter*, 1944).

It is difficult to establish how much of an audience these had, and whether they were taken seriously – but the sheer scale and variety of media outlets employing this imagery is striking.

Nazi cinema propaganda could do much the same, especially given its ability to disseminate photorealistic animated imagery of vermin and pests. *The Eternal Jew* (USHMM, 1940b) – a 1940 propaganda film by Fritz Hippler, produced at Joseph Goebbels' instruction – aimed at stigmatising the Jewish population in Poland and Europe more broadly. It covered a wide range of antisemitic themes, including usury, economic exploitation, and brutal slaughter of animals, but one of its core messages was motivational dehumanisation. Jews were 'a race of parasites', 'the parasite nation of Judah', 'parasites on mankind from the very beginning', who, despite their apparent assimilation, 'forever remain foreign bodies in the organisms of their host people, regardless of appearances'. They were, despite their threatening nature, extremely weak, functioning by 'tricking the healthy instinct of the nation', rather than through outright strength. Because of this weakness, 'the politics of a parasite race must be carried on in secret', since 'the Jew is still a rootless parasite, even when in power … [his power] lasts only as long as his misled hosts are willing to carry him on their backs'. 'Wherever the body of a nation shows a wound', the narrator noted, 'they anchor themselves and feed on the decaying organism … endeavour[ing] to deepen and prolong all conditions of sickness.' As before, Nazi propaganda posited a vastly powerful (but at the same time very pitiful and weak once uncovered) threat capable of parasitising, subverting, and draining the vigour of an entire nation, but noted that they were helpless once recognised.

Another key theme across much of *The Eternal Jew* was its focus on poisoning, hygiene, and the threat of disease. While Germans had, the narrator suggested, formerly thought of Jews as just 'grotesque and comic … this time we recognise that there's a plague here, a plague that threatens the health of the Aryan peoples'. Along with discussions of the 'filthy and neglected state of Jewish homes', this showed a map of the spread of the Jewish diaspora throughout the world, in a manner highly visually reminiscent of contemporary maps of the spread of epidemic disease, or mould. It is very similar, for example, to the map of the spread of typhus in *Fighting Typhus*. This visceral imagery gave way to a discussion of the spread of rats, including images of a seething, swarming rats' nest, and accusations that both 'carry destruction to the land by destroying mankind's goods and nourishment and spreading diseases and plagues such as cholera, dysentery, leprosy, and typhoid fever'. The following discussion touched on many key themes of motivational dehumanisation, describing its subjects as not merely 'cunning and cruel', but also 'cowardly … represent[ing] the elements of sneakiness and subterranean destruction'.

In short, Jews were portrayed not merely as parasites, draining the strength of Germany and infesting it, but as an existential and visceral threat, capable of lethally infecting and overcoming it. The cowardliness and subterranean nature implied that it could be defeated if confronted directly, and the disease/vermin imagery urged its own set of violent, cleansing responses. Such imagery falls into the now familiar paradigm of a physically weak but existentially dangerous enemy that lay within a stronger but naïve, or easily taken advantage of, national audience, that sought to destroy them by means of a range of corrupting, inhuman practices, and that could be defended against only by exposing them and destroying them in their entirety.

The Eternal Jew had a wide audience, with multiple showings at 66 cinemas in Berlin alone (Taylor, 2009, 186), and state-mandated showings in the occupied Netherlands (Charman, 2005, 86), in schools (Reeves, 2004, 116) and, as mentioned above, for the army. According to SD reports, these showings found mixed results. Contemporary reports indicated some degree of audience fatigue. Reeves suggests that 'audience interest declined quickly [beyond] 'the politically active sections of the population [and] the mass cinema audience (the primary target of the propaganda) was deeply alienated by it' (2004, 116). One report, noted that some audience members said that 'we've seen *Jud Süss* [an earlier antisemitic film] and we've had enough of this Jewish filth', seeing *The Eternal Jew* as a 'strain on the nerves' and occasionally leaving 'in disgust in the middle of a performance' (Reeves, 2004, 117). At the same time, it also saw some success. Other audiences noted the film 'lived up to [its] high expectations [and was] more instructive, convincing, and impressive than many an anti-Jewish tract'. Particularly significantly, reference was made to the power and effectiveness of 'the way the maps and statistics catalogued the spread of Jewry (the comparison with the rats [was] mentioned as particularly impressive'), a fact also noted in *The Eternal Jew*'s review in *Unser Wille und Weg*, the monthly Nazi propagandist's journal (Charman, 2005, 88). Taken together, this suggests a mixed perspective of its effectiveness. It certainly succeeded in its message – encouraging its audience to regard the Jews with disgust and aversion, associating them with subhuman vermin – but so perhaps too much so, with mass audiences finding it an unpleasant film to watch. Among particularly ardent Nazis, however, its clear dehumanising message enjoyed a more enthusiastic reception.

It also served as a template for other propaganda. Jowett and O'Donnell argue that its 'indoctrinating commentary' did contribute towards making the ghettoisation and later extermination of Jews, which began shortly after, more feasible (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2011, 246). Musolff notes how it functioned as a 'perfect blueprint for genocide propaganda … its images reappear[ing] in countless posters and pamphlets', shown to Wehrmacht and police units involved in extermination, and, as noted above, in the journals of those involved (Musolff, 2010, 57). Thus, even if it was *too* effective in inducing disgust in its audience, it had a wide reach, and was effective in setting an eliminationist antisemitic agenda.

Taken together, there is clear evidence of a distinctive tradition of motivational dehumanisation in Nazi visual propaganda, with a distinctive set of pest, vermin, and plague motifs, and implicit or explicit eliminationist 'solutions'. Its small direct impact, and sometimes excessive audience-alienating approach limited its effectiveness, but, broadly, it seems to have had a large social effect. Raw circulation figures likely understate the spread of its message, with public displays, and state distribution leading to considerably greater dispersal. In cases where these institutions were military organisations, these audiences would be those who went on to actually enact the mass violence of the Holocaust, and, as seen in the last section, often repeated the arguments this propaganda made. This suggests that genocidal propaganda did not necessarily need to appeal to, or be consumed by, the majority of the population. If mass culture was deliberately channelled towards the groups that were particularly responsible for mass killing, then it could be effective regardless of its wider audience. Finally, the observations by writers like Musolff, Jowett, and O'Donnell that dehumanising media provided a 'pattern' for other instances of dehumanisation in people's everyday lives, that permeated everyday speech and discourse beyond its direct audiences – while very difficult to quantify – illustrate another way that this media could affect society more extensively.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Based on this survey of archival material, it seems clear that motivational dehumanisation was widespread and widely consumed before and during the Holocaust. Many German media outlets, political entities, and military leaders put significant effort into portraying Jews as disgusting non-human entities that posed some threat to the German 'body politic' – typically as vermin, disease, or strength-sapping entities that, despite their individual weakness, used their infiltrating nature to undermine Germany. This propaganda typically suggested that Germans (as well as non-Jews more broadly) needed to be ‘awakened’ to the threat Jews they posed, at which point a cleansing/pest-clearing operation could easily be undertaken.

This is not an entirely new observation. What this study *does* demonstrate, however, is that motivational dehumanisation was pervasive across a wide range of social strata, and across a wide time period. Genocidal ‘ideological entrepreneurs’ (like Bölsche and, later, Hitler and Goebbels) established the metaphors and language of motivational dehumanisation. In turn, high- and mid-ranking military figures and members of bureaucracies employed these images, repeating them in training materials for common soldiers, who often used similar imagery themselves in diaries and letters describing genocide. All of this took place within a cultural and media environment that – while not always finding an enthusiastic audience – repeated and rebroadcast these ideas.

What does this mean for the ‘pervasiveness’ of motivational dehumanising ideas and worldviews? The fact that it was so common in popular discourse – especially at moments or contexts which were politically salient, disseminated to large audiences, or displayed in a range of workplace, public, or domestic settings – meant that the message was arguably persuasive throughout society. It would have been very difficult to avoid some form of dehumanising; message; even if they were not internalised and subscribed to, they would still form part of the culturally legible and familiar ‘reservoir’ of discourse and ideology. This did not automatically translate into internalisation (as the existence of bystanders and resisters demonstrates), but personal accounts suggest that many *did* internalise it, including many who were well positioned to translate this into genocidal behaviour, such as camp doctors, military commanders and officers, officials, and those responsible for designing training or educational curricula.

Thus, motivational dehumanisation was a distinctive phenomenon, which was widespread throughout German society, and was well-placed to have a significant impact.

4. RWANDA 1991–1994

4.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The Rwandan genocide was the systematic mass murder of between 500,000 and 1 million Tutsi between April and July 1994. Following the death – likely assassination – of the president Juvenal Habyarimana, military and local leaders urged Hutu to take up arms against their Tutsi neighbours, who they saw as an alien, threatening force, loyal only to the invading RPF (the Tutsi rebel group that had been skirmishing with government forces in the north of the country). Despite some political/national defence characterisations of the conflict, and significant violence against moderate Hutu and members of the Twa ethnic group, the genocide was overwhelmingly ethnic and anti-Tutsi in its targeting, involving violence against Tutsi communities as a whole, rather than just against military units. As such, this thesis will focus on anti-Tutsi dehumanisation, which portrayed them as the main 'enemies' of the state. The violence was carried out by a mixture of paramilitary groups such as the *Interahamwe* militias, members of the army and Presidential Guard, and 'civilian defence networks' mobilised by local civilian authorities (burgomasters) (Lemarchand, 2018).

Scholarship on the Rwandan genocide offers a wide range of explanations for such a striking intensity and level of violence in such a short period of time. Many scholars, journalists, and observers have noted the intensive use of dehumanising images in the run-up to and during the genocide.

Des Forges, in her history of the genocide for Human Rights Watch, notes how ‘attacks, virulent propaganda, and persistent political maneuvering’ (Des Forges, 1999, 4) allowed the Habyarimana government to exacerbate internal ethnic divisions. With genocidal massacres – largely of Hutu – in neighbouring Burundi, and RPF advances in 1993, ‘Hutu power’ ideology became even more prominent. Following the assassination, she describes how a flexible network of military and local political actors used a wide range of tools, including radio, military speeches, and other vectors of dehumanisation (Des Forges, 1999, 329–384), to coordinate mass killing.

A wide range of authors (using a range of documents and arguments) suggest that emotion, ideology, and (often dehumanising) discourses played a major role in shaping genocidal violence. An edited volume by Thompson (2007) provides a wide range of detail about how media sources disseminated a particularly effective genocidal message, as does Chrétien’s (1995) study shortly after the genocide. Kaufman (2006) outlines a theory of ‘symbolic politics’ where discourses and group mythologies of ethnic difference, rather than rational choice, explains the violence in Rwanda.

Other writers, by contrast, have stressed other explanations. Fujii’s detailed interviews of perpetrators lead her to conclude that neither ethnic fear nor ethnic hatred accounted for genocidal violence at a ‘micro’ level. Rather, self-sustaining and escalating local group dynamics produced genocidal *Interahamwe* identities and participation in violence; ‘killing produced groups and groups produced killings' (Fujii, 2011, 186). Straus' detailed study of perpetrator motivations found that pre-existing individual antipathies, group pressures, and the violence of the war, played a more significant role than genocidal ideologies (Straus, 2006, 150), although in his later work developed the role of ideology in genocide. He sums up his explanation for the genocide as being a complex mixture of 'war, race, and power' (173–4). My approach focuses on the discursive and emotional elements of genocidal mobilisation in the country – for which I find significant evidence. Broadly, I follow the argument of recent writers like McDoom (2012) and Ross (2013) in arguing that the line between emotional and 'rationalist' approaches in Rwanda is difficult to unpick, and that they were mutually constituting. Dehumanisation provided a means by which highly emotional and ideological reasons for genocide could combine with and inform strategic and material decision-making about whether, and more importantly what forms of, violence was necessary.

4.2 IDEOLOGICAL PRECURSORS TO GENOCIDE

How far did dehumanisation in the Rwandan genocide draw upon an extensive and pre-existent history of dehumanising ideas? If dehumanisation (and indeed racist attitudes of 'ethnic threat') were absent in the decades before the 1994 genocide, then this would direct our attention to the role of later genocidal ideological entrepreneurs, suggesting that they could effectively develop these political images whole-cloth. If dehumanisation was common, however, this would suggest that genocidal elites merely needed to muster pre-existent and commonly-held language and imagery.

Despite clear ethnic divisions in Rwanda in the colonial and immediately postcolonial period, many observers suggest that violent anti-Tutsi sentiment diminished between the 1960s and 1990s. Li's description of a 'near-absence of anti-Tutsi propaganda or policy in Rwanda from the early 1970s to the 1990s' (Li, 2007, 93) perhaps overstates the case – Article 19 observed that 'by the early 1970s, the Tutsi were so effectively excluded from political influence that politics began to divide along regional instead of ethnic lines', for example. But while noting extensive marginalisation, the organisation suggested that 'government sponsored political violence against Tutsi largely abated in the absence of border incursions' (Kirschke, 1996, 5–6). In addition, many key figures in the genocide only rose to prominence advocating genocidal rhetoric during the 1990s. Many journalists, such as Hassan Ngeze – later of the pro-genocide magazine *Kangura* – previously worked for the more moderate *Kanguka* (Trial International, 2016). Noel Hitimana, an RTLM presenter, previously worked at Radio Rwanda, where Li notes 'professionals of both ethnicities who spoke highly of him as a kind man with no particular hatred or animosities for anyone before the period of multipartyism' (Li, 2007, 102). Lemarchand finds little 'overt, officially sanctioned racism' in 1950s Hutu discourse – 'no *Mein Kampf* to provide ideological direction to the revolution, no *Führer* to instil hatred in the minds of the masses', and, importantly, 'no Final Solution to deal with Tutsi threats' (Lemarchand, 2005, 53–4). While 'antifeudal' and 'anti-monarchist propaganda' had contained racism, Lemarchand identifies the 1993 assassination of Melchior Ndadaye in Burundi as being the catalyst for "cumulative radicalization' best illustrated by the rise of Hutu Power'. From this, I conclude that the patterns of intense motivational dehumanisation seen in the 1994 genocide were a comparatively new development, and did not have a clear origin in ethnic-political violence in the 1970s and 1980s (Alozie, 2007, 219; Dottridge, 2007, 244).

One key element of anti-Tutsi propaganda – discussed in more detail later – would be the slur, pervasive throughout media and speech, that they were '*inyenzi*', or cockroaches. The use of this term – to refer to Tutsi, or Tutsi militant groups – dated back long before the genocide. As early as the 1960s, Benesch notes that "*Inyenzi*,' was a term coined by some of Rwanda's governing Hutu to refer to rebel fighters of Rwanda's minority ethnic group, the Tutsi' (Benesch, 2004, 62–69). Thus, '*Inyenzi*' was a long-standing term of abuse, albeit one set aside during the 1970s and 80s, and complicated by reports that the term may have been a self-deprecating term of pride for Tutsi militias in the 1960s (Higiro, 2007,84). Des Forges suggests that the term '*Inyenzi*' (cockroach) had been largely dormant in Rwandan political discourse between the 1960s and 1990, when 'it was revived to refer to members of the RPF' (Des Forges, 1999, 57), and by extension Tutsi more broadly. While '*inyenzi*' was a straightforward term of abuse in the 1990s, it received a new lease of life in this period, being reworked and revived despite not having a lengthy period of currency.

Other examples of dehumanising metaphors and imagery did not need a long history of usage in that sense, because they could be readily adapted from people’s everyday experience. Lethal snakebites, for example, were common in Eastern sub-Saharan Africa (Kasturiatne, 2008, 1597–1599), meaning that calling someone 'a poisonous snake' was a readily comprehensible metaphor, imputing a distinct threat and set of norms to deal with it Although snake imagery is a widespread and negative discourse around the world, it is a particularly immediate concern for many Rwandans. Tirrell, for example, notes how ‘few cultures like snakes, but in Rwanda, boys are proud when they are trusted to cut the heads off snakes’ (Tirrell, 2012, 176). Thus, a long-standing history of use was not necessary for the slur to have weight – if Hutu propagandists could convincingly label Tutsi using animal imagery, then they could transpose negative associations from, and violent solutions to these animals, to Tutsi.

Based on this, while there was *not* an uncomplicated or distinctive set of long-standing dehumanising discourses for Hutu propagandists to use, it would not be entirely necessary. Slurs and images could be revived, or repurposed from elsewhere, to incite and encourage genocidal violence. As this chapter shows, this is exactly what happened.

4.3 LEADERS AND STATE ELITES

Having established a discursive context for the Rwandan genocide – an environment in which motivational dehumanisation was not extensively present, but where it could be easily evoked – I now examine the role of leaders and state elites in disseminating this kind of discourse.

First, we should look at the specific government that ruled over the mass killing of Tutsi. The Rwandan genocide began on 7 April 1994, the day after the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana. While Habyarimana was replaced as President by Théodore Sindikubwabo, who was involved in organising the killings, Melvern suggests that the organisation of the genocide was carried out by a group of high-ranking 'extremists in the army' who had 'managed to legitimise their racist beliefs' rather than a single Hitler-like figure, and that 'a large part of the planning of the genocide was … carried out in military offices' (Melvern, 2006, 23).

The language employed by these military leaders was steeped in the language of motivational dehumanisation. This is particularly clear in the evidence presented in the ICTR case Prosecutor v. Théoneste Bagosora, Gratien Kabiligi, Aloys Ntabakuze, and Anatole Nsengiyumva (a group of high-ranking military commanders), in which a wide variety of perpetrators and witnesses noted the repeated use of '*inyenzi*' as a term of abuse for Tutsi, both before and during the killing processes. It was used not merely as a slur, but to specifically invoke fears of vermin and the need to root out an infiltrating force.

In April 1994 Bagosora, for example, warned soldiers under his command not to let 'infiltrators' cross their picket at Nyamirambo, and to be vigilant against *inyenzi* (ICTR, 2008, 348). These same soldiers were later involved with repeated massacres at the location they were guarding. On another occasion, he harshly criticised the people of Gisenyi prefecture ‘for hiding “*Inyenzi*” and assisting them to cross the border to Zaire’, citing the story of the ‘*inyenzi’* Fred Rwigema, who had fled Rwanda as a child in 1959 but had returned as an adult leading a Tutsi militia. There are clear parallels to similar genocidal imagery examined later, where anti-Tutsi speakers argued in favour of specifically targeting pregnant women and children, to destroy subsequent generations of ‘threats’. Other defendants also heavily used 'infiltration' imagery to justify violence. Kabiligi repeatedly called civilians ‘*inyenzi*’ before killing them, for example (ICTR, 2008, 380), including one case in June 1994 in Musambira, where he admonished troops under his command – fresh from, in their own words, killing ‘*inyenzi*’ – to ‘be vigilant [and] make sure that no [*inyenzi*] infiltrate your ranks’ (ICTR, 2008, 446). In April 1994, Ntabakuze instructed his troops to kill a group of 600 ‘*inyenzi*’ refugees (ICTR, 2008, 356), having repeatedly referred to Tutsi and moderate Hutu opposition as ‘*inyenzi*’ who should be destroyed to avoid their supposed infiltration and corrosive effect on Hutu military discipline (ICTR, 2008, 55). Nsengiyumva, likewise, congratulated his troops on rooting out and killing *inyenzi* (ICTR, 2008, 424), asserting that they should be ‘exterminated’ (ICTR, 2008, 306), and – the day after Habyarimana’s death – that he held a list of specific ‘*Inyenzi*’ who should be killed quickly and defensively ‘because if you lose time, they are going to exterminate us in the same way as they killed the President’.

While 'inyenzi' was commonly 'just' a slur, it was typically used to evoke fears of infiltration and intimate threat within communities and military units strongly suggests that its association with cockroaches was more than coincidental. The close proximity between extreme forms of violence (rooting out targets who had insinuated themselves in the national community), and dehumanising discourse whose 'internal logic' called for those same forms of violence, suggests a connection between the two.

'*Inyenzi*' was not the only slur used against Tutsi that ICTR witnesses attested to high-mid-ranking Rwandan officials using; snake imagery was also a common way to stigmatise Tutsi and encourage violence against them.

In April 1994, for example, Sylvestre Gacumbitsi, the mayor of Rusumo, ordered local Interahamwe members to kill Tutsi refugees using the metaphor of 'striking at a snake' (ICTR, 2004, 30) – calling 'for the tall grass to be cleared so that any snakes found therein [might] be caught' (ICTR, 2004, 52), and that they should 'not save a single snake' (ICTR, 2004, 98). Immediately after such exhortations, mass killing of Tutsi by *Interahamwe* members followed, as well as rapes of Tutsi women (ICTR, 2004, 98). By casting Tutsi as a lurking, venomous danger, it evoked a threat that the audience was already familiar with and that they could safeguard themselves against by destroying in its totality.

Similarly, Tharcisse Muvunyi, the interim commander at the Officers' Training Camp in Butare Prefecture, at speeches in April 1994 in Gikonko and May 1994 in Gikore (ICTY, 2006, 127), enjoined a large number of civilian men and military officers to send away their Tutsi wives, to stop them from poisoning them – they were ‘serpents’ to be killed, and their eggs should be crushed (ICTR, 2006, 54). One of Muvunyi’s subordinates, a soldier named Irénée Hitayezu, was quoted by the ICTR prosecution as claiming that Tutsi ‘are like snakes. I mean, we’ve been killing them for quite some time, but we have not yet managed to finish them off. It’s just like serpents, you know, you can kill snakes, kill them, but they will still keep popping up because they are always being born’ (ICTR, 2012, 200). This idea of Tutsi as a sinister force that was difficult to stamp out without destroying all of them – including their young, and processes of reproduction – was common throughout discourses of motivational dehumanisation in Rwanda, and echoes Bagosora’s remarks about Rwigema, above.

Aloys Simba, a military veteran turned political leader in Gikongoro and Butare prefectures, used similar themes both before and during the genocide. In April 1994, in a rally in Rukondo Commune, Simba exhorted his followers to ‘search for the snakes in the bushes and hit them on the head … whoever remains in Rwanda will see how the elephants fight’ (ICTR, 2005, 54–6). This clearly shows the importance of the type of animal to motivational dehumanisation; Simba likens Hutu fighters to elephants, presumably alluding to their strength and nobility, while portraying the enemy as a lurking, harmful and infiltrating force that needed to be smashed.

Elie Ndayambaje, the burgomaster of Muganza commune, and Emmanuel Nteziryayo, the Director of Communal Police Matters and later prefect of Butare, extended this metaphor of destroying 'snakes and their eggs' out into a wide range of other dehumanising concepts. At Ndayambaje's swearing-in ceremony on 18 June 1994, the two delivered several speeches in which they referred to 'sweep[ing] the dirt, continu[ing] with work, and kill[ing] those hiding Tutsis', as well as 'separating the wheat from the chaff', and ordered their followers to 'destroy [Tutsi] houses, rats, and lice' (ICTY, 2015, 810). In this, the focus on cleansing and purifying their community of perceived ethnic contaminants is clearly on display.

Andre Sibomana, burgomaster of Mbazi – who had previously coordinated the *defence* of Tutsi against genocidal violence – employed this terminology against Tutsi following the 20 April meeting of burgomasters in Butare province. In a public speech the day after, Sibomana related that 'in killing a snake curled around a gourd, you break the gourd if you must to kill him' (Des Forges, 1999, 358). Des Forges notes the specific type of gourd Sibomana used in this image was a highly important household fixture, meaning that the sacrifice Sibomana called for was more significant (Des Forges, 1999, 703). Just days later, Mbazi saw large-scale massacres of Tutsi in stadiums. These arguments portrayed the Tutsi as an intimate threat – curled around and entangled with the home – that was so dangerous and so difficult to destroy that it necessitated extreme violence and 'collateral damage' to root out. Indeed, one Hutu farmer interviewed later agreed to this interpretation, noting that he took it to mean ‘if there were Hutus who hid Tutsis, they had to be killed along with the Tutsis’ (Lyons and Straus, 2006, 48).

Similarly, Léon Mugesera, in a speech to MRND party members in Kabaya in 1992, declared that ‘we ourselves will take care of massacring these gangs of thugs. You know, it says in the Gospel that the snake comes to bite you and, if you let it stay, you are the one who will perish’ (Kirschke, 1996, 5–6), further underlining the risks of insufficient vigilance and coexistence with the supposedly demonic Tutsi. Notably, there is no verse to this effect in the Gospels.

The degree to which many Hutu leaders deployed these themes suggests that they not an incidental element of genocidal political discourse, but a key component of it. Even if not all political speech can be surveyed this way, the consistency across a variety of sources (Hutu and Tutsi), contexts (private audiences to mass speeches to specific killing orders), and times (before and during the genocide) suggests this was a pervasive and core part of the *génocidaires’* ideological discourse. Throughout all this imagery of domesticity ruined by vermin – of infiltrating cockroaches, of snakes worming their way in to nest in Hutu communities – was a strong theme of needing to defend against a supposed threat, that 'justified' exterminatory violence (that, as with similar formulations during the Holocaust, needed to be total lest the threat return worse in future). This, in turn, patterned the specific violence to be used against Tutsi. If they were 'cockroaches', then they needed to be responded to with vigilance and destruction in the home; if snakes, sought out in the grass and crushed. One victim recalls that, in mid-April 1994, Mayor Gacumbitsi, of Rusumo commune, told soldiers to 'take your tools and get to work. You hit snakes on the head to kill them' (van Haperen, 2012, 97).

There is, therefore, a clear pattern of high- and mid-ranking Hutu leaders using motivational dehumanisation. While this sometimes seems to have been used as a generic slur, the way that metaphors and dehumanising framings were consistently used and elaborated on in a range of different circumstances, and reflected in the actions of *génocidaires*, suggests that motivational dehumanisation played a major role in both causing and shaping violence.

4.4 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION IN BUREAUCRACIES AND MILITARIES

So far, I have found significant evidence of motivational dehumanisation used to call for large-scale categorical violence against Tutsi. A wide range of Hutu leaders, in high-level military planning meetings, in public political speeches, and during the actual enactment of genocide, used such imagery. Was this imagery also used by 'ordinary *génocidaires*', lower in informal or formal hierarchies of violence? Did they internalise its messages?

In a collection of interviews by Totten and Ubaldo (2011), several survivors specifically reference dehumanising language being used by perpetrators. One interviewee in Butare recalls cockroach and snake imagery being used against her:

> *if you are called a snake, it's an animal that is very dangerous and people don't like to live near it … being called an inyenzi also bothered me because it's pointed out you are dangerous and you need to die … everyone hates them in Rwanda because they get in our cupboards, and you try to do everything to get rid of them. (46)*

Previously, the same interviewee described a popular claim among Hutu extremists that 'a snake can give birth to a snake, so any snake was bad, dangerous, no matter how young' (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 46) (similar to a *Kangura* article, discussed later). This clearly demonstrates dynamics of motivational dehumanisation – creatures that were both threatening and lowly/verminous, that posed a mortal danger, and that infested people's homes, reinforcing our impression of how dehumanisation worked and suggesting that its subtexts were clearly recognised. If the victims understood these meanings, it is likely that the killers did too.

Other survivors recount similar use of language, including during the act of killing. One account from Huye describes how a fleeing Tutsi boy was identified as a 'cockroach', and killed (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 36). Others in Mubuga recall how commonly Tutsi were identified and located by RTLM as 'cockroaches' (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 54, 65) – a term that survivors described as common (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 66, 68), and routinely employed as a direct precursor to acts of violence or killing. The link between cockroaches 'scurrying away' and fleeing victims is clear here. One interviewee in Kiblizi (a town in Butare Province) refers to violence invoking this kind of discourse occurring ‘about two times a month’ from 1990 up to the genocide (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 144–145, 156). That violence against cockroaches had to be total is also reflected in these accounts – one group of killers in Nyarusiza, early in the genocide, shouted that they should ‘make sure no cockroaches escape’ (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 83). Together, these accounts show a wide range of instances of motivational dehumanisation, used by ordinary perpetrators directly as part of ethnic violence. While many of Totten and Ubaldo’s examples come from Butare Province, some are from further afield, and the clear selection and interview methodology they outline, combined with the broad range of interviewee backgrounds, suggest they are clearly representative and a strong foundation for analysis. In short, they present a convincing case that many Hutu used dehumanising language against Tutsi, often during the actual commission of violence, and the forms this violence took often reflected the metaphors this language evoked. Furthermore, either directly (enacting violence at RTLM’s direction) or indirectly (by reworking proverbs about snakes giving birth to snakes), this also was spurred by elite and media imagery.

In some cases, snake imagery was used without explicit elaboration. Kamilmindi, for example, cites the language that *génocidaires* used to describe his 1–2 year-old daughter in Kigali – pointing at her and claiming 'that one is a snake. [We] have to kill her’ (Kamilmindi, 2007, 137). In Bitare on 22 April, Des Forges relates how *génocidaires* shouted to rounded-up Tutsi ‘you are snakes … we will exterminate you’ (Des Forges, 1999, 598). Nowrojee, in her work, finds that insults such as 'Tutsi snake' were often employed during rape by *génocidaires'* (Nowrojee, 2007, 367). Another survivor refers to dehumanisation in his school in Kibungo province – 'some children used to tell us that their parents told them not to speak to the snakes. We were the snakes and we were hated; even the teachers were against us' (Rwanda Survivors Fund, 2009). These examples do not unpack the reasons for the perpetrators to use this language in the same way previous examples have done – they could simply be examples of one-off or off-hand slurs without extensive symbolic meaning behind them – but together, they do show a clear association between motivational dehumanisation, violence, and hated.

Perpetrator testimonies are also useful, particularly in examining how far perpetrators had internalised these images and ideas, since they can speak more directly about their internal processes and motivations. We should be cautious about using these – many perpetrators (who at time of interview were incarcerated) – may have misrepresented or reinterpreted their role to make them seem less (or occasionally more) culpable. Even so, by assessing a range of accounts (with these risks of unreliability in mind), we can attempt to gain some insight into their reasons for participating.

One such collection of testimonies is Hatzfeld's *A Time for Machetes* – a 2000s collection of interviews with incarcerated perpetrators from Nyamata district. These interviews clearly displayed motivational dehumanisation:

> *'the Hutu always suspects that some plans are cooking deep in the Tutsi character, nourished in secret since the passing of the ancien régime. He sees a threat lurking in even the feeblest or kindest Tutsi. But it is suspicion, not hatred. The hatred came over us suddenly after our president's plane crashed. The intimidators shouted 'just look at these cockroaches – we told you so!' And we yelled 'right, let's go hunting!' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 207)*

Between vermin metaphors, the fear of a secret 'lurking' enemy behind a 'kind' or feeble' facade, and the threat of domination by a foreign power, this resonates closely with accounts seen so far. Perpetrators described how 'everyone was hired at the same level for a single job – to crush the cockroaches' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 12), or how they 'spoke extreme words against the Tutsi, calling them cockroaches and threatening them with an evil end' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 89). Others spelled out motivational dehumanisation, describing the nature of the Tutsi as a supposedly disgusting, infesting threat: 'we called them 'cockroaches', an insect that chews up clothing and nests in it, so you have to squash them hard to get rid of them. We didn't want any more Tutsis on the land' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 218). Fear of demographic/reproductive contamination was also present – one Hutu woman married to a Tutsi man recalls how 'neighbour women asked me how I could have let myself be impregnated by a cockroach' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 104).

Hatzfeld's interviewees also attest to legitimising dehumanisation. Tutsi were often described as livestock or game animals – chickens and cows (Hatzfeld, 2008, 19–20), goats (Hatzfeld, 2008, 30), and 'marsh game creatures' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 55) – making them easier objects of violence or 'hunting expeditions' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 10, passim)). One interviewee described how 'we no longer saw a human being when we turned up a Tutsi in the swamps. I mean a person like us, sharing similar thoughts and feelings' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 42). In other cases, Tutsi were dehumanised into individual parts, to avoid acknowledging the act of killing. In one testimony, the speaker describes 'strik[ing] without seeing who it was … I saw a gush of blood begin before my eyes … I sensed it came from my machete', thereby eliding the fact of killing by simply mentioning the strike, machete, and gush of blood without reference to the victim (Hatzfeld, 2008, 18).

Thus, while motivational dehumanisation remained common, legitimising dehumanisation increased during actual acts of violence. This makes sense in light of my approach: the former's invocation of the victims as a threatening force would be useful for mobilising violence against them, but the latter's reduction in moral restraints against targets of violence made it easier for killings to occur. Some of Hatzfeld's interviewees confirm this – while mentioning radios using 'exaggerated' and 'evil-minded' language of 'cockroaches [and] snakes … to get us all fired up' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 207), they specifically reference shifts in language once the violence began:

> *Before the killings, we usually called them cockroaches, but during, it was more suitable to call them snakes, because of their attitude, or zeros, or dogs, because in our country, we don't like dogs; in any case, they were less-than-nothings … for [some], the insults were invigorating, made the job easier. The perpetrators felt more comfortable insulting and hitting crawlers in rags rather than properly upright people. Because they seemed less like us in that position. (Hatzfeld, 2008, 124)*

While initially being encouraged to perceive Tutsi as dangerous, threatening animals, Hutu *génocidaires* moved to a discursive framing of victims as lowly and unclean animals, once the violence began. Snake imagery, rather than focusing on venomousness, here emphasises the victims' lowliness, making violence against them more acceptable by removing moral restrictions of violence against people 'like us'.

Hatzfeld's work – while a useful resource – deserves caution for its methodology and transcription/translation practices. While Hatzfeld does detail his procedures for independent verification of claims made by perpetrators, and the 'spin' they put on their recollections (Hatzfeld, 2008, 142–147), his broader editorial choices limit the credibility of his work as a source.

Fujii, for example, notes that 'Hatzfeld, the interlocutor, is absent when the killers speak', leading 'the killers' words [to] seem to spring from a spontaneous and ongoing monologue'. Particularly significant for this project, she questions whether 'it [was] Hatzfeld, for example, who first asked whether killing people was like killing animals, or did this analogy originate with the killers?' (Fujii, 2007, 155–156). Fujii's specific concern, that Hatzfeld aimed to paint perpetrators as 'cold blooded monsters [and] aberrant members of society who would never remind us of ourselves', is less relevant for this project, which has demonstrated how *non*-aberrant (if still morally reprehensible) dehumanisation is. Rather, as Fletcher notes, the issue is that he may have 'coached' his interviewees - the risk that Hatzfeld 'has made a significant contribution not only to the dissemination of the stories of the genocide, but to the dissemination of the *myth* of the genocide' (Fletcher, 2013, 74–5). Given that Hatzfeld retained a story he later found to be untrue on the grounds it conveyed 'a more essential truth' (Fletcher, 2013, 77) as to the character of the genocide (admittedly, while flagging this up in the text), his work may simply reinforce existing accounts of the genocide, rather than being an independent account of interviewees' comments. Fletcher also notes how Hatzfeld's interstitial comments and writing style leaders her to doubt that his translation offers an 'accurate representation of the killers' perspective' (Fletcher, 2013, 72). While Hatzfeld's collection of testimonies is an important insight into the motivations of *génocidaires*, it should be handled with caution. Even so, the degree to which Hatzfeld's perpetrator testimonies align closely with other sources – to a degree beyond what we might expect if he coached responses about animal metaphors more broadly – suggests that there do have some value.

Other perpetrator testimonies can also offer useful insights into the role of motivational dehumanisation and related phenomena, and reach similar conclusions.

Straus, for example, based on his perpetrator interviews, finds that 'a small core of local actors seized the initiative, consolidated control, and then mobilised adult Hutu men to destroy the "Tutsi enemy"', characterised as the entire Tutsi population. He does not, however, find strong evidence of a '"culture of hatred" toward Tutsis [or] a deep dehumanization of Tutsis', but rather ‘pressure from other Hutus, security fears, and opportunity’ (Straus, 2008, 96–7). While ‘hardliners undoubtedly used dehumanizing language both before and during the genocide, and some perpetrators I interviewed used dehumanizing language to describe Tutsis … the language of threat, danger, and war was far more prevalent than any subhuman metaphors’ (Straus, 2008, 158). This superficially conflicts with dehumanisation-centric accounts, but has a close similarity with them in its focus on threat and danger, something that I have found motivational dehumanisation to be concerned with.

One explanation for this discrepancy would be that dehumanising messages developed and simplified as they were disseminated. When these messages were circulated more widely through rumours and community mobilisation, it was a broader sense of fear and insecurity (along with participation by fellow Hutu) that resonated with the majority of Hutu. Indeed, Straus finds that ‘broadcasts contributed at least indirectly to the idea that Tutsis were dangerous and should be killed’ but were much more effective ‘on particular perpetrator populations, in particular local elites and the most aggressive killers’ (Straus, 2008, 231) – those who directed and instigated killings. The majority of Hutu perpetrators, however, were driven by 'face-to-face mobilisation' and 'a real situation of war and crisis'. These findings will align with our later observations on RTLM’s impact. Fujii, too – despite generally being sceptical of explanations rooted in ethnic hatreds and fear, which she sees as produced by rather than producing ethnic violence (Fujii, 2011, 102), as well as group dynamics – does note the presence of a core of Interahamwe perpetrators motivated by hatred (Fujii, 2011, 99–101). These, motivated by hate broadcasts and discourses, could have served as nuclei around which programmes of ethnic violence could emerge and develop.

To conclude, many accounts – from different sources, locations, and social backgrounds – attest to motivational dehumanisation being used by perpetrators, especially language portraying Tutsi as snakes, cockroaches, or other invasive creatures. These metaphors were often particularly well-suited to genocide. By claiming all Tutsi were snakes or cockroaches, they made violence against children and non-combatant women justifiable or even necessary, as if left alone they would grow into (or propagate) the next generation of inevitable and unchanging threats. As predicted in my theoretical discussion in previous chapters, contemporary testimonies record perpetrators as referring to victims as lowly crawling creatures, a deindividuated mass, or other creatures or entities not worthy of human moral consideration during the actual acts of killing, seemingly to make violence against them easier.

4.5 DEHUMANISATION IN MASS MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE

The Rwandan genocide was largely locally and rapidly organised, taking place in a rural country with low industrialisation and limited media access outside major centres like Kigali. What media networks were available, however, played a major role in promoting dehumanising imagery, both before and during the genocide. I will primarily examine *Kangura*, a pro-genocide and MRND-sponsored magazine, and *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (‘RTLM’), a radio station involved in the coordination and mobilisation of genocidal violence. I will assess how they employed motivational dehumanisation, against what targets, and using what tactics – as well as their reach and audience size.

4.5.1 KANGURA

Kangura was a bi-monthly newspaper whose main run was published between May 1990 and April 1994. Published by Hassan Ngeze, a former journalist at the more Tutsi-sympathetic/anti-ethnic thinking *Kanguka*, it declared itself in its slogan to be 'the voice which seeks to awaken and defend the "majority people"' (Kirschke, 1996, 35). Despite initial state harassment, *Kangura* quickly became a favoured tool of Hutu elites, receiving legal immunity, free printing, and state-supported distribution in return for promoting a violent anti-Tutsi message. *Kangura* often even pre-empted the state's line, calling for violent 'self-defence' of the Hutu majority while the state worked to catch up (Kirschke, 1996, 36). Thus, Ngeze and the other writers were arguably among the ideological elites and norm entrepreneurs who shaped and pioneered genocidal policy.

Amidst extensive violent anti-Tutsi material, *Kangura* employed a wide range of dehumanising imagery, focusing heavily on cockroach imagery. In the fortieth issue of *Kangura*, for example, published in February 1993, the term was used 91 times (compared to 130 uses of the word 'Tutsi', and 17 uses of 'RPF'). The routinisation of vermin imagery was bolstered by specific articles, arguments, and illustrations that drew on this imagery to insist that Tutsi should be destroyed. A particularly dramatic use of this would be the main article for the February 1993 *Kangura*, entitled ‘A cockroach cannot bring forth a butterfly.’ Citing the ‘immutable laws of descent’, and the work of ‘genetic scientists’, *Kangura’s* editors argued that 'a cockroach brings forth a cockroach [and] an *Inyenzi* [the Kinyarwanda term is used here, despite the first two references using the French ‘cancrelat’] brings forth another *Inyenzi’* (*Kangura*, 1993, 416). This argument, seen previously in this chapter, had three sub-claims. Firstly, it painted Tutsi as an innately hostile force that could not be changed, integrated, or negotiated with – their 'treachery and wickedness are in our country's history … their wickedness is identical'. This also tied into an argument that there was a long historical precedent of Tutsi malevolence: 'the atrocities that the *Inyenzi* of today are perpetrating against the population are identical to those they perpetrated in the past, namely killings, plundering, rape of young girls and women'. Additionally, as seen previously, it also suggested that the only way to deal with them was to destroy them as a group, even the children, to prevent the threat from re-emerging later. Thus, cockroach imagery in *Kangura* represented a dramatic intensification of the anti-Tutsi slur from its pre-1990s usage.

Kangura also regularly employed snake imagery – noting that 'the word cockroach again reminds us of a very poisonous snake’ (*Kangura*, 1993, 417). In some cases, it was used in exactly the same way as cockroach imagery, as in a 1993 article that cited the ‘Kiswahili proverb’ that ‘the child of a serpent is a serpent‘ (Chrétien, 1995, 158), closely echoing above material in its focus on vermin begetting vermin (and thus needing to be targeted in their entirety, including the young and seemingly unthreatening, as part of a policy of self-defence).

There were some differences, however. As Tirrell notes, there is an ‘even stronger … extermination imperative’ (Tirrell, 2012, 205) for snakes (a mortal threat) than cockroaches (a disgusting, but less-lethal, nuisance), and snakes’ behaviours, attributes, and cultural connotations make them a useful tool to call for violence against ethnic foes. Perhaps most significantly, snakes possess connotations of evil, malevolence, and subversion. One *Kangura* article in 1991 suggested that 'only the vigilance of God' could have warned against RPF 'snakes always ready to spit their venom at Hutu and moderate Tutsis' (Chrétien, 1995, 153), a description that became more widely applied with time. One article by a different author, written in 1993, referred to Tutsi as the ‘Shitani-Ntutsi’ (‘Tutsi demonic snakes’), and an invasion of ‘Naja nigricolis’ (spitting cobras) into a person’s house (Bonaparte, 1993, 367). By linking snakes with demons, this author made the continued existence of the Tutsi within Rwanda into an unholy presence, that needed to be stamped out.

Alternatively, folkloric images of snakes could tie into ‘commonly held wisdom’ to make violence uncontroversial. In the January 1992 issue of *Kangura,* Déo Karangira, one of its writers, offered an extended 'parable' in which a snake was rescued from a burning forest by a compassionate partridge which flew away with it, only to bite its neck out once the two had safely landed (Karangira, 1992, 226). This repeated themes observed elsewhere in motivational dehumanising propaganda: the targets were weaker than the audience, or in a worse position, and dependent on their kind, if naive, intercession. This mercy, however, is paid back with treachery and violence, at a time when the partridge has made itself vulnerable. Suggested here was the idea that toleration of Tutsi in Hutu-dominated Rwanda was foolish since they would betray and kill the audience's group. Similar ideas were evident in a letter to the editor in *Kangura* which described how 'our life is in danger, for it is stupid to live with a snake that bites your heels' (Manireba, 1991, 7). These seem to represent an attempt to naturalise anti-Tutsi prejudice, tying it to familiar folklore and everyday risks such as snakebites.

Snake imagery tapped into many other sorts of threat. They were a 'two headed dragon', 'rearing their heads to devour the unconscious Rwanda and Rwandans' (*Kangura*, 1990, 15), possessing 'the cunning of a snake' (*Kangura*, 1990, 9). The threat posed by the 'snake-like' Tutsi was seen as rooted in the weak naivety of their foes, their base cunning allowing them to lurk, plot vengeance, and subvert somnolent Rwandan society from within – images that also served to affirm the superiority of the Hutu audience.

Kangura thus represented a significant source of motivational dehumanisation in Rwanda, employing a wide range of imagery and metaphor to stigmatise Tutsi, call for categorical and total violence against them, and – in particular – extend the targeting of violence from merely military targets or members of the RPF to non-combatants as a priority. All snakes were threatening, even the young; it was not possible to target only the ‘hostile’ ones. Given the limited reach of mass media in Rwanda, however, how far was it representative of ordinary Rwandans’ media consumption?

At least on a superficial level, *Kangura* seemed to have had a limited impact. Jean-Marie Vianney Higiro, director of the Rwandan media regulatory body ORINFOR before the genocide, estimates that most major newspapers had a circulation of 2,000 – 3,000 (Higiro, 2007, 80–81). Even if Ngeze’s claims that his paper circulated 10,000 – 30,000 copies per issue were accurate (which Higiro doubts), this would still represent a small fraction of Rwanda’s then-population of 7 million. Additionally, literacy was low – between Alison des Forges’ high estimate of 66%, and Higiro’s more conservative estimate of 56% – and newspapers were expensive, limiting the number of Rwandans who could consume their messages. This suggests that it would have a commensurately small effect.

Nonetheless, several factors give *Kangura* a deceptively broader potential impact. As with *Der Stürmer*, reading *Kangura* was not a solitary activity, but a joint and social one. Kagwi-Ndungu cites several witnesses in the ‘Media Trial’ who described how ‘those who could read *Kangura* were able to explain it to those who could not read and thus the messages were widely disseminated'. The 'common practice' was that illiterate people could ask their children to read aloud from their copy of *Kangura*. Alternatively, poor people borrow it from a neighbour, or even photocopy it (Kagwi-Ndugnu, 2008, 332–

333). Kangura also enjoyed privileged promotion from other media. The radio station RTLM (which, as we will see, had a much broader audience) hosted Hassan Ngeze to promote *Kangura*, describe its contents, and direct listeners to buy or read it (RTLMa, 1994, 14; RTLMb, 1994). In addition, in the last few issues before the genocide began, *Kangura* ran an RTLM-promoted quiz/competition, supported with lavish prizes, aimed at 'familiaris[ing] readers with past issues and the ideas of *Kangura*' (ICTR, 2003, 83), particularly its political anti-Tutsi content.

Therefore, despite significant obstacles to the media reach and accessibility of *Kangura* (which limited the extent to which its anti-Tutsi content could contribute to genocidal violence), its distribution networks gave it a significant reach and ability to promulgate motivational dehumanisation to ordinary Hutu.

4.5.2 RTLM

Alongside *Kangura*, one of the most notable forms of pro-genocidal media in Rwanda was *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*, a radio station that played a significant role in promoting genocidal beliefs.

While Radio Rwanda – the national radio station – had previously been a key vector of pro-Hutu, anti-Tutsi/RPF rhetoric, this changed with the establishment of a coalition government in 1992, when the station began offering a wider range of viewpoints, and hardliners such as Ferdinand

Nahimana were removed from supervisory roles. In response to this, and given increasing ethnic hatred, Nahimana and other Hutu hardliners (many of whom were closely linked politically, familially, and economically with Habyarimana (Des Forges, 1999, 81)) set up a national radio station to push their own anti-Tutsi message, which began broadcasting in August 1993.

Like *Kangura*, RTLM received extensive state support in its activities, despite being nominally private. Des Forges notes that the government subsidised the free distribution of radios to local authorities before the genocide (Des Forges, 1999, 77–78), and provided access to national broadcasting frequencies, broadcast equipment and power generators (Des Forges, 1999, 81–82). As such, even though ostensibly separate, RTLM can thus be regarded as a core part of the infrastructure of the Rwandan genocide.

RTLM extensively and routinely used cockroach imagery, and the term '*inyenzi'* to describe Tutsi (Nkusi et al., 1998, 50–51). Mixed in with news and light entertainment content, the constant references to Tutsi as cockroaches further made the two terms synonymous among the station's Hutu audience. Tirrell, for example, cites one passage from January 1994 where Valerie Bemeriki employed the slur ten times in as many sentences, repeating and emphasising with 'emphatic demarcation' the line between the human audience and the verminous, threatening enemy. Again, like in *Kangura*, RTLM went beyond simply using the two terms interchangeably, elaborating on its messages to suggest that Tutsi were innately threatening, could not be negotiated with, and had to be destroyed. During the genocide, RTLM presenters warned that ‘if you are a cockroach you must be killed, you cannot change anything’ (RTLM, 1994c, 4), and that ‘if the *Inyenzi* have resumed the war on the 1st October 1990, it means that it is the same war which has started again, they are the same *Inyenzi* who are only Tutsi’ (Nkusi et al., 1998, 28). Here, animal/dehumanised imagery was used – as elsewhere – to reinforce eliminationist messages.

Again as with *Kangura*, RTLM also drew heavily on snake imagery to stigmatise and dehumanise Tutsi, both before and during the genocide itself, encouraging violence against them in two different ways.

The first was alleging that Tutsi possessed a kind of snake-like deceptiveness, masking their true intentions to commit violence against Hutu. RTLM warned Hutu not to negotiate with the RPF, or even ask for or accept a cease-fire from them, because ‘conducting negotiations with a snake is not easy’ and that one should prepare for war, rather than ‘negotiating on [one’s] knees, as the *inyenzi* have declared it’ (RTLM, 1994d, 11). Other statements took a more religious tone, suggesting that ‘I tell you this in all truth, like the Evangelist said. As long as you accept the serpent that comes to live in amongst you, it will come to bite you, that’s a problem, you will all die’ (RTLM, 1992, 4). Implicitly linking the Tutsi with the deceptive Biblical serpent, and invoking the unexpected and venomous threat that snakebites posed, this argued that the presence of Tutsi living unmolested amongst the Hutu audience was inevitably and inescapably lethal, unless they were destroyed or expelled first. This shows the versatile nature of snake-based dehumanisation, and how it could be evoked to stigmatise Tutsi in several different ways.

Once the genocide had begun, RTLM began to disseminate a wider range of dehumanisation, legitimising and motivational alike. References to Tutsi as 'white ants' (Nkusi et al., 1998, 30) and 'dirt' to 'get rid of' (Mironko, 2007, 127) underlined the perception of Tutsi as a deindividuated, homogenous group to which human sentiment was not owed – while still evoking senses of uncleanliness and infiltration. References to Tutsi as creatures whose 'cruelty … can be cured only by their total extermination' (Nkusi et al., 1998, 29), and whose 'ugly hair and beard swarm with lice so that they look like wild animals' (Nkusi et al., 1998, 33), however, fit more closely within familiar motivational dehumanisation tropes, by portraying Tutsi as a diseased, vermin-carrying force that needed to be destroyed.

Based on this, it is clear that, like *Kangura*, RTLM represented a clear source of motivational dehumanisation, with presenters deliberately using the imagery of infiltrating, foul vermin or inhuman forces to call for and necessitate violence against Tutsi. Again, like *Kangura*, it is also important to consider the audience sizes and potential impact of such broadcasts to determine their effectiveness.

Radio ownership would be a good place to start to get an indication of RTLM's potential audience. In the 1991 census, 29% of households owned a radio, with much higher ownership (57.9%) in urban areas (61.4% in Kigali, where Mironko notes that his interviews with perpetrators suggested that 'RTLM appears to have been especially effective' (Mironko, 2007, 127)). This represented a moderate increase in radio ownership since the last census in 1978, where the equivalent percentages were 18.6% and 43.6% (Service National de Recensement, 1994, 350). Des Forges, however, suggests that radio ownership dramatically increased between 1991 and the genocide, citing the central government's distribution of radios to local authorities and Hutu groups, and one account from a nun travelling in Rwanda just before the genocide who 'had seen new radios at every one of the dozens of barriers where she had been stopped en route' (Des Forges 1999, 78). These suggest a wider potential audience for RTLM than otherwise expected, although – as Li notes – it is important not to assume that a wide potential audience led to a large number of accepting would-be génocidaires (Li, 2004, 12).

Accounts of the reach and influence of these broadcasts differ. By examining the impact of varying signal strength against levels of violence on different communities, Yanagizawa-Drott finds there was a significant correlation between the two. Drawing on quantitative and mapping approaches, he argues that 'approximately 10 percent … of the participation in the violence during the Rwandan Genocide can be attributed to the effects of the radio. Violence that inherently requires more coordination, such as militia and army violence, was also more affected by the broadcasts' (Yangizawa-Drott, 2014, 1947). As Danning notes, however, these findings have been criticised by a range of other writers, questioning the replicability of Yanagizawa-Drott's findings, and whether radio reception is a good proxy for radio consumption, or the influence of its content (Danning, 2018, 8). As such, quantitative efforts to assess the role of radio have yield inconclusive results.

In the absence of clear quantitative data regarding radio ownership and influence, qualitative data and contemporary accounts can help, by offering insights as to how radio broadcasts were received.

One common theme from such accounts is that radio *ownership* likely understates radio *listenership*, with multiple sources agreeing that people actively sought out RTLM programming. Witnesses testifying at the ICTR described radio listening – and specifically RTLM listening – as a communal and social activity:

> *Young people could always be seen on the street with a radio listening to RTLM … the broadcasts were a common topic of conversation in homes, offices, and on the street. Witness FY testified that people listened to RTLM in bars and at work, and that you could hear it in taxis at the market … in Kigali, RTLM was listened to constantly, and during the last months of 1993 and early 1994 one would find little radios in offices, cafes, bars, and other public gathering places … militia at the roadblocks listened to RTLM … [one witness] described crossing at least four roadblocks on 10 April, finding all those manning each of the roadblocks listening to RTLM. [A Hutu militia member manning a roadblock testified that] they heard about what was happening in the country and their leaders from RTLM. (ICTR, 2003, 117)*

Other accounts provide similar claims. Danning cites a broad range of accounts from sociologists describing how ‘people who did not have radios went to someone else’s house to listen to the radio’ and, how agricultural labour patterns meant that men working in agriculture (and later, potentially, in genocidal violence) had easier access to radios (Danning, 2018, 11). He quotes an account from one of Li's interviews, in which 'a militia member named Hakiri used to spend mornings on the roof of his shop with a radio clutched to his ear, listening to RTLM. When he listened, "his mood changed" and he would climb down and gather people to tell them what he had heard' (Danning, 2018, 13). Taken together, these suggest that raw radio ownership data is indeed (as Danning argues) a 'poor proxy for radio consumption'. A wide range of accounts from across Rwanda, attest to both radio more broadly and RTLM in particular reaching a considerably larger range of people who actively sought it out.

Furthermore, perpetrator, witness, and survivor accounts specifically note RTLM as linked with genocidal violence. Mironko's interviews of genocide perpetrators found that, while often not owning radios or listening to RTLM, many referenced key RTLM talking points or referred to others who had heard of it, reinterpreting and propagating genocidal messages throughout the community and across the entire country (Mironko, 2007, 127–134). Based on his interviews, Li presents a similar impression, suggesting that

> *'RTLM explicitly informed conversations that took place away from the physical contexts of listening as well. Broadcasts were often reincarnated elsewhere as rumour, where the possibilities for exaggeration or reinterpretation could only expand … Across the country, thousands of listeners were relaying, embellishing, and even misrepresenting RTLM's broadcasts.' (Li, 2007, 99)*

These assessments might provide the bridge between the widely reported dehumanisation earlier, and Straus' and Fujii's observations that few directly cited it. Even if RTLM – and its dehumanising messages – were seldom directly referenced, they did influence some *génocidaires*, who disseminated their broader sense of threat to a wider audience.

Victim and perpetrator testimonies also referenced the importance of radio propaganda during and before the genocide. Interviews by Totten and Ubaldo include several references to radio as a source of denunciations (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 25), political division (Totten and Ubaldo, 43), hateful rhetoric repeated in school (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 44–5), information from the RPF (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 45), anti-Tutsi statements repeated by leaders at regional and *cellule* levels (Totten and Ubaldo, 65, 68), or direction for killers (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 69). Hatzfeld's interviewees also reference it, with one claiming 'the radio exaggerated to get us all fired up. 'Cockroaches', 'snakes' – it was the radios that taught us those words. The evil-mindedness of the radios was too well calculated for us to oppose it' and that 'the radios were yammering at us since 1992 to kill all the Tutsis' (Hatzfeld, 2008, 207). These may have been an attempt to displace personal responsibility to an external force, and so should be taken with some scepticism, but do imply that radio broadcasts were widespread and persuasive enough to ascribe some responsibility to them.

While we should be cautious with Hatzfeld's presentation of his interviews, his accounts do align with Totten and Ubaldo's (whose interviews were conducted earlier, and which have a more clearly elaborated methodology and editing process (Totten and Ubaldo, 2011, 10–13)) among others, suggesting that many Rwandans had access to radio and that it did influence the genocide.

To conclude, RTLM, like *Kangura*, clearly offered a very distinctive sense of threat that the Tutsi supposedly presented, emphasising snake and cockroach imagery, alongside atrocity propaganda designed to make Tutsi and the RPF appear subhuman and menacing. While its direct influence was limited by low radio ownership and reception, contemporary listening practices and the way RTLM talking points permeated through Hutu communities gave it a significant direct and indirect influence, both before and during genocidal violence.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Based on this survey, there does seem to be a clear and distinctive pattern of elite-sponsored discourses of motivational dehumanisation around the issue of race in Rwanda. Intensifying from around 1990 onwards, reaching its peak during the genocide, this particularly focused on stigmatising Tutsi as noxious, disgusting or venomous pest animals that invaded the home - cockroaches, snakes - as well as existentially threatening entities such as demons. This chapter has charted a clear, coherent, and distinct set of examples of such discourse.

This is reflected not just in contemporary media, but also with the *kinds* of violence observed by writers like Des Forges, who note the Interahamwe's focus on hunting down and destroying 'hidden' Tutsi (including those not typically targeted in military campaigns, such as women, children, priests, and medical workers) (Des Forges, 1999, 13). These tactics are what one would expect from a campaign of violence that saw its foes as cockroaches, snakes, or other hidden pest animals. This is particularly clearly evident in the words of Noel Hitimana, an RTLM presenter who was a key promoter of motivational dehumanisation:

> *'…the population is very vigilant … they have sacked all the houses, the rooms, the kitchens, everywhere! They have even torn out all the doors and windows in all the uninhabited houses, [and] in general they find inkotanyi hidden inside. They have searched everywhere!…If they [the inkotanyi] get hungry, they'll all come out before you arrive. That is why you must act very fast! Force them to come out! Find them at whatever cost.' (Des Forges, 1999, 160)*

This characterisation of the targeting of the violence – borne out by many of the accounts that Des Forges and others examine – clearly reflected the kinds of imagery that RTLM, Kangura, and Hutu leaders presented. This included this imagery of hungry insects emerging from hiding places in houses to be destroyed by vigilant hunters, as well as the forms that violence took - the 'quite remarkable … direct and literal application' of snake-killing metaphors observed by Tirrell (2012, 205). In short, motivational dehumanisation correlates closely with the forms taken by and targeting of genocidal violence, suggesting that it may have been involved in shaping them.

How pervasive was motivational dehumanisation in Rwanda? Judging by raw audience figures of the main exponents of dehumanising discourse, such as Kangura and RTLM, it would seem to have been marginal, only reaching a small fraction of the population. Examining accounts of how it was actually consumed, however, suggests that this might under-estimate the degree to these messages permeated out into society. Not only was listening and consuming them a social phenomenon – meaning that a single *Kangura* edition or radio set could reach a larger audience in turn - but dehumanising messages were disseminated at political rallies, private meetings, and in military training and culture, and its users included all levels of the military, among government and civil service officials, informal Interahamwe militias gathered from the ordinary civilian population, as well as media sources.

These examples alone may not show that it was pervasive in the sense that everyone had internalised these messages, but instead that the messages themselves were widely pervasive throughout society. Even if Hutu in Rwanda did not use these metaphors and discourses themselves, they would be familiar with them, and they would serve as a 'reservoir' of images, conflict frames, and ideas that could be further drawn upon by genocidal leaders later. Indeed, cases like the use of 'inyenzi' or ‘snake’ metaphors seem to confirm this. As well as being 'generic' slurs, the terms were used as a shorthand for particular targets and methods of killing. Thus, in combination with the 'self-explanatory' nature of dehumanising metaphors, suggests that, when tapped by elites, this 'reservoir' could lead to genocidal violence; it certainly was commonly used during it.

The degree to which motivational dehumanisation diffused throughout Hutu society also attests to its influence. This can be traced from conflict frames in which dehumanisation would be comprehensible but where there was no widespread dehumanisation, to elites (often in media and government) who often used these framings to pioneer dehumanising imagery and discourses, to the methods by which they disseminated these images to the national public (including both media and speeches), to the public, military, and paramilitary groups themselves, and finally to the actual sites of violence. That these images were repeated so clearly from one group to another suggests that they were an important and influential factor in determining behaviour, rather than an incidentally-employed slur – important enough, at least, that these messages were repeated throughout Rwandan society and seemed in many cases to have determined the forms taken by violence.

Just because people were exposed to dehumanisation does not mean they internalised it. Not everyone directly participated in the genocide - Straus estimates approximately 200,000 did, with most of the killing being carried out by an extremely zealous core of around 20,000 (Straus, 2004, 95). While there may have been some who supported the genocide (who internalised dehumanising messages but did not take part for lack of opportunity), even Straus' upper estimate represents a small fraction of the Hutu population at the time. Fujii (2011) convincingly shows that many perpetrators were motivated by local and group micro dynamics rather than deep-seated ideological commitment, and, elsewhere, illustrates the complex relationships between perpetrator, bystander, and rescuer status during the genocide (2014). Internalisation cannot have been universal and total; it cannot account for these details. Instead, what I have found is a mixed level of internalisation/pervasiveness among perpetrators. Elites, leaders, broadcasters and commanders - as well as others at 'pivotal' locations in the infrastructure of killing - often internalised dehumanising attitudes to a greater degree. Their orders and instructions to kill the enemy fell on an audience that was often receptive because it had at least been exposed to dehumanising ideas and discourses, was familiar with what they called for, and was in any case receptive to warnings about a Tutsi ‘threat’.

5. FORMER YUGOSLAVIA 1989–1995

5.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Unlike the Holocaust, paramilitary groups from a wider range of sides committed large-scale violence against civilians in the wars in the former Yugoslavia. The Croatian assault on Serbian Krajina displaced 150,000 – 200,000 Serbs (though the ICJ later found no genocidal intent), while – fifty years earlier – the Nazi-aligned Croatian Ustase government had killed large numbers of Serbs, Jews, and Roma at sites like Jasenovac concentration camp (USHMM, 2018). Politicians and media figures during this period could, and did, publicly claim that contemporary conflicts were an extension of historical ones initiated or escalated by the other side (de la Brosse, 2003, 24). Without erasing this history, I will focus solely on discourse in Serbia, both to allow more in-depth analysis and to reflect those elements of dehumanisation that were specific to the Serbian discursive, cultural, and historical milieu.

As my literature review showed, several writers argue that this conflict had little to do with ethnic sentiments (including dehumanisation). Mueller notes that 'when ordinary Serb soldiers were given an opportunity to express these presumed proclivities or to act in response to the ingenious televised imprecations in government-sanctioned violence, they professed they did not know why they were fighting and often mutinied or deserted en masse' (Mueller, 2000, 48). The perpetrators of atrocities were a mixed group of 'thugs and hooligans', 'semicoherent paramilitary groups', and 'weekend warriors [present] mainly to rob and pillage' (Mueller, 2000, 50). Thus, he concludes that Bosnian Serb military violence was the product of 'common criminality', rather than 'ethnic hatred'. Gagnon, likewise, finds little evidence to support notions that elites 'pursued strategies of ethnic outbidding by provoking violence along ethnic lines in order to mobilise their populations to support them' (Gagnon, 2006, 178–9). Both writers offer views of the conflict rooted in criminality and the local dynamics of violent groups, with ethnic hatred – if present – not typically part of the key causal processes leading to ethnic violence.

I suggest that these two arguments are largely inadequate, both on empirical grounds and in terms of their causal explanation. This chapter will focus on the first, using a descriptive and archival approach to demonstrate that – *contra* Gagnon, Mueller, and others – motivational dehumanisation was routinely and consistently used across early 1990s Yugoslavia. By charting what messages were popular in elite and everyday discourses, and the kinds of violence that they called for, I have a stronger foundation for examining any causal links between genocidal discourses, decision-making, and violence in subsequent chapters. I will find a less clear – but still distinct, and similar – vein of stigmatising ethnic rhetoric, which I link to subsequent campaigns of violence and extreme mistreatment.

5.2 IDEOLOGICAL PRECURSORS TO GENOCIDE

Did Serbian ideological entrepreneurs draw on a long-established tradition of ethnic dehumanisation, or did they innovate new metaphors and readings of history?

I suggest that the answer lies between the two. Ethnic hatred was mingled with cross-ethnic cooperation and solidarity. However, Balkan history contained enough instances of the former, as well as a 'reservoir' of widely known historical narratives, that leaders in the late 1980s and early 1990s could draw upon to assemble a discourse of existential threat. Even if they had not previously believed them, the notion of existential, barbaric threats demanding pre-emptive retaliation would therefore ‘make sense’ in the context of ethnic extremism during this time.

Western observers during the conflict typically explained it in terms of ancient, long-standing hatreds leading to near-inevitable violence. Mead, in the *Los Angeles Times*, suggested that 'peacemakers [were] no match for ancient Balkan hatred', from the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, via 'repressive … corrupt … arrogant [and] voracious' Ottoman rule, to the present, where, after the collapse of the Yugoslav state 'the nationalities reverted to type: murdering the parents and harassing the orphans' (Mead, 1992). Kaplan likewise claims ethnic coexistence was 'often … balanced on a knife's edge', citing Yugoslav writer Ivo Andric that 'entire hurricanes of tethered and compressed hatreds [were] maturing and awaiting their hour' (Kaplan, 1993, xvi). Despite significant historical coexistence and cultural intermingling (Cigar, 1995, 14–15), Yugoslav history provided a rich array of historical events ostensibly supporting such a view, like the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, the Serbian Banat uprising against Ottoman oppression in 1594, and forced conversion and cleansing of Muslims from Serbia following nineteenth-century independence (Cigar, 1995, 17–18). Some instances were in living memory, such as Ustase plans to forcibly convert, ethnically cleanse, and murder Serbs as a group (Macdonald, 2009, 106). Some Bosnian Muslims had participated in the Waffen SS (Hoare, 2013, 13–62), while the Serbian Chetnik movement had openly committed 'to cleanse the state territory of all [non-Serb] national minorities and anti-national elements' (Cigar, 1995, 18). During Tito's government, reminders of ethnic conflict were proscribed, but as Denich notes, this arguably was an 'acknowledg[ment of] the power of memory' (Denich, 1994, 369), a recognition seemingly vindicated by their resurgence following the end of Titoism.

At the same time, contemporary polling does not support the notion that 1980s Serbian culture was a hotbed of racism. Gagnon notes that in 1990, 'about one-half of Croatia's Serbs [voted] for the reformed SKH [the League of Communists of Croatia, who 'clearly focused on positive relations' between Serbs and Croats], while only 13.5% voted for the Serb nationalist party' (Gagnon, 2006, 36 fn.9)). Even if most (77.6%) did see relationships between nationalities as very or mostly bad at a national level, relative coexistence was people's everyday reported experience. Hodson et al.'s 1990 survey data agreed, finding that 'average tolerance levels in the republics closely paralleled the level of national diversity in each republic'. Bosnia and the Vojvodina, 'which have the highest average tolerance, also have the greatest national diversity' (Hodson, Sekulic, and Massey, 1994, 1547). A survey of young people in Bosnia found that 77% disagreed with the notion that 'one always needs to be cautious' towards other nationalities, and 90% suggested that relationships between ethnicities in their own communities were 'good' or 'very good' (dropping to 24% at the level of the republic, however) (Gagnon, 2006, 41–42). Sekulic, examining similar data, finds that 'exclusionary attitudes were not high before armed conflict' – they seem to have been its consequence, not its cause (Sekulic, 2014, 50). Taken together, these clearly show that there was no generalised attitude of mutual distrust or 'ancient hatred' in the years before the violence.

Even if the 'ancient hatreds' narrative is unconvincing, there were enough incidents to allow Serbian leaders and many of the public to construct and '*accept* [a] historicist paradigm, and by doing so … contribut[e] to shaping their approach *as if* dealing with a millennium of ethnic strife' (Cigar, 1995, 11) (my emphasis). Even if they reported good relations with neighbours, many Serbs learned deeply anti-Muslim national epics in schools, read lurid fiction about genocidal violence in the Second World War, and consumed reporting on geopolitical theories warning of imminent genocidal threats, that prefigured later discourse directly. I examine three particularly key examples of this.

5.2.1 THE MOUNTAIN WREATH, 1847

‘*The Mountain Wreath’* was a book by Montenegrin writer Prince-Bishop Njegoš – an epic poem published in 1847, detailing the actions of Njegoš' ancestor Metropolitan Danilo I Petrović-Njegoš, in the ‘extermination of the Turkish converts’. Throughout, Njegoš describes Danilo being torn between the need to kill ‘loathsome degenerates’ who have accepted the ‘Turkish faith’ – an act of ‘religious cleansing’ he believes will lead to national regeneration – and the knowledge that they were formerly fellow Montenegrins. After some hesitation and (fruitless) attempts at negotiation, Danilo supports his fellow Christians’ calls to destroy the ‘loathsome infidels’, rejoicing with ‘great gladness [and] great joy’ when they destroy the Muslim-owned houses, and murder all those who do not flee.

The book clearly invoked dehumanising imagery. In the first six lines alone, Njegoš had Danilo describe the Turks as the ‘accursed litter’ of the ‘devil’, ‘march[ing] to lay waste to the whole planet Earth just as locusts devastate the green fields’ (Njegoš, 1997, 16), and continued in a similar vein – Turks were a 'plague of mankind' that 'poisoned' the world, 'spew[s] out all the venom of [their] black souls'. In the chorus 'the entire [Christian] people' likewise chant that 'high mountains are reeking with heathens', and warned that this 'stench' had caught the 'lion in the trap'. Later, Turks were described as fatted on 'human blood', and possessing 'a savage mind and a poisoned temper [like] a wild boar, not a human being [and] leaving behind stench of inhumanity'. Their leader was a 'serpent', and their followers a 'filthy breed of dogs'. This text draws a contrast between heroic, noble, Christian Montenegrins (who are nevertheless naïve, consistently offering second chances and reconciliation only to be proved wrong each time, suggesting that a peaceful settlement is foolish), and the foul, poisonous, and bestial convert Montenegrins and their Ottoman patrons.

The Mountain Wreath was no niche cultural artefact, but had a significant audience, and thus potential impact. Mihailovich, in his 1997 English translation, describes how the book had had nearly one hundred new editions since its initial printing (Njegos, 1997). Wachtel finds a wide range of sources attesting to it as a source of national pride. A 1921 academic textbook described it as 'on the highest poetic pinnacle of our people' (Wachtel, 2004, 135), and Njegoš remained a nationally honoured writer and widely read school text up to the 1980s despite state attempts to quell nationalist feeling (Denich, 1994, 370). In 1984, a teacher – Mubera Mujagic – suggested at a national teaching conference that the text should be removed from the required school curriculum, since it ‘create[d] bile, poison, and hatred towards anyone who belongs to another belief or nation’ (Wachtel, 2004, 144–145), showing that contemporary observers were concerned as to its impact. The Yugoslav writer Bora Ćosić, upon being asked if the poem was a ‘kind of breeding-ground for atrocities’, noted that

> *[Paramilitary leader] Zeljiko Raznjatovic (Arkan) … is an admirer of Njegoš. And it turns out that he’s not the only one whose heart begins to stir with black emotions at the reading of Njegoš’ description of ethnic*

> *cleansing as a bloody baptism leading to the rebirth of Serbia as the most powerful nation in the region. (Wachtel, 2004, 145)*

Taken together, these strongly suggest that *The Mountain Wreath* was a culturally salient source for many in Serbia. It had been required reading for generations of school children and was identified by multiple contemporary observers as either an actual or potential motivator for ethnic violence. Thus, ethnic coexistence in the 1980s notwithstanding, there were ideological resources to be drawn upon by dehumanising leaders.

5.2.2 *KNIFE*, 1982

Other authors offered much more lurid material. One example of this would be '*Nož*' ('*Knife*') (1982), by Vuk Drašković, which tells the story of a Serbian survivor of a Muslim attack on his village rediscovering his history. Much of *Knife* depicted graphic violence by Muslims against Serbs, including an extended scene of gang rape, torture, and murder by the Muslim Osmanovic family (Drašković, 2007, 31 ff., 171, 190–1, 388). Its description of atrocities specifically underscores the inhumanity and disgusting animal-like nature of the perpetrators. Husein, one attempted rapist of a young Serb woman, is described in bestial or mindless ways, especially once he is gutted by the Serb family: 'Husein got up on his feet and stuck out his tongue. He was slobbering all over himself and talking nonsense … his stomach fell open and burst. A powerful stench arose' (43–44). Elsewhere, '*Ustashe*' engage in brutal, ritualistic, and almost demonic behaviour later attributed to Muslims and Croats by Serbian atrocity propaganda during the Yugoslav war. These include making necklaces out of the eyes of Serbian women (190), 'boil[ing] children in water … pour[ing] tar on open wounds [and] having rodents nibble at the entrails of live men' (388). While not essentially dehumanising, these present Muslims as an alien force that threatened the integrity of Serbian bodies in bizarre, savage ways far outside the remit of 'civilised' violence (much is made of the way they employed knives to mutilate their targets, rather than guns to simply kill them), thus playing on similar dynamics of otherworldly and lurid violence.

Direct use of dehumanisation was also common. The narrator of the first part describes how the local community guarded itself against 'wolves and the Osmanovici [the local Muslim family, who have] blood on their hands … reach[ing] all the way up to their elbows' (9), taking advantage of attempts to offer them hospitality and brotherhood (Drašković, 2007, 9, 38). Elsewhere, they are variously 'a stain' (Drašković, 2007, 29), 'bad seeds' (Drašković, 2007, 20), '*balije'* (Drašković, 2007, 31ff) (a phlegm/infection-related slur examined in more detail below), blood drinkers (Drašković, 2007, 44–46), people who take intense sexual pleasure from killing (Drašković, 2007, 118), and bearers of a 'genetic and contagious' urge to murder (Drašković, 2007, 96). When the narrator is finally tortured to death by his attackers, he curses them as dehumanised subjects –

> *I hope that only poison springs from your seed. I hope your houses teem and roil with leprosy, O land of Herzegovina! I hope that, aside from your murderous and idiot seed, nothing in you is capable of conception or birth, and leprosy rots you and strikes you dead … may a festering curse befall this freak. (Drašković, 2007, 49)*

Knife thus clearly deployed motivational dehumanisation against Muslims, portraying them as contaminated vermin, inhumanly violent and barbaric, and taking advantage of naïve victims. Macdonald notes that it was part of a broader genre of similar works – such as Momir Krsmanović's *The Blood Stained Hands of Islam* and *The Drina Runs Red With Blood*, Slobodan Selenić's *Timor Mortis,* and Marjorie Radulović's *Rage of the Serbs* – that also used torture and mass murder imagery to 'dehumanis[e the enemy] as genocidal beasts' (Macdonald, 2002, 138–9).

How representative was *Knife* as an example of dehumanisation, and how far could it have influenced later violence? While exact sales numbers are not public, it saw several reprints (Drašković, 2007, 25), a film adaptation (Cigar, 1995, 106) and a successful overseas book tour (Hockenos, 2003, 125). The platform it gave Drašković at bodies like the Serbian Union of Writers – where he repeated its themes by asking 'are there any limits to our humiliation' and implicitly warning of future threats of genocide (Drašković, 1990, 13–17, quoted in Vujačić, 1995, 240) – propelled him to political influence. Cigar also quotes Branislav Lainović, who would later become the leader of the Serbian Guard, a Drašković-affiliated paramilitary group responsible for atrocities including war rape against Muslims in Gacko (Cigar and Williams, 2012, 55), as finding *Knife* particularly influential for his ideological development: 'I beat up many Muslims and Croatians on vacation in Cavtat because of his *Nož.* Reading that book, I would see red, I would get up, select the biggest fellow on the beach, and smash his teeth' (Cigar, 1995, 25). Based on this, it seems likely that *Knife* had both the reach and the content to lay the groundwork for anti-Muslim attitudes and violence.

5.2.3 MEMORANDUM OF THE SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS, 1986

Another document that provided a basis for future threat rhetoric would be the *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts*, a 1986 publication in which leading intellectuals criticised the current 'anti-Serbian' structure of the Yugoslav state, and called for drastic reform. Several writers identify the Memorandum as playing a major role in inflaming Serbian nationalist violence (Sells, 2003, 317; Milosavljevic, 1999, 52–55), and so it bears some investigation.

Unlike *The Mountain Wreath* or *Knife,* the Memorandum focused primarily on less lurid topics of economic grievances and comparative modernisation. Even so, it often adopted an urgent and aggressive tone, warning that the poor treatment of Serbia by the other republics amounted to 'physical, political, legal, and cultural … genocide' (SANU, 1986), and 'a worse defeat than any experienced in the liberation wars waged by Serbia from the First Serbian Uprising in 1804 to the uprising of 1941'. Current Serbian political troubles were, it suggested, part of a Nazi-authored campaign of uninterrupted persecution that was close to reaching its 'final victory', subjecting Serbs to 'physical annihilation, forced assimilation, conversion to a different religion, cultural genocide, ideological indoctrination, denigration and compulsion to renounce their own traditions because of an imposed guilt complex'. By attempting to link unquestionably genocidal historical violence with a more ambiguous situation in the 1980s, and advocating a violent ‘defensive’ response to avert this, the authors thus clearly securitised their political environment in a familiar way. Following publication, the Academy became significantly enmeshed in pro-Milošević and pro-conflict politics (not a single pronouncement between 1988 and 1992 challenged state policies (Maksić, 2017, 125)), receiving considerable attention, coverage, and circulation through state media.

Thus, even if it did not engage in motivational dehumanisation itself, SANU contributed to a widespread perception of political threat from genocidal neighbours, already vividly depicted by popular texts like *Knife* as bestial, savage, and subhuman.

Thus, Serbs in the early 1990s were exposed to a range of media dealing heavily in the rhetoric of threat and imminent extreme danger, sometimes depicting lurid images of subhuman/monstrous Muslim threats, or sometimes a more ‘neutral’ approach that still tapped into similar securitised notions of an existential threat to Serbia and Serbs. Many combined dehumanisation with Serbia’s actual history of persecution, mapping this onto modern conflicts.

How to square this with the low level of ethnic hatred in Serbia in the 1980s, revealed by polling? I suggest that it represented a ‘reservoir’ of imagery and sentiment. Even if it was not necessarily believed (polling data shows that a significant minority *did* seem to believe it), many were familiar with these notions, and that familiarity could be invoked by writers, military, and leaders seeking to draw links between past violence and the present. Serbs were aware of this history and these images, and if leaders called on them as frames for understanding modern conflicts, then they could become convincing.

Indeed, this aligns closely with the findings of Oberschall, who also notes the surprising contrast between the relatively peaceful 1980s and the early 1990s period of ethnic hatred that called back to events before the 1980s. He describes a set of ideas that 'simmered in the memories of older people', and that after 'decades of dormancy' in the mainstream, could be 'activated' by leaders taking advantage of media domination, perceived military threat, and 'fear of extinction as a group' (Oberschall, 2000, 990). This points to the importance of long-standing cultures of fear or mistrust not as primordial, constantly held sources of aggression, but as *potential* ideas, familiar to large numbers of people, that a sufficiently well-placed and skilled leader could draw upon and persuade their audiences were relevant.

5.3 LEADERS AND ELITES

At the top of political hierarchies, leaders and elites were able to set policy, and possessed the platform to spread their beliefs (and popularise framings of conflict) more widely. In this section, I identify the extent of their uses of dehumanisation, commonalities across them, and their locations and contexts.

Slobodan Milošević, the president of Serbia during the conflict, was a major force in the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, and indeed was indicted by the ICTY specifically for his joint and individual criminal responsibility for genocide in Bosnia (ICTY, 2001b, para. 32). His speeches and statements, however, do not show the same level of dehumanising animus seen from similar leaders in Rwanda or Germany.

His 1989 St Vitus' Day speech, for example, commemorating the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, at first seemed to praise national minorities: 'Serbia has never had only Serbs living in it … this is not a disadvantage for Serbia. I am truly convinced that it is its advantage … citizens of different nationalities, religions, and races have been living together more and more frequently and more and more successfully'. Later, however, his speech took on a more threatening tone, describing Serbia as a 'bastion that defended European culture, religion and European society in general'. Serbs, he said, needed to 'remove … disunity' to avert 'greatest disaster' that the nation faced, implying the necessity to defeat and disempower opposing groups. Kaufman suggests that 'these charges of murder and 'genocide' … created and fed the fear of ethnic extinction that is the driving force of ethnic violence' (Kaufman, 2001, 181).

The same contrasts can be seen elsewhere. His televised speeches in the early 1990s typically disavowed ethnic cleansing as a 'criminal action … that cannot be accepted or justified' and that Republika Srpska had disavowed the tactic (Belgrade TV, 1992a). At the same time, however, he warned that Serbia's neighbours were not doing the same (Belgrade TV, 1992b) and that Serbs were 'subject to genocide for the second time in this century', and so needed to exercise 'the basic right that everyone should enjoy … the right to defend himself, to protect his country and to protect his people' (Belgrade TV, 1992b), and 'do everything in our power to prevent that tragic experience from reoccurring' (Belgrade TV, 1991).

While Milošević did not use dehumanisation himself, Carmichael notes that his audience in speeches in the late 1980s did, holding up placards bearing slogans such as 'oh Muslims, you black crows, Tito is not around to protect you', and announcing 'I'll be the first, who will be the second to drink some Turkish blood?' (Carmichael, 2002, 26). Carrion-eating symbols of bad luck clearly dehumanised Muslims, while notions of 'drinking blood' evoked (intentionally or unintentionally) the notion of '*devsirme*' (Ottoman military conscription of Serbian boys), which was commonly associated with blood draining or vampirism (Sells, 2003, 373). Critically, however, these were what Milošević's supporters said, not the man himself.

Based on this brief survey, Milošević – despite his broader role in ethnic violence – did not heavily employ motivational dehumanisation. His discussions of the need for defence against existential threats had certain elements in common with it, and he was part of a broader ideological project that employed it, but it was not key to his approach (even if his followers read it into what he said).

Radovan Karadžić, by contrast, engaged much more heavily in this tactic during his tenure as President of Republika Srpska 1992–1996. In July 1993, Karadžić announced at a state dinner that Bosnian Serbs were fighting against

‘Asiatic darkness’ to ensure that ‘Islamic fundamentalism doesn’t infect Europe from the south’,(Cigar, 1995, 100), while elsewhere, he warned of an ‘Islamic penetration’ of Europe (Macdonald, 2002, 234). In speeches before the Republika Srpska Assembly (ICTY, 2012, 28718) in late 1993 and early 1994, Karadžić warned of the threat of the ‘toxic all-destructive Islamic octopus’ (ICTY, 2009, 54), which Serbs were familiar with from historical conflicts. This familiarity, he argued, allowed them to see through the way that it ‘skilfully takes on various guises but which is with all its variability and ambiguity constant in its irreconcilable poisonousness toward the Serbian Orthodox being’ (ICTY, 2014, 47597). These claims hit key tropes of motivational dehumanisation. Its subjects were characterised as an octopus, throttling and constricts its prey with long insidious tentacles, rather than destroying them in open struggle. They were ‘toxic’ and ‘irreconcilabl[y] poisonous toward the Serbian Orthodox being' – an injunction against peaceful contact or coexistence with them. They used skilful deception and trickery – rather than raw, direct strength – to undermine their opponents. This calls to mind Young-Bruehl's observations of the way targets of obsessional prejudice are ascribed with 'diabolical behind-the-scenes cleverness' (Young-Bruehl, 1998, 33–34), at once amplifying the threat they posed while undermining them as weak and requiring that cleverness to pose a threat.

Karadžić also warned of the 'demographic threat' posed by Muslims – that their supposedly high birth rates were out of control and would eventually outcompete and destroy Serbs. The way that this reduced a natural phenomenon into an animalistic view of 'breeding' vast numbers of children (as opposed to more restrained numbers among Serbs), posing an exponentially growing threat, is very similar to the imagery of ballooning pests or vermin in Nazi propaganda. In speeches to the Bosnian Serb Assembly in January 1992, Karadžić warned of the need to defend against Muslims 'demographically overwhelm[ing]' Serbia with their unnaturally high and '[in]tolera[ble]' birthrate' (ICTY, 2009, 547). He added that 'there can be no discussion here. They will overwhelm you with their birth rate and their tricks. We cannot allow that to happen' (ICTY, 2009, 550).

Just as intellectual/political elite institutions like SANU provided a set of rhetorical foundations, and political support for Milošević's warnings of an oncoming genocide, a joint proclamation by SANU and the Serbian Medical Society did the same with Karadžić's message. Providing a secular counterpoint to arguments by the Serbian Orthodox church (Shiffman, Skrabalo, and Subotic, 2002, 629–630), these bodies warned of the threat of 'biological, and hence also physical disappearance', due to the over-fertility of non-Serbian ethnic groups (specifically Muslims, Albanians, and Roma). Shiffman et al. summarise how these populations were described as having 'fertility so high that it can no longer be called rational or human reproduction' Shiffman, Skrabalo, and Subotic, 2002, 629-630), especially since Serbian birth rates were much lower owing to the 'terror committed against the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina' and its supposed results on populations of 'potentially reproductive Serbian males' (Takševa, 2015, 6–7). Thus, Karadžić's arguments about 'demographic threat' were echoed in elite publications.

Biljana Plavšić, Karadžić's successor, followed a similar discursive approach. A former virologist, she often invoked her scientific authority (Lilly and Irvine, 2012, 268), justifying her claims that Muslims were a genetically 'degenerate' and plague-like threat by asserting that 'I am a biologist and I know [these things]' (Wilmer, 2002, 213). In one statement to *Svet*, later reprinted in *Politika,* she claimed that

> *It was genetically deformed material that embraced Islam. And now, of course, with each successive generation it simply becomes concentrated. It gets worse and worse. It simply expresses itself and dictates their style of thinking, which is rooted in their genes. And through the centuries, the genes degraded further. (Sells, 2002, 58)*

She suggested later in the interview that 'Serbs in Bosnia, particularly in the border areas, have developed a keen ability to sense danger to the whole nation and have developed a defence mechanism' (Wilmer, 2002, 217). This not only evoked notions of Social (or literal) Darwinism and Balkan ethnic politics as a biological struggle to the death, but also privileged her viewpoint above more moderate Serbs who might have counselled ethnic rapprochement.

By describing Muslims as genetically (rather than just culturally) divergent, Plavšić portrayed them as intrinsically and irrevocably distinct to her non-Muslim audience, unable to be reasoned with or dissuaded by non-coercive measures. Going beyond traditional Social Darwinist concerns with competition, her notion of ever-worsening 'genetic deformation' posing a political threat is clearly reminiscent of dehumanisation's focus on contamination by degraded, but still threatening, enemies. What had supposedly been threatening to Serb wellbeing in the Ottoman Empire and during the Second World War, she implied, was even worse in the late twentieth century.

Plavšić, like Karadžić, also often publicly addressed the 'demographic threat'. In a statement quoted in 1994 by the Bosnia-Herzegovina paper of record, *Oslobođenje*, Plavšić expressed 'upset' about Serb-Muslim marriage, since 'they allow[ed] genes to be exchanged between ethnic groups, and lead subsequently to the degeneration of Serb nationality' (de la Brosse, 2003, 24). Here, close non-violent contact with the target group was portrayed as degrading and defiling not merely to those involved, but to the entire Serb nation. This aligned with Plavšić's other statements, quoted in *Borba*, that 'rape unfortunately belongs to the war strategy of Muslims … towards Serbs. For Islam rape is normal … also under Islamic religious tenets nation[ality] of the child is the one of his father' (de la Brosse, 2003, 19–24). This made the threat more direct – not only were Muslim men supposedly predisposed to sexual violence (a 'fact' commonly referenced in atrocity propaganda (de la Brosse, 2003, 54–55)), but they would undermine Serbian national identity in mixed marriages. Even if explicit vermin imagery was absent, the evocation of intimate and degrading threat had much in common with it.

Plavšić, therefore, was a key exponent of motivational dehumanisation, repeatedly evoking a desperate, defensive conflict against a threatening and degenerate foe, and using her political and scientific credentials to do so.

Taken together, while the three leaders examined here all consistently leaned on threat rhetoric, they did not all employ the same level of dehumanisation. Milošević employed broader imagery of existential threat from Serbia's neighbours. Karadžić and Plavšić, by contrast, were much clearer and more direct in their invocation of dehumanised imagery, and did so consistently, often at causally significant moments and contexts: in nationally read newspapers, and before major political assemblies with significant influence on decision-making and the course of politics and violence in the former Yugoslavia.

5.4 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION IN BUREAUCRACIES AND MILITARIES

So far, I have illustrated clear anti-Bosniak feeling drawing on pre-existing cultural attitudes – but only at the apexes of political systems of violence, rather than among those directly involved in it. Did this latter group espouse dehumanising views? Was there evidence of similar beliefs about an existentially threatening, dehumanised enemy amongst generals, intermediate military commanders, or soldiers and paramilitary groups? This is particularly complex to assess in the Serbian case, where paramilitary and irregular violence was much more common than in the other two genocides. Without the centralised sources of military indoctrination, conditioning, and command as in Germany, or the few key ideological sources to directly or indirectly influence militias as in Rwanda, how far would such groups follow this pattern?

The answer appears to be yes, although not as clearly as seen in Rwanda or Germany.

One key slur – used extensively by high-ranking military and common soldiers alike – was the description of Muslims as '*balije'*.

The term's precise origin – and thus, how far it was an example of dehumanisation – is unclear. Carmichael describes it as 'of unclear etymology', though extremely 'demeaning' (Carmichael, 2015, 62), while Sells links it to a South Slavic term for 'spit' or 'mucus', *bala*, noting how Muslims survivors reported many paramilitary nationalist Serbs accompanied its use with 'spitting' gestures against them (Sells, 1998, 77). The ICTY, for its part, described it as 'a derogatory term for BH Muslims, carrying religious connotations' (ICTY, 2003, 231), specifically with overtones of backwardness and crudeness (Elias-Bursac, 2015, 143). Elias-Bursac also notes that it carried a deeply offensive sense to it and that Serb defendants often disavowed its use, with Radislav Krstić – Mladic's second-in-command – denying ever having used such a 'profoundly offensive term for a Muslim' (Elias-Bursac, 2015, 144). Such disavowals were, however, undermined by multiple attestations from witnesses, military transcripts and combat reports.

Benson and Sljivic-Simsic translates '*balija'* as a 'backwards Muslim peasant' or 'crude person', and '*bala'* as 'mucus, snivel or snot'. Similar-sounding terms have similarly unpleasant, derogatory, or disgusting meanings – '*balav/ac*', for example, means 'snivelling' or 'slobbering', while '*baliti'* means 'to talk nonsense', and '*balega'* means 'animal excrement' (Benson and Sljivic-Simsic, 1990, 15). Sells' argument that there was overlap seems highly plausible; not only was *balije* a slur carrying connotations of backwardness, but it also seems to have originated from unpleasant biological phenomena, analogous to the English term 'scum'. Whatever its precise meaning, it clearly carries connotations similar to those found in motivational dehumanisation.

References to the term *balije* were common throughout ICTY trials, appearing – often with in-depth discussion – 131 times across the Karadžić trial, for example. It occurred among low-level paramilitaries cursing Bosnian Muslims as they ordered them to bury the bodies of their co-religionists (ICTY, 2016b, 407), and in the speech of high-ranking military officers like Lt. Col. Vujadin Popovic, who issued direct instructions to his subordinates that 'all the *balija* [of Orahovac and Zvornik] have to be killed' (ICTY, 2010a, 451). While he claimed to only target 'abled-bodied Muslim men suspected of committing war crimes' (ICTY, 2010a, 42), his insistence that 'all' *balije* had to be killed, orders to 'finish off' orphaned children, and alleged murder of hospitalised Bosnian Muslim prisoners of war cast doubt on this.

These slurs were not merely incidental, but represented a key component of violence. Del Ponte finds seventeen ICTY cases where ethnic slurs ('*balija'* featuring prominently) were specifically cited as important in trial judgements (Del Ponte, 2006, 553). While the Appeals Chamber in the Krstić case argued that '*balija'* was merely 'commonplace … charged language …

amongst military personnel during war', rather than evidence of genocidal intent (ICTY, 2004a, 44), other cases found differently. In the trial of Radoslav Brđanin, one of the leaders of the Autonomous Republic of Krajina and a significant media and military leader, the Tribunal found that language played a direct role in violence (and upheld this finding on appeal). Based on the evidence that the Tribunal heard, a key part of his campaign of ethnic cleansing involved propaganda and public speeches describing non-Serbs as '*balijas*', 'vermin', and 'scum' (ICTY, 2004b, 136). It found that 'although Brđanin's public statements may have been motivated in part by his drive toward self-advancement', they contributed 'disastrous[ly]' to an atmosphere where genocidal violence and ethnic cleansing were acceptable and unlikely to have any repercussions, and one where otherwise sympathetic Bosnian Serbs feared for their safety if they dissented from it. Indeed, witnesses and victims testified that the threatening atmosphere this language created was one of the main reasons they left the area (ICTY, 2008, 4).

Thus, use of dehumanising language and imagery seems to have been widespread enough to have an impact. Articulated using a sufficiently powerful media position, from military leaders with sufficiently credible force, it became threatening enough that it led to targeted minorities fearing genocidal violence and fleeing the area.

This came amidst a broader strategy of dehumanising language by Brđanin. At a rally in Banja Luka in 1994, he took the podium, complaining that 'those leftist forces which are offering us coexistence again must know that it is the obligation of Serbs over the next hundred years to wipe their feet from the foul non-Christians who have befouled this [land]' (ICTY, 2013, 43739). The presentation of Muslims and political rivals as a 'befouling' slime that needed to be extirpated and purified from Serbian territory is a clear example of the contamination rhetoric observed several times before. That they were described as existing underfoot also goes to re-emphasise the common theme of motivational dehumanisation that the foe is a lowly and inferior force, while retaining its status as threatening and harmful.

In short, while the etymology of '*balije*' is not clear, it behaved much like a dehumanising slur, emphasising the inhumanity and detestable nature of its subjects, and calling for their destruction to avoid contamination.

Other accounts show further use of a wider range of other dehumanising and related terms from those involved in violence.

Several examples of this occurred during the Serbian takeover of Prijedor in April 1992, where dehumanisation, fears about demography and reproduction, the need to enact pre-emptive genocidal violence to avoid suffering it oneself, and the notion of an invasive poisonous force overlapped. One of the first non-Serbs targeted for disappearances was Zeljko Sikora, a popular Bosnian doctor who was nonetheless accused of having 'a hidden agenda to sterilise all Serb women in Prijedor municipality' (ICTY, 2002a, 22). While not directly a dehumanising claim, it still touches on similar notions of insidious, invasive, and barbaric threats to the strength of the Serbian 'body politic'.

It is not possible to establish a direct causal link to this, but it is suggestive that military broadcasts following the takeover of Prijedor threatened that neighbouring villages would be 'purified' and taunted that 'women would be left without their bulls', with Muslim men in the area castrated in response to similar supposed violence against Serbs in Sarajevo (Hampson, 1993, 22). 'Bulls' are not vermin or monsters in the way that motivational dehumanisation implies, but the combination of 'purification' terminology, reproductive/demographic violence, and the need to commit genocide as retaliation or pre-emption for the enemy's actions, touches on similar themes.

During actual periods of killing, motivational dehumanisation sometimes gave way to legitimising dehumanisation. In the Krstić ICTY case, addressing the Srebrenica massacre of Bosnian Muslim men and boys, the Court found that 'the Prosecution has persuasively argued that "parcels" was a code name for Bosnian Muslims and that "distribute" was a code for killing them' (ICTY, 2001b, 146). In a wide range of examples, Serb military figures – including General Radislav Krstić and Colonel Ljubisa Beara – discussed the necessity and difficulty of 'distributing' and finding a 'solution' (ICTY, 2010a, 507) to the 3,500 'parcels' that had 'done most to ruin us' (ICTY, 2001b, 146). This referred to the Muslim men who were later executed en masse by military units led by Krstić and Beara (ICTY, 2010, 496). Major Miodrag Jokić's stumbling over words –

describing 'big problems with the people [being detained], I mean, with the parcel' (ICTY, 2001b, 146) – suggest that dehumanising framing did not always stick, but was a script that participants tried to self-correct to follow. The use of 'parcel' language is a clear example of legitimising dehumanisation (despite unconvincing claims by the perpetrators that it was a generic term for 'groups of people' (ICTY, 2010b, 103–105) or a code phrase to obfuscate military planning on insecure communication lines (ICTY, 2001b, 146)). Instead of focussing on a monstrous or verminous threat, it presented its subjects as lesser beings whom soldiers would have fewer inhibitions about killing. It was not unprecedented, either; Kalfus similarly highlights how Nazi documentation of the killing process referred to Jews as 'pieces', 'merchandise', and 'load' (Kalfus, 1990, 87-93).

To conclude, dehumanisation was indeed widespread across a broad range of military and paramilitary groups, at a range of levels, with the pervasive use of the term '*balija'* a clear example of this. The degree to which usage of the term within the military was consistent with that of paramilitaries like Brđanin, suggest that this was a widespread social phenomenon.

It framed the enemy as a vile, contaminating and hostile force that needed to be expelled and cleansed from the body politic – demonstrating motivational dehumanisation – and, during periods of killing, focused on reducing the supposedly human status of its targets (legitimising dehumanisation). While not as distinct or clearly pervasive (in either sense) as Rwanda and Germany, these discourses clearly played into ideas about the kind of threat that ethnic enemies posed. While I will investigate the degree to which it actually caused or was associated with violence in subsequent chapters, this can therefore be seen as a link in the causal chain between genocidal rhetoric and violence, and one that psychological literature *would* predict to play a role in encouraging violent action.

5.5 DEHUMANISATION IN MASS MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE

Dehumanising rhetoric in Serbia was not limited to elites and militaries but was culturally widespread, including among national print and broadcast media, cultural (and especially intellectual) leaders, and civil society institutions such as churches. Alongside sources like Drašković's *Knife* and Njegoš' *The Mountain Wreath* (which, as already explored, were popular at the time), these disseminated images of motivational dehumanisation, and can show how far they permeated Serbian society in the 1990s.

5.5.1 WOUNDED SERBIA

Media imagery of Serbia as a biological entity – a literal 'body politic' to be defended against corruption and wounding – was common. The Bosnian Serb newspaper *Ognjista* in February 1993 suggested that division of Serbian lands 'unavoidably penetrates the Serbian national being with fear and uncertainty, like a sharp blade cutting into the living tissue of the Serbian national organism', while the newspaper of the Croatian Serb militia *Vojska Krajina* published an article in April 1993 warning of an 'unparalleled dissection of the Serbian national tissue' (Čolović, 2002, 35). Veselin Djuretic, a SANU member and Republika Srpska politician, declared at the Second Congress of Serbian Intellectuals in April 1994 that enclaves and regions of other nationalities in Bosnia were 'in fact wounds on the body of the Serb ethnic being' (Čolović, 2002, 35).

Karadžić, for his part, used the imagery of the 'body' of the Serbian nation as a focus of renewal and strength, and emphasised the importance of bodily unity between Serbia and the Bosnian Republika Srpska and the Croatian Krajina Republika, which were the 'centre' of the Serbian national body (Čolović, 2002, 34). This focus on the defence of Serbs against what Čolović describes as the 'painful butchering', 'severing and amputation' of the 'biological substance' of the nation, is linked with ideas of motivational dehumanisation. This imagery focused more on territorial integrity and control of land rather than the insecurity of Serbs (though the two were clearly connected), linking visceral concerns about mutilation with 'rational' security concerns about territorial fragmentation.

To this 'wounded Serbia' imagery, many writers added now-familiar notions of disease and contamination.

Reacting to allegedly Islam-inspired articles in other newspapers, Deacon Radovan Bigović, wrote in the official church journal in 1991 about the 'malignant disease of the authors of these texts and of those at whose orders they write'. This language quickly assumed an implicitly genocidal edge, wondering ‘whether this disease has been contained or whether it has infected the majority of its organism’, and that ‘the Serb must help the Muslims to cure or excise that rather naïve tumour from their breasts’ (Cigar, 1995, 31). While this could be read in terms of disavowal of supposed foreign masters and reaffirmation of Serbian orthodoxy, the language of tumours and 'excision' implies stopping a sinister and insidious force by destroying it utterly.

Similarly, in 1993, an editorial in the fortnightly magazine *Duga* criticised Milošević’s government for not ‘clean[ing] out the anti-Serbian parasites that have multiplied in the key institutions [...] They are used to living as parasites on the backs of the Serbian people’, only understanding ‘brute force’ and ‘instinct’ (Milinkovic, 1994, 51; quoted in Landay, 2012, 42). By suggesting that these ‘multiplying’ parasites lacked strength and vigour of their own but would draw on Serbs’ greater power, and were motivated by ‘brute force’ and ‘instinct’ (and thus not amenable to negotiation), this evoked a familiar dynamic of lowly, inferior, but existentially threatening and infiltrating foes.

5.5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND GENETIC THREAT

Demographic threat was also a key element of dehumanisation in popular Serbian media, evoking a group that was dangerous not by force of arms, but through its inhuman fecundity that threatened to overwhelm Serbia as a nation.

These ideas were often expressed quite early in the timeline of genocidal mobilisation. In a popular 1989 journal commemorating the six hundredth anniversary of the battle of Kosovo, Marko Mladenović warned that Albanian Muslims were using their birth rates to attempt genocide, with 'dirty breeding machines' waging a 'dirty demographic war for an ethnically pure Kosovo' (Sells, 1998, 55–56). Likewise, a 1988 *Politika* article warned that Muslims' unnaturally 'high birth rate' was an 'act of violence against ordinary social development' that it was essential to 'handle accordingly, using violent means' (Janković, 1988; in de la Brosse, 2003, 40). Vojislav Stojanović, President of the Association of University Teachers and Scholars of Serbia, warned in a 1990 article in *Politika* that Serbia's neighbours sought to 'subjugate and oppress it' – 'the Albanians acted in an immoral and inhuman way … conduct[ing] an unprecedented campaign for their wretched and pitiful women to bear children' (de la Brosse, 2003, 41). Such language evokes both legitimising and motivational dehumanisation. For the former, it positions Albanian women as 'inhuman' and 'breeding machines', a deindividuated tool and weapon in Yugoslav biopolitics. For the latter, it drew upon the now-familiar combination of lowly status ('wretched and pitiful') and threatening nature (a 'dirty war', a 'campaign', an 'act of violence' against Serbia). Stojanović went on to warn that 'Albanian terrorists, beasts, were raging across Kosovo and Metohija' (Grmek, Gjidara, and Simac, 2002, 286), breaking into Serbian homes and committing atrocities, and implementing a 'monstrous theory of births at any cost' (Grmek, Gjidara, and Simac, 2002, 287). This clearly illustrates the link between demographic threat and dehumanisation.

Finally, poet and politician Bozidar Vucurević (who would later preside over the expulsion of Muslims from Trebinje, and destruction of the mosque there) drew on similar themes. In his published poetry, he described Muslims as an 'urban pestilence' and 'misfortune' that must be cleansed (Vujovic, 2000, 132). In an October 1994 interview in the newspaper *Srpsko Oslobodjenje,* he suggested (albeit later retracting the claim, suggesting first that it was mistranslated then that he did not say it at all) that being 'in a league with the Muslims … is just like being in a league with the devil'. Any conflict with Muslims, Vucurević claimed, was not merely 'a religious and a national or a civil war' but an existential threat – 'a war of civilisations', occasioned by the 'breeding' and 'explod[ing] birth rate' of 'wretched Islam' (ICTY, 2013b, 35999).

Linked with reproduction was the other common theme of genetic and pathological imagery – portraying Muslims as an intrinsically degenerate threat. As with Plavšić's rhetoric, this was particularly common in popular Serb media (Čolović, 2002, 16–17).

In a 1987 *Duga* column, the artist Dragoš Kalajić suggested that Muslims in Yugoslavia were 'an unconscious and spontaneous expression of pseudo-Arab culture', and a result of 'genetic predetermination and predisposition', as well as the influence of 'a special gene of the Ottoman soldiery' (Cigar, 2003, 316–317). He went on to describe them as the product of 'the Ottoman armies and administrators … satisfying their sexual impulses' (thus also drawing upon the image of Muslims as sexually rapacious and threatening). This, he suggested, placed them outside 'the European family of nations' (Cigar, 2003, 26), and caused them to exhibit a range of negative characteristics: a 'neoprimitive lust for power', as well as (to quote Cigar's paraphrasing), 'a propensity for theft, a lack of ethics, laziness, authoritarianism … and even discomfort wearing European clothing' (Cigar, 2003, 325). While not explicit dehumanisation, the notion of a group that was at once inferior and threatening, innately hostile and able to spread and contaminate others due to the hereditary nature of their threat, bore much in common with such imagery. *Duga* was an influential journal to publish such opinions – Milivojevic notes it as being 'one of the magazines with the highest circulation' (Milivojevic, 2000, 609–610), while Markovic remarks upon its influential upper and middle-class readership (Markovic, 2000, 587, 607). As such, statements like those of Kalajić were not marginal. Indeed, similar sentiments were expressed by a range of articles in newspapers such as *Duga* (Cigar, 2003, 338), and *Vreme* (Cigar, 1995, 71), as well as broadcasts on Radio Belgrade (de la Brosse, 2003, 64–65 fn 146).

5.5.3 ATROCITY PROPAGANDA

Notions of Muslim and Croat cruelty (especially against women and children) that called their humanity into question were also key features of dehumanising propaganda. While there *were* atrocities carried out against Serbs, the way these were reported – and sometimes fabricated or exaggerated –contributed to deliberate campaigns of dehumanisation, as well as the widespread belief in the late 1980s and early 1990s that Serbia was at risk of genocidal destruction from their inhumanly brutal neighbours.

De la Brosse cites a wide range of such stories from the broadcaster *Radio Television Serbia* detailing '*Ustashe*' barbarism, especially around the Serbian siege of Croatian-held Vukovar in late 1991. These included prurient details about gouging out eyes, cutting off children's fingers and making necklaces (reminiscent of 'necklaces of eyes' imagery in *Knife*), and disembowelling foes, with one interviewee concluding that 'they have no mercy on anyone, I don't know how that is, what are they, animals or what, they are not human' (de la Brosse, 2003, 61–62). Tellingly, an interviewed officer suggested that such Croatian tactics 'proves they are weak, it proves that they are inhuman, it shows how far they are prepared to go' (de la Brosse, 2003, 61).

Similar attitudes were circulated about Bosnians. In November 1992, *Radio Television Serbia* broadcast several interviews stating that Bosnians in Ljubovija 'committed genocide against the Serbs, they slaughtered, castrated, gouged out eyes' (de la Brosse, 2003, 64–65, fn. 144), and so should be denied food aid. De la Brosse notes that 'their answers follow more or less the language of journalistic propaganda'. Indeed, not four months before, an SDS publication in Sanski warned that

> *What … our bloodthirsty enemies … had in mind was to gouge out our eyes and carve us up, hack our bodies to pieces, rape women and girls in front of their dearest, to circumcise, to destroy our religion, to crush us just because we happened to be Serbs … they had monsters ready and*

> *committed to raping Serbian women, and they had developed a system of killing each and every Serb. (ICTY, 2009, 549)*

These evocations of a brutal and grotesque threat dehumanise the targets of this propaganda both directly – 'not human', 'animals', 'monsters' – but also on a broader, implicit basis. Such visceral imagery evoked notions of intimate danger from a subhuman source, and precluded any chance of negotiation. While atrocity propaganda is common in war – Lasswell, writing after World War One, argued that 'every war must appear to be a war of defence against a menacing, murderous aggressor [and] the rapacity of the enemy' (Lasswell, 1927, 47), in order to mobilise support – these lurid tales of military atrocity went further than 'ordinary' wartime propaganda. Their dehumanising tone, content, and context clearly contributed to the desirability of ethnic violence against a supposedly subhuman and cruel foe.

This survey of Serbian cultural output – from popular newspapers to intellectual/cultural life (including poetry and science), to atrocity propaganda on prime-time TV – show that dehumanising imagery was widespread. This alone does not mean it would had an impact, but shows it *was* well placed to do so, becoming an everyday part of life. Even if Gagnon and Mueller are correct and much violence was ostensibly motivated by economic factors and group dynamics rather than ethnic animus, the whole process took place in a society deeply suffused with images of the eventual victims of this violence as subhuman biological threats to the 'body' of the Serbian nation.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This empirically focused study shows clear evidence of socially pervasive use of dehumanisation in Serbian political and popular discourse in the 1990s. While several writers have downplayed ethnic hatred-based propaganda, this has shown it was widespread, and articulated in politically salient circumstances that primed it to have an impact. It was consistent enough to suggest strong ideological coherency rather than opportunistically selected metaphors into which I merely read post-hoc patterns.

Mainstream discourses in the 1990s could draw upon a long legacy of dehumanising attitudes, with popular books like *Knife* and *The Mountain Wreath* offering lurid and intense views of monstrous danger from neighbouring ethnic groups. In each case, violent and pre-emptive 'retaliatory' action was suggested to be necessary to avert the threat they posed and atrocities they threatened – the 'terrible war of defence' described by Dobrica Ćosić, to avert the 'new genocide' by 'chauvinist-*oustachi* Croatia and the Muslim *djihad*' (de la Brosse, 2013, 35). Historic Ottoman violence against Serbs, and persecution and mass murder of Serbs by Ustase at camps like Jasenovac, only made such warnings of a 'second genocide' more compelling to their audiences. If we are looking for the 'background' of dehumanising imagery and metaphors identified in previous chapters, then this is clearly an example of it. Embedded in education, popular culture, civil discourse (Titoist attempts to suppress it notwithstanding), and the media (Maksić, 2017, 153) those in Yugoslavia would have been familiar with dehumanising imagery and tropes, even if they did not personally believe them.

These messages, in turn, were drawn upon by Serbian political and cultural leaders in the years and months directly before the genocide, in order to motivate and direct participation in genocidal violence. While Milošević did not heavily engage in dehumanisation, both Republika Srpska leaders did, as did many mid-ranking politicians and intellectual, cultural, and civil society groups; similar ideas were expressed throughout military and paramilitary leaderships. The consistency of these messages (including specific recurring details like a demographic threat, genetic corruption and atrocities such as necklaces of eyes or fingers) suggests they were a distinctive discourse that was replicated and disseminated, rather than something incidental or a set of opportunistically adopted canards.

At the same time, as seen in my other cases, this did not translate into universal internalisation and deeply held support for genocidal violence. Lieberman, in a study of nationalist narratives in the former Yugoslavia, finds a complex mix of identities as friends, rescuers, bystanders, and perpetrators among contemporary accounts (Lieberman, 2006, 298-299), while Oberschall cites estimates from contemporary observers that '30 per cent of Serbs oppose such things [ethnic cleansing], 60 per cent agree or are confused and go along with the 10 percent who "have the guns and control the television tower"' (Oberschall, 2000, 986).

This is not what would be expected from a populace who unanimously supported or had internalised motivational dehumanisation on a deep level. Rather – as seen before in Rwanda and Germany – it seems important that it was those who occupied pivotal political, military, and media (literally, those who controlled the 'guns [and] the television tower') had internalised them more deeply. They used them to promote a sense of violent insecurity that – even if not always taken up wholeheartedly – was still enough to mobilise others in the 10%, and either find some purchase with the 60%, or appeal to them with a broader message of existential danger or insecurity.

In many examples, these discourses took a less intense form than in the other two case studies examined. While each case study has used different sets of imagery, many of the images used in Serbia were *similar* to motivational dehumanisation, rather than explicitly invoking it. While they drew upon similar notions of a powerful-but-weak, infiltrating, contaminating existential threat that requires categorical 'pre-emptive' violence to check, these discourses were somewhat more diffuse and less pervasive (in both senses). This might be linked to the less purely genocidal character of ethnic violence (as opposed to widespread campaigns of extermination). The less clear-cut campaign of motivational dehumanisation took place alongside the less clear-cut campaign of genocide – I will explore what this means in subsequent chapters.

PART 3: THE ROLE AND PLACE OF DEHUMANISATION

6. CHARACTER, EXTENT, AND CONTEXT OF MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION

Over the past three chapters, I have engaged in a detailed archival study of genocidal motivational dehumanisation in Nazi Germany, Hutu power-era Rwanda, and early 1990s Serbia and the Republika Srpska. Doing so has yielded a wealth of examples of motivational dehumanisation, drawing together strikingly similar and consistent discourses and security framings from across all three case studies, including extensive material not collated together in the literature so far.

In addition, I have also placed these in context: identifying who articulated these discourses, how consistently they did so, to what audiences, as well as what role they played in genocidal decision-making processes (through high-level policy decisions, military directives, or low level tactical choices), and popular mobilisation (through speeches, media, propaganda, and training). By providing a more fully contextualised and in-depth study of dehumanising discourse and its overlap with security politics, I hope to provide a more solid empirical foundation for the discursive and causal analysis I offer in this and following chapters.

Collating examples, however, can only provide a descriptive picture of dehumanisation, giving limited causal, generalisable, or analytical insight. To develop this more descriptive and primary-source based approach into something that might contribute to a more generalisable account, in this chapter I will compare and analyse common themes between the three case studies. This helps answer my RQ1, drawing a cross-case account of the nature and extent of motivational dehumanisation:

RQ1: First, how pervasive is (motivational) dehumanisation during periods of genocidal mobilisation and violence, and what forms does it tend to take?

With this in mind, I divide this chapter into two sections.

In the first section, I discuss the forms, metaphors, and internal 'logics' of motivational dehumanisation. If I am to talk about it as a distinct phenomenon, then I must identify what it was. What did it typically claim? What key and repeated metaphors, relationships, and implied attributes did it predicate to the target group? Who articulated it, in what contexts? I seek to identify a consistent set of discourses that operate in a distinct way, to more clearly identify a phenomenon that has only faced limited examination in the literature so far.

In the second section, I examine the dissemination and reception of motivational dehumanisation across genocidal societies, as well as the question of pervasiveness more broadly. What patterns can be observed in the political and social locations in which motivational dehumanisation was expressed, and what kind of political structures were commonly involved with spreading it?

What audiences did these messages reach, and how much were they internalised by them? Previous treatments of dehumanisation have typically not disaggregated the varied contexts, organisational positions, and power relationships that characterised dehumanising discourse, instead simply looking at it at 'national', 'elite', or 'popular' levels. Additionally, as noted in the introduction, discourses can be 'pervasive' in more than one way; they can be pervasive in the sense that the majority of people were exposed to them, and would understand what they meant, and/or they can be pervasive in the sense that many people had internalised them to some degree.

6.1 METAPHORS OF MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION

My three case studies have demonstrated the existence of a consistent, recurring tendency for genocidal states to portray their enemies as non-human *threats*, as a distinct subset of dehumanisation more broadly. This further confirms the observations of writers like Savage and Neilsen.

What imagery was used for such portrayals differs in each case, but, underlying these, there is a clear set of shared dynamics and concepts:

- Germany – disease, rats, lice, infection/infestation.
- Rwanda – snakes, cockroaches, demons, infestation/infiltration.
- Serbia – genetic impairment, disease, barbarism/luridly inhuman treatment.

Imagery of vermin and disgust was common in each. Specific differences might be explained in terms of social, cultural, and environmental differences – Rwandan audiences would be familiar with snakes as a 'natural' threat, while lice and diseases like typhus and tuberculosis were immediate concerns for Germans at the time – but, overall, they draw upon a set of relatively universal experiences of danger to humans (illness, pests, and other phenomena evoking disgust reactions, which were at once existentially threatening, but also lowly and infiltrating), imply similar subject positionings between audiences and targets, and impute similar sets of attributes to their subjects. The explicit and implicit arguments offered by this framing were extremely well-suited to characterising a group (regardless of its actual threat) as an existential danger that could not be negotiated with. Thus, because of the similar internal logics of the phenomenon in question, it is not surprising that we would observe a 'convergent evolution' towards metaphors of vermin, pests, and disease. The different metaphors employed in each case are much less significant than the more fundamental similarities between them. Put simply: such metaphors were very well-suited to the job.

By contrast, in interstate non-genocidal warfare, more overtly bestial imagery to depict wartime enemies was common, focusing on monstrosity and animal danger rather than infection and corruption. Examples include imperial predators stalking China in 1905 propaganda (NARA, 1904), and Wilhelmine Germany as a colossal mechanical dragon (Furniss, 1915) or a giant martial ape (Hopps, 1917). The implicit relations between audience and dehumanised subject in such cases were very different – while these monsters might threaten the life of members of the community, they were obvious, brutish, and lacked the insidious quality as the images used in genocidal propaganda. American anti-Japanese propaganda in the Second World War *did* often employ motivationally dehumanising themes, however. One of its mainstays, the 'Tokio Kid', did portray this kind of sneaky, insidious threat, with its goblin-like face, sharp fangs and bloody knife. Typically, however, such propaganda depicted a directly threatening entity, existing *outside* the nation, to be defeated by military force; where it did depict an internal threat, it did align with a popular policy of mass incarceration, but propaganda was typically aimed at stigmatising an enemy 'over there' rather than 'among us'.

In the genocidal propaganda I examined, however, its subjects were portrayed as more insidious, lowly threats *inside* the nation, seeking to undermine, subvert, or violate the integrity of the 'body politic'. In my case studies, genocidal dehumanisation tended not to depict its subjects as lions or dragons, but as more lowly creatures and forces, recalling Eco's observation of fascist visions of 'the enemy' as 'at the same time too strong and too weak' (Eco, 1995), as well as the domination-vulnerability paradox from Straus (2015). Rather than tearing apart its victims, such a threat posed an intimate danger, described using the imagery of infection, parasitisation, home infiltration, or blood-sucking. In some cases, the innocuousness of the supposed threat was used as an additional spur to categorical violence. Hitler suggested that Jews were more akin to tuberculosis, rather than the Black Plague, for example. Because the latter was a dramatic and obvious threat, it would invite a direct response, while the former was a slow, degenerative threat that would weaken and destroy a person's body while remaining undetected (Hitler, 1943, 232). Thus, the innocuousness of Jewish populations was cited as evidence of their danger, and the need to be 'vigilant' and all-encompassing in one's targeting.

This distinctive set of metaphors contrasted with legitimising dehumanisation's focus on the enemy as a deindividuated mass to whom the audience owed no obligations.

As well as stigmatising enemies, dehumanising rhetoric also often emphasises the health, virtue, or goodness of the audience's in-group. For Biljana Plavšić to claim that Bosnian Muslims were 'genetically deformed' implies that Bosnian Serbs were genetically pure (Sells, 2002, 58). Alfred Rosenberg claimed that Jews parasitised German society because of its strong 'creative forces' (Bein, 1964, 22), while in Rwanda, the audience's group were implicitly 'butterflies' or civilised humans, as opposed to cockroaches or subhuman barbarians. This praise often came with an implication that the dehumanised group were taking advantage of the audience's naiveté. Drašković portrayed the Muslim Osmanovici family as monstrously taking advantage of the Serbian Father Nicifor's kind hospitality and brotherhood to murder him and rape his family (Drašković, 2007, 9, 38). *Kangura* printed proverbs in which the misplaced mercy of stronger, noble, naïve creatures led to them being killed by those they rescued (ICTR, 2002, 226), and exhorted its 'majority people' audience to ‘wake up’ to the threat they faced, and use their strength to address it (Kirschke, 1996, 35). Thus, dehumanisation often not only depicted a foul and invasive enemy, but also flattered the audience by contrast.

As well as describing the supposed threat, dehumanisation also provided templates for how audiences could respond to it, with metaphors that often implied their own solutions. Vermin could be fumigated or killed individually, cancerous tumours could be ‘cut out’, diseases could be ‘cured’, and dangerous animals could be destroyed in culturally appropriate ways. Violence against Jews was typically justified in terms of anti-typhus and anti-tuberculosis hygiene, imagery of snake- and cockroach-killing provided a tactical shorthand and model for Hutu killing Tutsi, and sexual violence and forced pregnancy was supposedly necessary to stop the supposed tide of Muslim babies and the ‘demographic threat’ (Sells, 2003, 373). Dehumanised images of the enemy could easily lead to violence that reflected the specifics of that dehumanisation.

The ‘internal logic’ of dehumanisation also called for widening the scope of ‘acceptable’ violence, from targeting combatants to entire populations. If they were rats, cancer cells, or other vermin, they could not be anything else, and would pass on their threat to the next generation. This encouraged violence against non-combatant women and children for their role in propagating the next generation, rather than simply targeting those involved in the fighting. This might even be intensified by a failure to destroy the target group in their entirety – ‘natural selection’, or a desire for vengeance, might make the children of the group even more fierce or determined to threaten the audience in future, meaning that extermination had to be total.

Not all examples of motivational dehumanisation displayed all of these elements to the same degree. Many speakers invoked them in passing, leaving meanings implicit, or only emphasised specific elements. Additionally, the Rwandan and German cases showed more clear and consistent evidence of dehumanisation among leaders, media, and *génocidaires* than those in Serbia; notably, the violence in the first two cases was more clearly aimed at exterminating the foe, and more diffuse in the Serbian case, with greater emphasis on displacement of populations from 'Serbian' territory.

Nonetheless, the surprising degree of consistency in the form and internal discursive logic of motivational dehumanisation, despite very different circumstances in each case study, suggests it is a distinct phenomenon. It is a key and unlikely finding. If genocidal media, elites, and populations selected their imagery arbitrarily, or instrumentally responded to changing circumstances of ethnic violence and tension, I would expect to see little commonality in the images they used. That such a commonality existed – sometimes using arguments and metaphors almost indistinguishable from each other save for the proper nouns they referred to – suggests that it appeals to more deep-seated psychological dynamics of disgust and aversion (examined in greater detail next chapter) and that this phenomenon serves a useful purpose to genocidal projects. These observations are supported by the case studies developed thus far in this thesis, and by other studies of dehumanisation and psychological research examined in my literature review.

There are two potential objections to this conclusion.

Firstly, this consistency would be less surprising if I found that genocidal propagandists were influenced by other cases of genocide. If this mimicry were the case, it would suggest any commonalities might be ascribable to propagandists simply copying what worked in other countries, rather than reaching the same conclusions independently out of some deeper phenomenon of motivational dehumanisation. Given the evidence, I find this unlikely. There is scant – but present – evidence of at least some level of awareness of Nazi propaganda strategies among Rwandan and Serbian propagandists. Des Forges notes that Habyarimana 'apparently' owned copies of films about Hitler and Nazism in his home (Des Forges, 1999, 97). Belic suggests Nazi German ideas of 'partisan neurosis' may have influenced the pathologisation of national identity by Yugoslav psychiatrists, many of whom were heavily involved in politics (Belic, 2011, 134) – but this is limited and highly indirect. Additionally, works such as *The Mountain Wreath* predate Nazi antisemitism and its 'biological' antecedents entirely.

Where Serbs and Hutu did reference Nazi Germany, it was exclusively in negative terms. Hutu propaganda suggested Tutsi 'nourish[ed] Neo-Nazi dreams [of] colonial expansion', espoused 'Nazi fanaticism' (Chrétien, 1995, 178), and modelled themselves 'on the model of the Aryan race', using the Swastika

(Des Forges, 1999, 65). Serbs had been genocidally victimised by Nazi Germany and its Ustase allies within living memory, and the 'defence' against repeats of this violence underpinned much of its own ethnic violence. As such, they would be expected to eschew, rather than adopt, dehumanising Nazi ideas. Any similarity is more parsimoniously explained by the idea of culturally specific but 'convergently evolved' discourses described above, rather than a deliberate (but unattested to by historical record) 'copying' of tactics from hated historical examples, which were already used as negative comparisons for the targeted group.

Another criticism is that my analysis has risked circularity. I have looked for material using a definition I derived and refined as I worked, and so the fact that I have found (or selected) material fitting my definitions might seem trivial, not evidence of a larger trend. I suggest that the emphasis on context works against this concern however. These discourses often had large audiences, or were articulated repeatedly by those responsible for policymaking. Attention to this sort of political salience can significantly strengthen the claim that these discourses were indeed a major part of causal mechanisms of genocidal violence, rather than cherry-picked. With my shorter case studies in Chapter 8, this objection can be further reduced, by showing that, again and again, genocidal movements drew upon these images – no cherry-picking is necessary.

To conclude, I answer this part of RQ1 in the affirmative. It is possible, across multiple cases, to identify motivational dehumanisation as a consistent phenomenon across different cases. It called for violent action against a foe cast as a threatening animal, microbe, or other similar creature. Doing so reduces moral restraints on violence against its targets, like legitimising dehumanisation, but far more common throughout the discourse of elites, media, and the military was an attempt to make violence urgent, desirable, and total.

As part of this, I have identified a number of key repeating themes that emerge from the idea of motivational dehumanisation, either as explicit or implicit ramifications of its internal logic. Its subjects are portrayed as a force that threatens to poison, subvert, infect, decay, or infest the national 'body politic', and from which the nation thus needs to be defended. That they were not an external, obvious threat was portrayed as one of the reasons for their lethality. The supposedly slow, subtle, and insidious harm brought about by this dehumanised threat from within made them particularly deadly. This contrasted with the audience, who were portrayed as ‘strong but unwitting’ hosts – perhaps naive or ‘asleep’ – who could be parasitised or caused to degenerate by a cunning and harmful threat nonetheless characterised by its weakness. Genocidal elites and ideologues presented themselves as ‘awakening’ their audiences to the supposed threats, and then suggested to their newly awake audience that the dehumanised targets should be destroyed. Targets should be destroyed ruthlessly within the audience’s own communities, an argument that was both an injunction to be merciless, and a further spur to violence because of the invasive, close-to-home nature of the threat. It was necessary to destroy the target communities in their entirety, lest – like cancer, or an infestation of vermin, or rot – they grow back, possibly stronger or more numerous. The specific imagery and arguments used may have varied, but these overall 'internal logics' that I have identified were remarkably apparent in all three cases.

6.2 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION: ITS POSITION AND PERVASIVENESS IN GENOCIDAL SOCIETIES

This thesis has not merely aimed to analyse motivational dehumanisation as a set of ideas but also to put it in context, building on existing scholarship to understand it as part of a broader set of social and political processes. What patterns were there in how it spread throughout the bureaucracies, media, and elites of genocidal states? Did genocidal motivational dehumanisation arise from a broader, perhaps more diffuse environment of dehumanisation in popular culture, or could it emerge by itself? How pervasive was it throughout society – that is, how much could a Rwandan Hutu, Serb, or German be expected to be aware of it on the radio, on billboards, or in popular speech? Did people internalise these views as a result?

As mentioned in my methodology, I have analysed the contexts that dehumanisation took place in using four broad categories:

- Ideological precursors to genocide

- Leaders and state elites
- Bureaucracies and militaries
- Mass media and popular culture

While Rwanda, Germany and Serbia were very different societies with different social structures, what broad equivalencies I identify allow me to identify areas of commonality and difference. I briefly summarise the common findings (or lack thereof) from my three case studies at each level, highlighting patterns or recurring issues that emerge when comparing the three instances of genocidal violence. This also allows me to identify the timeline over which motivational dehumanisation emerged – the circumstances it became prominent in, and how it spread.

As I move into discussions of mass media and popular culture, I will begin to address questions of pervasiveness, since these offer insights into broader public attitudes regarding motivational dehumanisation. I assess – as far as is possible – the degree to which motivational dehumanisation-based conceptions of the enemy had pervaded each society, both in terms of how difficult to avoid such messages were, and how much people had internalised them. The latter is considerably harder to determine, but my analysis so far can provide some indications.

6.2.1 IDEOLOGICAL PRECURSORS TO GENOCIDE

I start by examining the cultural and ideological precursors to genocidal rhetoric.

As Doty notes,

> *Statements rarely speak for themselves. Even the most straightforward and ostensibly clear statements bring with them all sorts of presuppositions or background knowledge that is taken to be true. In the absence of the 'truth' of the background knowledge and the world it presupposes, the statement would not make sense. (Doty, 1993, 306)*

What were the reservoirs of background knowledge, historical memory, and pre-existent patterns of dehumanisation upon which leaders could draw? Especially when *génocidaires* directly cited particular texts or statements as influential, this can prove useful in illustrating what the genealogy of dehumanising imagery was, and how discourses of motivational dehumanisation were initially 'assembled'.

In Germany, the long history of dehumanising antisemitism in Europe provided deep reservoirs of imagery about antisemitism – such as allegations of plague-spreading, ritual murder, and blood-drinking – that would later be picked up by groups like *Stürmerverlag*. Martin Luther's work, in particular, was replete with references to Jews as unclean, toxic, or harmful forms. That said, antisemitic discourse in Germany only took a clearly eliminationist tone later. Probst notes its influence 'appears to have been rather uncertain until at least the late nineteenth, or perhaps the early twentieth century' (Probst, 2012, 58).

The more medicalised, ethnic form of antisemitism espoused by nineteenth-century figures like de Lagarde, and Stewart Chamberlain, as well as the work of biologists like Bölsche, was more influential for later Nazi elites.

In Serbia, the long history of ethnoreligious conflict and Ottoman control, together with more immediate territorial politics, provided a long history of hostile ethnic imagery to draw upon. While the 'ancient hatreds' thesis that drew a direct and inexorable line between this history and modern conflict is unconvincing, there were ample examples that *could* be drawn on as a reservoir of genocidal imagery; 'activated' from 'decades of dormancy', as Oberschall suggests (2000, 990).. 'The Mountain Wreath' clearly used imagery of Muslims as 'degenerate … locusts' to justify violence against them, and was extensively taught in schools. Other texts like 'Knife' and the SANU Memorandum evoked a dire, and often dehumanised threat in other ways. Even if Serbs in the 1980s did not universally or strongly believe these were accurate reflections of ethnic relations in Yugoslavia, they would be familiar with these images of a verminous, threatening enemy, so appeals to such imagery to justify genocidal violence would be readily comprehensible and meaningful to them. This would allow the speeches of leaders like Karadžić to appear to be justified in terms of longstanding history and tradition.

While ethnic tensions had been present in Rwanda, becoming particularly intense post-independence and with the conflict with the RPF, there does not seem to have been a strong pre-1990s tradition of motivational dehumanisation. There was, as Lemarchand notes, ‘no *Mein Kampf* to provide ideological direction to the revolution, no Fuhrer to instil hatred in the minds of the masses’, and, importantly ‘no Final Solution to deal with Tutsi threats’ (Lemarchand, 2005, 53–54). Many of those involved in genocidal media outlets that were later key to using dehumanisation, like *Kangura* and RTLM, had previously worked for more moderate outlets or were described by co-workers as holding 'no particular hatred or animosities for anyone' (Li, 2007, 102). This invites us to focus on the leaders and elites who pioneered dehumanising images and ideas after 1990; what changed?

Based on this, genocide did not have to draw upon a primordial notion of long-established hatreds, or upon the sort of centuries-old imagery described by writers like Goldhagen. The biological motivational dehumanisation repeated by Nazis largely came to significant cultural prominence and influence in the late nineteenth century – around fifty years before the Holocaust, while important sources of dehumanising imagery like ‘The Mountain Wreath’ emerged as early as 1842 – 150 years before the war in Serbia. In Rwanda, however, despite a history of ethnic violence and tension dating back to independence in 1962, the ecosystem of media that played a key role in promoting the ideas of the genocide in 1994 – *Kangura* and RTLM – simply did not exist until the 1990s. Across the three cases, there is little pattern save for that a ‘reservoir’ of genocidal sentiment *was* present before each genocide began. In each case, there were a set of ideas and metaphors circulating through education, media, and culture that were broadly understood by society as a whole, and that could be coaxed back into broader meaningfulness and resonance by elite and media action. The 'lead times' that these reservoirs took to draw upon and disseminate throughout national audiences varied widely. However, it does suggest there is no distinct pattern to the timing of ideological precursors of genocidal dehumanisation, or a need for a lengthy literary or cultural tradition of such imagery.

Taken together, this shows that, although historical, cultural, and literary reference points were important in shaping motivational dehumanisation, they were not necessary. Indeed, that motivational dehumanisation did not require this particular 'background knowledge' was one of its main advantages. When leaders and media figures labelled their enemies as animals, diseases, or other unpleasant entities, they did not need to draw upon a long history of such imagery. Instead, they often appealed to basic knowledge about the natural world, and to fairly universal instinctual psychological aversions to pathogens and disgusting phenomena (Aarøe, Osmundsen, and Petersen, 2016). If securitising elites could persuade a fraction of their audiences that their relationship to the targeted group was analogous to their relationships with vermin, filth and disease, then it followed that they should hate them, fear their infiltration, find any compromise impossible, and use categorical 'cleansing' methodologies of killing.

What sort of natural 'background knowledge' did discourses in each case draw upon, and how did it relate to everyday experiences?

In Rwanda, the common use of snake imagery might be explained by the fact that snakebite was a very real threat, with approximately 1,400–10,000 annual deaths in the eastern Sub-Saharan Africa region making it a phenomenon people would be familiar with (Kasturiatne et al., 2008, 1597–1599). Military leaders like Tharcisse Mvunyi, Sylvestre Gacumbitsi (ICTR, 2004, 30, 52, 54, 98), and Aloys Simba, repeatedly used snake imagery as a shorthand for tactical methods of genocidal killing – they invoked hunting and killing snakes in long grasses, and smashing eggs to prevent their resurgence in the next generation. Tirrell notes the 'quite remarkable … direct and literal application' of such metaphors across Rwanda (Tirrell, 2012, 205). In each case, Hutu leaders were not drawing on a long history of dehumanising imagery, but rather on everyday experiences of the natural world, that leaders and media had persuaded them to apply to 1994 Rwanda.

The extensive use of epidemic disease imagery in eliminationist Nazi antisemitism could similarly be ascribed to people's everyday experiences. Especially on the Eastern Front, people were very familiar with epidemic diseases like typhus, where the post-WWI period saw thirty to forty million cases, killing approximately three million across Russia and Poland alone (Allen, 2014, 14). Posters likening Jews to typhus lice, therefore, would be very meaningful to people in Eastern Europe. Likewise, despite a slow decline in mortality over the nineteenth century, war and economic crisis led to a sharp increase in tuberculosis infections in Germany in the interwar period (Murray and Loddenkemper, 2018, 14–16), making people very familiar with infection, epidemics, and the need to defend against a ‘tuberculous’ threat; all imagery that could be repurposed against Jews (Allen, 2014, 26–28). Finally, the ghettoisation of Jews led to accusations that they were plague bearers becoming self-fulfilling – unsanitary conditions meant that TB and typhus became major causes of death, responsible for at least 33.7% of all deaths in the Warsaw ghetto by 1941 (compared to 8.3% among the same population in the 1930s) (Murray and Loddenkemper, 2018, 49–50). Nazi propagandists were quick to capitalise on this. Thus, dehumanising Nazi propaganda similarly drew on people’s environmental experiences, rather than just cultural history.

This is less evident in the former Yugoslavia, but there are still clear examples of environmental and scientific expertise being used to justify violence. Plavšić cited her academic background as justification for their belief – 'I am a biologist and I know [these things]' (Wilmer, 2002, 213), while extremist Croatian Serb leaders like Jovan Rašković cited their psychiatric training, identifying Bosnian Muslim inferiority as a 'pathological reality', rooted in the 'deepest layer[s] of the organic world' (Belic, 2011, 148). Professional expertise – from academic experts, whose job it was to ‘know things’ – about genetics, natural selection, or psychoanalysis served a similar role in making dehumanisation a fact of the natural world, rather than the product of a longstanding cultural legacy.

From this, I conclude that an advantage of dehumanisation for genocidal movements is that it does not need a longstanding cultural history in order to establish the kind of 'background knowledge' and subject-audience relations that informed genocidal violence. As is clear from Germany and Rwanda, imagery about disease or dangerous vermin could resonate with and gain its meaning from the experience of people’s daily lives.

In turn, this points me to look at the elites and leaders who were responsible for suggesting that *the immediate present* was the time to make good on longstanding traditions of prejudice, or who argued that ‘natural’ relations were relevant to specific cases, and that recognising the urgency of this was essential for survival. Securitisation of this sort requires a securitising actor to make the case that there is a security threat. Who were these securitising actors, and what arguments did they make?

6.2.2 LEADERS AND STATE ELITES

While state structures were very different, individual leaders and propagandists routinely espoused extensive amounts of dehumanising rhetoric, and played an important role in circulating it more widely. In speeches, Hitler and other leaders presented Jews as a verminous force that needed to be 'cut out' of Germany society. Karadžić and Plavšić publicly described Bosnian Muslims as a poisonous or genetically degenerate threat, and called for often violence specifically to avert this supposed demographic. Rwandan military and regional elites all used the same language of snakes, cockroaches, and vermin to call for specific forms of violence against Tutsi.

Together, these cases provide clear evidence of motivational dehumanisation across multiple cases. To demonstrate that they were representative and politically influential (rather than fringe or off-hand remarks), I will examine the locations and contexts in which they were uttered. Even if it were a small fraction of political speech, it would nonetheless be significant if articulated at key moments where it could sway decision-making (such as at a policy planning meeting), or influence large numbers of *génocidaires* (such as when it was delivered to a large audience). Secondly, I will examine its consistency across a range of public and private contexts.

Addressing the first point, the examples cited here have not been unrepresentative, cherry-picked from a corpus of material contradicting them, and nor are they off-hand, unimportant remarks. Rather, they were published in widely-read books and newspapers, or uttered in speeches to mass audiences. Hitler and Goebbels' speeches reached large numbers, while *Mein Kampf* and *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* enjoyed millions of sales. Karadžić's speeches were made before decision-making bodies like the Republika Srpska National Assembly, while Plavšić's statements about genetic degeneration were republished to large readerships in state and private newspapers. Rwandan elite génocidaires used dehumanising imagery to direct their subordinates' behaviour in military training camps, party gatherings, or speeches as burgomasters. Even if these audiences only represented a fraction of the total population, they were often members of military or paramilitary groups, or loyal political functionaries

– just the people who would *need* to be exposed to it to carry out and direct genocidal violence.

That motivational dehumanisation was employed consistently across different circumstances in each case study further suggests it was a core part of leaders' beliefs and rhetorical strategies, rather than simply being an opportunistically deployed rhetorical device.

Nazi elites employed it in public and in private, from before the genocidal project had begun, to its conclusion. Dehumanisation can be found as early as Hitler's 1919 report to Captain Mayer, where he diverted from what he was asked to report on, instead warning of the 'racial tuberculosis of the nations' (Maser, 1974, 215). It is likewise found in his personal notes, his speeches, and records of his *Table Talk* toward the end of the war. Goebbels was similarly consistent - even before he joined the Nazi party, he characterised Jews in his work as the 'poisonous eczema on the body of our sick nation' (Ginsborg, 2014, 315). If motivational dehumanisation were only espoused instrumentally, we would not expect the consistency of imagery expressed in public and private by a wide range of leaders from 1919 to 1945. That there was such similarity, even before any centralised control, suggests these were pervasive and deeply held outlooks.

In Rwanda and Yugoslavia, I have not been able to locate the same degree of evidence of privately held beliefs. Even so, public statements of dehumanisation remained strikingly consistent, suggesting that they were deep-seated enough not to change in light of rapidly changing political situations. In Rwanda, there is significantly more coherency in the statements of burgomasters, commanders, or other leaders than would be expected if each was simply improvising their imagery independently of each other. In Serbia, the widespread pathologisation of Muslims, and portrayal of them as a fanatical overpopulating horde, was present among many intellectuals and leaders, such as Karadžić in Bosnia, and the Miloševićs, SANU and the Serbian Medical Society in Serbia, who formed a distinct intellectual milieu and network in which these ideas could percolate.

That many leaders continued to espouse these beliefs, even when doing so was personally costly, is further evidence that they were deeply held, rather than instrumentally useful, ideologies. Plavšić, despite stating her regret at trial that 'blinding fear' of Serb victimisation had led her to pursue oppressive policies – a remark Subotic suggests may have simply been to lighten her trial sentencing (Subotic, 2012, 43–44) – quickly returned to espousing her old beliefs in her memoirs shortly after. She claimed she 'ha[d] done nothing wrong' (Subotic, 2012, 48), that her 'primitive' Bosnian Muslim enemies were motivated by a desire to steal and parasitise Serbian development for their own ('in the biologist's vocabulary, [Izetbegovic] wanted to force an 'expedited evolution'), and warned of their 'ritualistic' killings, 'Satanic experiments', 'laboratory manipulations', and 'bloody feasts' (Subotic, 2012, 56). She voiced these opinions to 'secure our children's survival and save from temptation those who threaten that survival' (Subotic, 2012, 56). These attitudes contradict her earlier contrition. That she published them even while appealing her dearly awaited 'dream' of early release for good behaviour (Subotic, 2012, 39) suggests that she deeply held onto such dehumanising beliefs about Muslims, even against her own best interests.

Many – but not all - other elites and media figures similarly continued to adhere to dehumanising beliefs, even when seemingly against their material interests. Julius Streicher, similarly, continued to promote dehumanising ideas even while on trial. Despite stating that 'it is my conviction that the contents of *Der Stürmer* … were not incitation', he repeatedly claimed his publications contained racial and political 'enlighten[ment]'. He continued by arguing that he was simply following on from Martin Luther's claim that 'the Jews are a serpent's brood and one should burn down their synagogues and destroy them' (Avalon Project, 2008b).

Not all genocidal elites defended their dehumanising attitudes at trial. Rosenberg claimed that he had wished to 'solve this [Jewish] problem in a chivalrous way' and claimed (again, seemingly disingenuously) to believe 'that it turned out otherwise is a tragic destiny' (Avalon Project, 2008a). In Rwanda, Ngeze did express remorse for his portrayal of Tutsi while requesting early release (ICTR, 2018b). However, as a group of academics noted in their letter opposing his release, he had refused to express guilt, regret, or remorse in the years of trial and imprisonment before that, and forced witnesses and survivors to undergo 'the traumatising ordeal of having to recount the details of their victimisation' (ICTR, 2018a). The wording of Ngeze's letter – remorse expressed closely in line with 2018 Rwandan politics – suggests it may have been a careful attempt to secure his release by 'saying the right thing'. In short, it was contrition, rather than hate, that was instrumentally used.

This supports the notion that these ideas were sincerely held by many elite genocidaires. It was not universal - some did express remorse for their previous motivational dehumanisation-based beliefs, but this was sometimes an instrumental attempt to gain clemency. Where they stuck to their old beliefs, even in cases where doing so hurt their attempts to gain early release or better treatment, this would suggest deep-seated convictions. Cases like Streicher and Plavšić represent fairly strong evidence that at least some leaders sincerely held dehumanising beliefs, even when they were not instrumentally useful or widely held social scripts.

Based on this, I suggest that there is clear evidence that motivational dehumanisation was sincerely held by members of elites across all three case studies. They played a major role in disseminating and espousing it at key moments in the genocide, whether in planning stages, addresses to political assemblies, political parties, or the public in general, or during the actual commission and ordering of violence. The fact that elites often (but not always) expressed these beliefs in private records, consistently across time and context, and continued to espouse them even when politically inconvenient suggests that they were at least somewhat deeply held.

6.2.3 BUREAUCRACIES AND MILITARIES

In each case, I have observed extensive use of motivational dehumanisation among military and paramilitary groups responsible for enacting the genocide - in terminology and strategies centred around 'cleansing' or 'purging' the enemy, in the inclusion of dehumanisation in military entertainment, training or indoctrinating media, or in statements made by participants during or after violence. These often repeated or built on elite or media discourses.

In each case, motivational dehumanisation was present at pivotal and key decision-making moments. Military leaders and officials planning and organising violence used clearly dehumanising framings. At the Wannsee Conference Heydrich identified Jews as the 'bud cells' of an anti-German threat, meaning that violence had to be total to prevent them from growing back stronger. Muvunyi and his subordinates at the Rwandan officer's college directed those under their command to destroy 'serpents' and crush their eggs. Lt. Col. Vujadin Popovic's orders to his soldiers included statements that 'all the *balija* have to be killed', including 'finish[ing] off' Bosnian Muslim children. These were all high-ranking military figures, responsible for shaping national or regional military policy and actions – their views, expressed in such contexts, could thus have a particularly significant impact, affecting and contributing to the actions of large numbers of subordinates whether or not they had internalised these messages themselves.

In several cases, the invocation of dehumanising discourse and slurs seems to have been contrary to what one would predict the interests of the speakers to be, implying – as above – that they were sincerely internalised, especially in Rwanda and Germany. The Wannsee Conference's minutes show it to have been highly technocratic – concerning definitions for who counted as Jewish, statistics of employment, and where they should be sent for liquidation (German Government, 1942). Nevertheless, Heydrich's and Buhler's remarks about the contagious, regenerative threat that Jews posed were sufficiently important to have been recorded in the minutes, despite seemingly breaking with this more managerial approach. These echo Bloxham's argument in my literature review regarding the role of 'ideologised activist cores' in galvanising and complementing bureaucratic function in mass violence (Bloxham, 2008, 230). Likewise, Muvunyi's statements about Tutsi women poisoning their spouses, and the need for Hutu men to kill or drive them off (not to mention similar claims in *Kangura*), would be an unpopular and extreme demand if Muvunyi simply sought to stir up ethnic tension for instrumental gains. This tendency to reference and uphold motivational dehumanisation, even when not tactically or personally convenient, echoes what I observed above with leaders and state elites.

In turn, dehumanising ideas were shared by many others throughout military hierarchies. In Germany, training and indoctrination films such as *Fighting Typhus* and *The Eternal Jew*, alongside military indoctrination syllabi such as *The Jew as Universal Parasite*, saw wide distribution, spreading lurid examples of motivational dehumanisation to lower-ranking troops. These images were closely reflected in statements by those involved in enacting violence. One German NCO claimed that his experiences on the Eastern Front opened his eyes to the 'Jewish threat'. Other soldiers described Jews as a ‘purulent appendix in the body of Europe’ that had to be cut out (Lewy, 2017, 127), ‘parasites of the human race [who] have to be extirpated’ (Lewy, 2017, 49), and ‘the plague boils of humanity’ (Klee, Dressen, and Reiss, 1997, 157). A direct example of this transmission of images could be found in the discourse of former pro-Tutsi moderate Andre Sibomana. Shortly after meeting a group of other pro-genocide burgomasters in Butare, Sibomana began to argue that Tutsi were a ‘snake curled around a gourd’ and smashing the vessel – no matter its cost – was essential to destroy such deadly infiltrating vermin (Des Forges, 1999, 703). Straus and Lyons cite an interview with a Hutu farmer who, hearing this, understood it to mean that all Tutsi and those sheltering them should be killed (Lyons, 2006, 48). These, together, provide a clear example of dehumanising ideas spreading throughout a political/paramilitary hierarchy, both promoting violence, and shaping the form it took. While the largely paramilitary nature of violence in Serbia (Gagnon, 2006) meant it lacked the same sort of centralised ideological indoctrination that promoted *Fighting Typhus* to large numbers of German soldiers, there are still examples of dehumanising texts, images, and metaphors circulating through military bureaucracies. Branislav Lainović cited *Knife’s* dehumanising portrayal of Muslims as a motivation for his – and his paramilitary group, the Serbian Guard’s – participation in anti-Muslim violence

(Cigar, 1995, 25). Additionally a profusion of dehumanising language describing Bosnian Muslim men as 'packages' passed down the chain of command from General Radislav Krstić, Colonel Ljubisa Beara, and Major Miodrag Jokić (ICTY, 2001b, 146). These demonstrate that dehumanising imagery and ideas could often spread from elites and leaders to those under their command.

During the actual commission of violence, perpetrators often employed legitimising, rather than motivational dehumanisation. SS officers referred to Jewish victims as a deindividuated mass or as 'pieces' or 'merchandise'. In many accounts from Rwanda, Tutsi were described by killers as farm animals, and their executions as 'bush-clearing work'. Some Serbian military units referred to Bosnians to be killed as 'parcels'. It is, as ever, difficult to ascertain interior mental states in such examples, or generalise out across broader military hierarchies, but these are clearly evidence of legitimising dehumanisation. This fits closely with the model of dehumanisation set out in my introduction. Motivational dehumanisation might increase the psychological incentives to commit violence in 'defence' of one's own security and the security of one's ethnic group, but was not as suited to diminishing violence against other humans. Legitimising dehumanisation, by contrast, was more closely associated with the actual process of killing.

More generic slurs also reflected motivational dehumanisation. References to Muslims as '*balije*' in Yugoslavia, or Tutsi as 'cockroaches' and 'snakes' in Rwanda were both extremely common among military leaders and line soldiers during the commission of violence. While less explicit about the implications of such language – they did not always explain them, as with Aloys Simba's injunction that *Interahamwe* members should 'search for the snakes in the bushes and hit them on the head' (ICTR, 2005, 54–6) – such slurs did reflect dehumanisation. In many cases, '*inyenzi*' or '*balije*' became a seemingly generic slur used as a substitute for any reference to Tutsi or Bosnians, to strip them of their human status. This can be seen, for example, in Nsengiyumva's followers repeated chants that *inyenzi* should be 'exterminated' just before a massacre of Tutsi in a church (ICTR, 2008, 306), or Lt. Col. Vujadin Popovic's orders that 'all the *balije* have to be killed' (ICTY, 2010, 451). While using the language of motivational dehumanisation, these seem to be better suited to removing inhibitions against violence against their targets, or as 'generic' terms of racial abuse. Thus, I suggest that the terms and discourse of motivational dehumanisation in some cases seem to have been 'pared-down', reduced in semantic content (but still building upon their earlier meanings) to provide slurs that deny their targets' humanity when it came to actual instances of violence.

Thus, dehumanisation, including motivational dehumanisation, was clearly present throughout the military and paramilitary structures of all three cases studies, and was associated with particularly genocidal forms of violence. While it came from a range of sources (including popular culture and society more broadly), it was often inculcated and promulgated by military elites to more low-ranking killers. We have records of several of these military and paramilitary troops continuing to repeat dehumanising ideas, even in diaries and other contexts where this was not instrumentally useful to them.

6.2.4 MASS MEDIA AND THE PERVASIVENESS OF DEHUMANISATION

Given the importance of understanding the pervasiveness of motivational dehumanisation, an examination of the reach and role of dehumanising media is particularly important. State and private press agencies, billboards, films, broadcasts, and other media could deliver consistent sets of ideas, images, and messages about 'the enemy' to a population, alongside other, more conventional reporting about national security or foreign policy issues. Ascertaining how omnipresent these messages were is important to determine how familiar audiences were with these messages – could they be avoided? Were they a routine feature of broadcasting? Did they take advantage of the medium to increase the impact that they had?

In each case, the media played a major role in disseminating, and in some cases, serving as the origins of, dehumanising imagery. Both before and during the genocide, sources like *Kangura*, RTLM, *Der Stürmer*, and *Duga* disseminated imagery of the enemy that cast them as an existential, verminous, barbaric, or infiltrating threat to the state and nation. In each case, mass media before the genocide portrayed the enemy group as vermin and played up (or outright fabricated) stories of the atrocities they committed or supposedly represented to the integrity of the audience's community, lives, and bodies.

In at least two case studies, I found that raw circulation numbers for dehumanising media were surprisingly low as a fraction of the whole population. Superficially, this casts doubt on their pervasiveness and influence on genocide. If only a few people were consuming dehumanising media, from a niche source, this limits their ability to have a causal impact, as well as my ability to generalise about broader 'media messages' at the time.

While *Der Stürmer* sold hundreds of thousands of weekly copies by the 1930s, its highest circulation – 700,000 copies sold weekly, in 1939 – was less than one per cent of the German population at the time. Even if I take the highest claimed circulation of *Kangura* given by its editor – 30,000 (an ICTR prosecution witness suggested that it was usually much less, between 1500 and 3000 (ICTR, 2003, 40)) – this is similarly less than half a percentage point of the Rwandan population of the time, only 56–66% of whom were estimated to be literate in any case.

In Serbia, Maksić describes an 'omnipresent discourse … tied together by the common Serb nationalist master frame [that] unremittingly structured affective flows and intensified sentiments of Serb ethnic solidarity'. He summaries the result of the increasing dominance of Serbian media by Milošević's SDS (Maksić, 2017, 153):

> *When inquiring about the situation in BiH in the mainstream media, a citizen of Serbia was likely to find a press release of SDS, an interview with Karadžić, a commentary by a Serb ethno-intellectual, a report on Jihadist or Ustase attacks, JNA's statement on operations against 'separatists', a broadcast of RSBiH assembly, a call for national unity by*

> *[the] Serbian Orthodox Church, a feuilleton on atrocities against Serbs in World War II, [or] an article about a campaign by a cultural or humanitarian organisation to help the suffering Serbs. (Maksić, 2017, 153)*

Even so, many key dehumanising media outlets reached a relatively small fraction of the population. Party papers in Bosnia-Herzegovina, such as the party's official *Javnost* and its informal *Otadzbina* had weekly and initial biweekly circulations of 52,000 and 6,000 respectively, out of a self-identifying Serbian population in Bosnia of approximately 1.4 million (Maksić, 2017, 154) – again, less than one per cent. In Serbia, *Duga* which was involved in disseminating dehumanising messages, was primarily an upper/middle-class journal (Markovic, 2000, 587, 607), while broadcasters such as Serbian Television and TV Belgrade would be limited by the fact that only 53% of households in Serbia and Montenegro had access to TVs in 1992. Thus, the picture that Maksić paints notwithstanding, this media enjoyed a limited reach.

These observations argue against both the representativeness of the sources I have cited above as evidence of widespread dehumanisation, their pervasiveness throughout society, and, by extension, the degree to which they could meaningfully affect the course of genocidal violence. If only a small fraction of the population directly engaged with dehumanising propaganda – as was apparently the case in Rwanda and Germany – then this would set a clear upper bound on the number of people who *could* be influenced by, or internalise, motivational dehumanisation. Indeed, in Rwanda, writers like Lee Ann Fujii and Scot Straus have noted that perpetrators seldom directly referenced dehumanising propaganda as explaining their behaviour when conducting interviews for their case studies.

Nonetheless, I suggest that to only look at low circulation figures as a percentage of total population misses the degree to which their messages were diffused and circulated in society. Especially in Rwanda and Germany, several factors worked together to give outlets like RTLM, *Kangura,* and *Der Stürmer* an impact and pervasiveness beyond what would otherwise be expected.

First, patterns of reading and media consumption for several key media outlets meant that they reached a far wider audience than raw circulation figures would suggest. Both *Der Stürmer* and *Kangura* received significant official support from other media and state sources beyond 'ordinary' sales, boosting their reach considerably. This included RTLM's radio promotion and readings of *Kangura*, mass distribution of copies of *Der Stürmer* by organisations such as the SS and German Labour Front, and incorporation of media like *The Eternal Jew* and *Fighting Typhus* into the training and indoctrination of the Wehrmacht and other Nazi armed services. Reading was part of communal life, allowing a single copy to be available more broadly. Koonz and Bytwerk, for example, both discuss the way that copies of *Der Stürmer* were put up in display cases in central and public areas, erected at great speed in response to national and regional competitions (Koonz, 2005, 163). In Rwanda, many witnesses in the 'Media Trial' reported how copies of *Kangura* were photocopied, read communally, or read out to those who were illiterate (Kagwi-Ndugnu, 2007, 332–

333). Thus, it is likely that the low readership figures identified above understate the true reach of genocidal material. More people would have consumed these media outlets, meaning that their messages would have become more diffused throughout society, and thus could have a wider impact.

The content of this propaganda reached a wider audience still, its medium being particularly well suited for this. A key element of dehumanising propaganda was its ability to deploy lurid imagery, which would make it engaging and striking for its audiences, in the form of caricatures and frontpages as seen in *Der Stürmer*, or metaphorically on the radio. Danning and Li both attest to individual listeners to RTLM repeating talking points elsewhere, and propagating genocidal messages across their communities 'as rumour, where the possibilities for exaggeration or reinterpretation could only expand' (Li, 2007, 99). This illustrates how this kind of avidly pro-genocide media (including dehumanisation, with its rumours of hidden threats) could function – an impact that was furthered by state programmes of dissemination of radios in the years and months leading up to the genocide. These transmission pathways allowed these ideas to percolate out into society more broadly.

In Serbia, by contrast, dehumanisation was disseminated using much more mainstream sources, such as public television broadcasting, major newspapers across the country, and groups such as SANU, which dominated intellectual life. While, as noted above, these did not have unlimited and omnipresent circulation, ‘only half of Serbian households having access to *Radio*

Television Serbia broadcasting' is a significantly greater potential audience than seen in *Kangura* above.

Taken together, this suggests that propaganda outlets circulating motivational dehumanisation were widely available throughout genocidal societies. Even if not omnipresent and unavoidable, they were widely disseminated throughout German, Rwandan, and Serbian society, and messages from *Der Stürmer*, *Kangura*, or other texts would be widely familiar to ordinary citizens. Dehumanising propaganda was included in workplace training and other materials, and built into everyday broadcasts on radios disseminated by governments and militaries that would later be involved in genocide. Rumours and everyday conversations in social spaces such as schools and workplaces, could further spread knowledge of it. In this way, dehumanisation-containing propaganda and discourses could have a much wider impact than the raw circulation figures might otherwise imply. While Serbia provides an example of very mainstream media, aimed at a wide range of audiences – from intellectual journals to TV reporting and tabloid newspapers – being used to spread motivational dehumanisation, Rwanda and Germany clearly show that this did not have to be the case. While sales of dehumanising media only represent a small fraction of the population, the messages that they contained could easily spread throughout the population.

In this sense, motivational dehumanisation was pervasive throughout the genocidal societies I have examined. Even if not everyone had internalised it, dehumanising rhetoric was highly widespread, and broadly accessible for people in genocidal societies. It could therefore serve as a familiar and comprehensible ‘reservoir’ of images, meanings, and subject-audience relations that could later be tapped by elites.

What about pervasiveness in the sense of internalisation, however? As mentioned in my methodology discussion, it is difficult to ‘look inside the heads’ of individual *génocidaires* to ascertain sincere internalisation, especially in historical cases with limited historical records, let alone answer these questions across entire societies. Nonetheless, the analysis in this and preceding chapters does offer several broad indicative conclusions.

Firstly, many of those involved in genocide did indeed seem to have internalised, and been motivated by, dehumanising ideas and outlooks. Diaries (where there was little reason to misrepresent oneself), conduct during violence, and discussions of their own motivations during and after the conflict (including when there was little instrumental benefit to espousing these beliefs) all suggest that many *génocidaires* were committed to, and had internalised, these attitudes. Many of these were ranking members of structures and organisations responsible for directing and shaping genocidal violence – politicians, military (and paramilitary) officers, and opinion leaders in culture and the media. At the same time, it was very clearly not universal. While I did observe a distinct and consistent vein of commonplace dehumanising attitudes across documentary sources in all three cases, this was not so widespread as to lead to the maximalist conclusion offered by writers like Goldhagen, that there was an 'almost universally held conceptualization of the Jews [or, by extension, Tutsi or Bosniaks] [that they] must be eliminated irrevocably from society' (Goldhagen, 1997, 48). Writers like Straus, Browning, Fujii, and others discussed in my literature review found many perpetrators who did not seem to be driven by dehumanising ideas, but rather by the dynamics of small groups, a desire to secure their immediate material interests by settling scores, or defend themselves against perceived violence. Additionally, as mentioned throughout each chapter, participation in genocidal violence was not universal – in each case, there were those who refused to participate in, or actively undermined, genocidal violence. As such, even if discourses of motivational dehumanisation were widespread in each society, they clearly did not convince all their audiences.

The observation that 'some people were convinced by dehumanisation, while others were not' is not a particularly novel or significant conclusion, but my thesis has gone beyond this.

First, there is the question of amongst *whom* motivational dehumanisation was pervasive. Even genocides with mass popular participation, like the Rwandan genocide, were only enacted by a small fraction of the population. As such, motivational dehumanisation would not have to be *all*-pervading to have an impact, but rather would have to be pervasive amongst those responsible for actually enacting the genocide – something closer to what

I actually found. Moreover, among the political leaders, military commanders, elite journalists, and other highly placed figures responsible for determining, initiating, and building support for genocidal policies, I have found that they often expressed motivational dehumanisation, both in private and public. Given their social and bureaucratic position, this internalisation of dehumanising images and tactics meant a great deal in terms of determining the course and form of violence. From this, we can conclude that motivational dehumanisation was pervasive in a similar way to the 'ideologised activist core' described by Bloxham (2008, 230), where an ideology entrenched in state bureaucracies galvanised bureaucratic structures into violence, or the '10 per cent who "have the guns and control the television tower"' described by Oberschall (2000, 986), who would in any case be the ones enacting genocidal violence. The position of these groups in society, and the ideological commitments pervasive amongst themselves, helped direct genocide.

Secondly, I have also found that motivational dehumanisation was particularly well-suited to bridging the divide between ideological/cognitive explanations for violence, and more security-focused/strategic/self-interest based concerns. Claims about the enemy as an infiltrating force akin to fungal spores or cockroaches were evocative discourses that genocidal ideological entrepreneurs pushed at genocidal planning meetings, but also seem to have contributed to the specific tactical logics of who to target to resolve this insecurity. Rumours of a barbarous, defiling enemy that threatened the spiritual and bodily integrity of the audience could mobilise Bosnian Serb or Hutu *génocidaires* to call for, or participate in, violence. These elaborate discursive constructs could also serve as more generic warnings about danger or insecurity, spread by rumour to mobilise large sections of the population, who did seem to support them. This meant that ideas with dehumanising roots diffused and became pervasive throughout genocidal societies; even if one was not in Bloxham's 'ideologised core', or Oberschall's 10%, concerns that one was in danger (that may have originated with dehumanising discourses) were much more pervasive throughout society. This phenomenon is summed up well by Straus:

> *a small core of local actors seized the initiative, consolidated control, and then mobilised adult Hutu men to destroy the "Tutsi enemy" … while hardliners undoubtedly used dehumanizing language both before and during the genocide, and some perpetrators I interviewed used dehumanizing language to describe Tutsis … the language of threat, danger, and war was far more prevalent than any subhuman metaphors. (Straus, 2008, 96-7)*

My research suggests a similar conclusion, with the proviso that 'the language of threat, danger, and war' and 'dehumanising language' are closely linked. As discussed in my literature review, it is often difficult to draw a clear division between ideological/cognitive and material/security-based explanations for political behaviours like genocidal violence. Motivational dehumanisation, with its powerful invocation of threat and insecurity, was particularly well-suited to function as both an emotional call to arms, and a material set of worries about danger, and could morph from the former to the latter as it spread through the mass media.

6.3 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION OVER TIME

Throughout my thesis, I have found that motivational dehumanisation was not a constant phenomenon across the timeline of genocide, from the first stirrings of genocidal ideology, to conscious mobilisation towards mass killing, to the violence itself. Rather, it developed and spread in different ways over time.

Broadly, I found that the chronology of motivational dehumanisation aligned with the model set out in my introduction.

In order to contribute to a genocidal movement, motivational dehumanisation had to be legible and comprehensible to audiences. Since target populations were *not* literally snakes, cancer cells, or typhus-carrying lice, metaphors and analogies needed to be made to link the two. In some cases, these were drawn from pre-existent cultural discourses or comparisons, built up by writers, politicians, and cultural movements over time. Thus, genocidal mobilisation in Germany and Bosnian Serbia drew upon complexes of dehumanising medical, theological, and historical imagery about the target groups, which informed later discourses. In other cases, dehumanisation used people's everyday experiences to 'make sense'. In Rwanda, dehumanising discourse directly referenced its audience's experience of the natural world, such as snakes or insects that might be encountered on a regular basis. Both cultural and environmental sources of imagery could be used for this purpose; German dehumanisation also drew on contemporary experiences of epidemic typhus and tuberculosis, while anti-Tutsi slurs had a long history in Rwandan politics. In any case, states engaging in motivational dehumanisation did not invent new metaphors out of nowhere, but drew upon examples from a pre-existent 'reservoir' of ideas and images, which predated genocidal mobilisation.

The next stage in the 'generalised timeline' of motivational dehumanisation would be the articulation of these images as part of a genocidal project. If their mere existence as part of the 'reservoir' of imagery and metaphor were enough to cause genocidal processes to begin, this would not explain *why* they emerged when they did. Instead, genocidal mobilisation was articulated by specific securitising actors – such as Karadzic, Hitler, and the presenters and editors of RTLM and *Kangura* – who were responsible for making the case that these metaphors and images were appropriate in the context of the time. In each case, they did so with reference to actual military conflicts – the invasion of northern Rwanda by the RPF in 1990, the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia (and subsequent anxieties about territorial integrity) in the late 1980s/early 1990s, or the supposed military threat that Germany's neighbours, especially the 'Judeo-Bolshevist' Soviet Union, posed in the 1930s. Some of these security threats were, at some level, more real than others. The RPF was an actual armed group with political designs on the Rwandan state, while the supposed Jewish conspiracy to subvert and destroy Aryan civilisation (whether through internal corruption, or manipulation of external capitalist and communist powers) was wholly fictitious. In each case, however, it was the *perception* of and belief in insecurity that mattered – expressed in the frame of motivational dehumanisation, threats were presented as existential, leading to genocidal responses.

When successful, these dehumanising/securitising moves led to policies and outlooks that permeated throughout military and political bureaucracies, as well as media and civil society. While not universally accepted, the pre-genocidal/early genocidal period in each case study saw large swathes of the population exposed to such ideas, with key decisionmakers and a not inconsiderable fraction of military and paramilitary groups seemingly internalising these ideas. The specifics and 'internal logic' of motivational dehumanisation helped to target and shape the resulting violence, which, when it further immiserated or encouraged disease among target populations (as seen in ghettos and concentration camps), only reinforced dehumanising ideas.

During the actual commission of violence, I continued to observe the use of motivational dehumanisation in letters, diaries, and speeches before and during violence – it was closely bound up with the ongoing reasoning for violence in the first place. As predicted, legitimising dehumanisation also became more evident at this stage – since it dealt with making the act of killing less psychologically taxing by encouraging perpetrators not to think of their targets as having human status.

In short, this simplified 'timeline' of motivational dehumanisation is similar to the map of the causal process I sketched in Chapter One, and my predicted timeline for the role that dehumanisation played. It describes motivational dehumanisation as a security framing that emerges in the broader context of (genuine or imagined) political or military threat, and is articulated by genocidal elites to reinforce and escalate this sense of threat and justify the destruction of the targets. It continued throughout the mobilisation for and enactment of genocide, being supplemented with legitimising dehumanisation during the period of killing. Such an account aligns with Neilsen's work on toxification, which sees it as an 'early warning' indicator that preceded genocide, and offered *génocidaires* a rationale and urgency to participate in killing (Neilsen, 2015).

6.4 CONCLUSION

In RQ1, I sought to investigate the pervasiveness of motivational dehumanisation, and the forms that it took.

Across my case studies, and the course of this chapter, I have identified a distinctive pattern of motivational dehumanisation. It possessed consistent and clearly articulated claims about the nature of enemy groups, with their own distinctive logics and policy implications. Repeatedly, genocidal propaganda and discourse portrayed its subjects as a strong-but-weak contaminating force, much weaker than the audience but existentially dangerous to them, that had to be identified, rooted out, and destroyed, lest it return stronger. Motivational dehumanisation, is, therefore, a particularly specialised and extreme form of securitisation, that blends deep-seated and visceral responses of infection and infiltration with military and national security concerns, and calls for extraordinary measures to respond to this supposedly urgent and imminent ‘threat’. It is difficult to explain precisely why elites chose such discourses and framings – choices of words and imagery are a largely internal phenomenon, which is often difficult to interrogate using the historical record. There are some possible reasons, however. Between highly effective nature of this discourse (it was ‘selected for’, to use the language of convergent evolution employed above), its ability to draw upon familiar everyday imagery from the environment that audiences would have visceral responses to, and the ‘negativity bias’ described by Rozin and Royzman (2001) which causes ‘contaminating’ imagery to be particularly powerful, there are a number of reasons why such images were used.

So much for the forms that motivational dehumanisation took – what about its pervasiveness? As mentioned in my introduction, I have taken two approaches to assessing the question of what ‘pervasive’ means – pervasive, in the sense that it was widely accessible throughout the society in question and most would be aware of it, and pervasive, in the sense that most people had internalised it.

When addressing pervasiveness in the first sense, I have found that dehumanisation was, indeed, widely disseminated throughout society. Leaders and other political elites routinely used their political platforms to disseminate it to large audiences, it was incorporated into training materials, and, while direct circulation and consumption of dehumanising media was often deceptively low, it often diffused out across society through rumour and other transmission pathways.

When addressing pervasiveness in the second sense, I found that motivational dehumanisation was not universally internalised. While many génocidaires involved in acts of killing did subscribe to motivational dehumanisation-based views of the enemy – citing them in the planning, execution, and reporting of the violence – the existence of large numbers of bystanders, combined with some resisters, and the population of perpetrators who did not ascribe their participation to dehumanising views of the enemy, suggests that it did not have universal enthusiastic support and internalisation. Those responsible for setting genocidal policy and directing violence, however, *did* seem to have largely internalised these messages, expressing and building policy on them. Since they were the ones with the institutional platform to cause and shape genocidal violence, they played an outsize role in causing it to happen, determining who was targeted, and selecting particularly genocidal forms of violence. Understanding the network of securitising actors, and the policymaking audiences they interacted with, is therefore highly important. Small numbers of elites and true believers circulated motivational dehumanising texts and documents, and the ideas that they contained filtered out into the broader population and other bureaucracies, particularly ones who were already well disposed to 'defensive' violence. This created smaller populations of eager consumers of propaganda, who would propagate and spread these messages, as well as a broader group of people who were at least aware of their themes and had picked up messages of threat and insecurity.

These findings build upon, and strengthen, the conclusions drawn by recent literature on dehumanisation, such as Neilsen's work on toxification, and Savage's original work on motivational dehumanisation. It has, however, underlined the importance of understanding context, speakers, and audiences for dehumanising discourses. Neilsen's notion of 'toxification' examines similar ground to this chapter, but is limited typically in the passive voice – victims 'are portrayed', 'are depicted', are 'conceived to be toxic', or 'branded as … lethal' – (Neilsen, 2015, 87, 89). They are branded and seen – by who? Neilsen and Williams' later work (2019) does explore this to some degree in the context of Cambodia, but this is still limited. Similarly Savage notes the importance of identifying 'a collectivised public discourse which is available to legitimise and/or to motivate the obliteration of its collective object', rather than merely in 'fringe individuals or collectivities', and locating 'how it … came to be available for use as factor in genocide' (Savage, 2009, 367) as future areas for study, rather than core concerns. As well as enriching and deepening our understanding of what motivational dehumanisation *is*, I have also sought to provide context for these discourses, exploring their origins, spread, and existence across different groups as a socially pervasive phenomenon. Having mapped motivational dehumanisation as a phenomenon, providing a generalised set of common features and a timeline of operation, in the next chapter I will investigate what causal role it played.

CHAPTER 7: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION

How did motivational dehumanisation affect genocidal violence?

In the past chapter, I assessed my findings about the degree to which motivational dehumanisation was a distinct phenomenon. It was a clear pattern of rhetoric, state discourse, and prejudice that recurred in a range of very different case studies, with similar metaphors, tropes, and images across genocidal and pre-genocidal periods in Germany, Rwanda, and Serbia. This was clearly more of a specific phenomenon than the broad category of 'dehumanisation' would suggest. Rather than simply representing a broader denial of humanity, these discourses distinctively frame the enemy as a vermin- or disease-like force that, despite being lowly and pathetic, is possessed of a cunning or virulence that allows it to pose an existential threat to the unwitting or naïve audience, who until that point had allowed it to continue to exist. While previous examinations of dehumanisation – even motivational dehumanisation – have treated it as homogeneous throughout society (or, as in Neilsen and Williams' work on the subject, examined it only on broad macro/micro levels), I have also found consistent patterns in the way that it manifested across different strata of society.

What is more, the ‘internal logic’ of such an understanding of the conflict leads to a distinctive set of policy, strategic, and security conclusions about the form that the response would take – specifically, a genocidal one. If the enemy group was innately threatening – cockroaches that could not become butterflies, snakes that would always be venomous no matter how they innocent they seemed, lice that could never be anything but, genetically encoded corruption – then there would be no sense in trying to reach some form of negotiated settlement with them, or use violence to convey a message or terrorise the target group into compliance. It was merely their nature to be an eternal security threat. Indeed, the 'strategic logic' suggested by dehumanising images explicitly warned against complacency, urging audiences to 'wake up' and recognise a threat that may seem to coexist with them, but would actually pose a threat. As such, since any conflict would be defensive (owing to the threatening nature of the enemy), and unavoidable (since they could not be negotiated with), the only solution would be to destroy them before they could destroy the audience. The logic of motivational dehumanisation went further than simply mandating violence, however, instead calling for specific forms of genocidal killing. Reproductive violence would be an example of this - like cancer, or vermin, the targets were said to grow back or repopulate if not completely annihilated, encouraging genocidaires to widen their targeting to include those involved in repopulation (non-combatant women and children), and carrying out reproductive violence against them. Alternatively, a focus on hygiene or 'cleansing' metaphors would suggest particular attempts to root out any lingering traces of the enemy, ferreting them out of hiding or concealment much as one might make an effort to clean pests or dirt from a house. A wide range of other metaphors would implicitly call for other forms of violence – such medicalised killing methods if the enemy was akin to typhus, or cultural traditions of pest-killing ‘community work’ reappropriated for genocidal violence. Taken together, these considerations about the ‘internal logic’ of dehumanisation would suggest that it did contribute to the form taken by genocidal violence. If it did lead to these policy conclusions (which it did, as seen last chapter), and was widespread among those determining policies and directing violence (which, again, it was), then this would imply that those internalising it would adopt genocidal and exterminationist approaches.

This suggests that motivational dehumanisation, by its own internal logic, would have a causal impact in shaping and directing genocidal violence. It remains to assess, however, what causal role it actually had, rather than what role the internal logic and pervasiveness of such discourses would predict them to have. Did motivational dehumanisation cause genocidal states, militaries, and individuals to support and engage in specific forms of violence, targeted against specific groups? It might simply be an epiphenomenal byproduct of other political processes or an after-the-fact way of justifying participation in violence. It is important to assess whether or not motivational dehumanisation and related framings of insecurity have any causative impact in their own right.

The way that distinctive dehumanising images were repeated so widely and so consistently is itself suggestive of their influence. One possibility is that different swathes of a national population independently reached for the same distinctive metaphors to describe targeted groups. This would itself be a striking finding, suggesting that these images were appealing to a wide range of genocide supporters. Indeed, I suggest that independent development of highly similar metaphors by otherwise unconnected genocidal movements does occur, owing to the distinctive internal logic of motivational dehumanisation 'convergently evolving' in different cases in response to everyday experiences.

Another possibility is that these ideas were transmitted through society by those that held them. If this was the case, it at least suggests that these dehumanising images of the enemy were compelling enough (either through genuine internalisation, or through a shared social expectation that they would be believed) for people who held them to pass them on. This process is difficult to observe directly, but I have found some examples, such as Hitler and Rosenberg's adoption of the distinctive racial imagery of Bölsche and Chamberlain would be one example, or accusations in *Knife* that Serb ethnic enemies made necklaces out of the eyes or fingers of Serbian children seemingly echoed by later news media. While not providing a clear ‘smoking gun’ about the degree of internalisation of motivational dehumanisation, these examples do provide evidence that it was influential enough to spread from person to person. They did not have to be sincerely internalised for this to happen, either. Leader Maynard identifies four ways that ideologies can affect behaviour and mass violence - not just deep-seated commitment but also adoption (taking on ideological values that, although not be strongly believed, were linked to other ideological interests) conformity (peer pressure from other members of the group), or instrumentalisation (where taking on an ideology would bring a specific benefit) (Leader Maynard, 2019, 639–643). If ideology spread from person to person through any of these approaches, then this would suggest it had at least some power to shape behaviour by propagating itself.

Another way of gauging the impact of dehumanising discourses on genocidal violence would be cases where perpetrators directly attested to its role in influencing their behaviour. The case of Branislav Lainović, who cited *Knife* as a direct inducement to beat up civilian Muslims and Croatians, and later directed his paramilitary Serbian Guard to commit war crimes against them, is a example of this. Both Hatzfeld, and Totten and Ubaldo, conducted interviews where Hutu perpetrators directly described how content on RTLM encouraged them to see Tutsi as 'cockroaches' and 'snakes', thus encouraging specific forms of exterminatory violence against them. In addition to legitimising dehumanisation, Lifton found in his interviews of former Auschwitz medical staff that they displayed a kind of ‘killing as a therapeutic imperative’ (2017, 15), and that medicalised genocide was the most ‘humane’ method of resolving a medicalised ‘Jewish problem’.

These are anecdotal, rather than systematic, examples, but do illustrate interviewed perpetrators directly ascribing their participation in violence to dehumanising attitudes. Does this hold true more broadly?

Given the difficulties in finding similar affirmations on a larger scale (it is unlikely that everyone influenced by dehumanising propaganda to attest to that fact directly and sincerely, in a format that would reach us as researchers), I need to find another way to demonstrate the impact of such propaganda. More systematic, macro-level approaches might be more effective than trying to gather many examples of micro-level individual behaviour and build a case on them. In the next two sections, I will employ two such macro-level approaches to investigate this.

First, I will examine evidence of variation within my case studies. Insofar as I can measure changing levels of dehumanisation across different case studies – varying across different regions within a country, varying by targeted group, or varying over time – I can link this with the incidence (how common it was) and nature of the resulting violence (who was targeted, using what form of violence). Even though this cannot easily be quantified, if I find that, holding other factors relatively constant, cases with more intense or widespread dehumanisation also had more intense or widespread violence, this could suggest a relationship between motivational dehumanisation and genocidal forms of violence.

Second, I will return to the psychological literature on dehumanisation and related phenomena, to offer more precise support for the kind of impact it may have. In the introduction, I noted that genocidal dehumanisation was extremely tricky to study in a laboratory or experimental setting due to the sheer scale and context of the phenomenon, as well as the ethical questions about replicating it among test populations. Throughout the last chapter, however, I have identified several key processes and dynamics within motivational dehumanisation that can be examined using existing social psychology scholarship.

7.1 ASSESSING VARIATION WITHIN CASES

One of the clearest ways to demonstrate that motivational dehumanisation influenced the forms taken by genocidal violence would be to look at internal variation within case studies. Doing so would allow me to hold political, strategic, and temporal factors relatively constant across a single case study, and thus identify if there was a relationship between changing levels of dehumanising propaganda and changing forms of violence. If I find that exposure to dehumanising propaganda or attitudes was also associated with particularly intense or distinctive forms of violence, then this correlation would suggest that there was a link between the two.

The nature and incidence of dehumanisation make it a difficult phenomenon to track same-case variation in, however.

As discussed in the previous chapter, it diffused throughout societies in complex ways, often spreading and influencing behaviour far beyond what circulation numbers, direct audience sizes, or other similar indications of variation might indicate. *Der Stürmer's* peak weekly circulation was less than 1% of the population (Bytwerk, 2001, 56–7), copies were widely distributed to groups like the German Labour Front and displayed in public areas across many small towns and villages. This meant even a handful of copies could have a potential influence and spread dehumanising rhetoric across a wide number of people or an entire region. Likewise, several writers on Rwanda have described how propaganda broadcast on stations like RTLM – much of it dehumanising – spread far beyond those who owned radios to hear it. This could take place through communal listening practices and people telling their neighbours and co-workers the latest news, as Danning describes (2018, 11–13), or in the spread of rumour, reinterpretation, and embellishment of RTLM broadcasts, as observed by Li (2007, 99). Li goes on to note that 'RTLM explicitly informed conversations that took place away from the physical contexts of listening'. To develop a point made by Danning, this not only suggests that radio reception and ownership was 'a poor proxy for radio consumption', but also that radio listenership was a poor proxy for being exposed to, and thus potentially influenced by, dehumanising media discourse, as the latter could diffuse readily throughout genocidal societies. In the former Yugoslavia, factors like the broadcast of dehumanising threat-framing on national media like *Serbian Radio and Television*, and the centrality of dehumanising texts like *The Mountain Wreath* in public education, likewise mean that it is difficult to neatly identify areas where dehumanisation was, or was not, present. Anyone with TV access could conceivably have tuned in to *Serbian Television*, and it seems that large numbers of people were indeed influenced by it. Gagnon cites Miladin Kovacevic and Srdjan Bogosavljevic, writing on behalf of 'one respected polling institution', who observed at the time that 'television … has very great influence on public opinion even though its credibility is widely challenged' (Gagnon, 2004, 97). As this media became increasingly controlled by Milošević and his allies, a key source of dehumanising and threat-framing imagery was thus a national fixture, rather than something that could be localised to one particular area.

This means that it is difficult to examine internal variation for motivational dehumanisation. Even beyond ordinary concerns such as it being a largely internal/ideational issue, motivational dehumanisation was socially diffuse and widespread in ways that cause problems for attempts to measure or localise variation within it. Its influence was broadly and diffusely felt across genocidal populations and states.

This is not to say that an analysis of variation of dehumanisation is impossible. On the contrary, several examples of internal variation have emerged across the cases I examined. While difficult to assess systematically, these do suggest that more intense dehumanising propaganda was associated with violence taking on particularly genocidal forms where particularly intense motivational dehumanisation was employed.

7.1.1 INTERNAL VARIATION IN BOSNIAN SERBIA

In Serbia, I observed two clear forms of variation in the use of dehumanisation – between Slobodan Milošević, as the President of the Republic of Serbia, and Radovan Karadžić and Biljana Plavšić, as the President and Vice-President (respectively) of Republika Srpska; and between the way that Croats and Muslims were portrayed. Broadly, Milošević was less clear than Karadžić and

Plavšić in his use of dehumanisation, and dehumanisation was more intense against Muslims than Croats.

While Milošević did warn of a supposed existential and genocidal threat posed by non-Serb Yugoslavs, emphasising the importance of 'removing disunity' to avert 'great disaster' (Carmichael, 2002, 26), he was often seemingly conciliatory towards them, announcing on national television that 'only insane people can believe that … ethnic cleansing could be something good … this is a crime that cannot be accepted or justified, regardless of the side' (Belgrade TV, 1992). In his Gazimestan speech, Milošević said that 'Serbia has never had only Serbs living in it … this is not a disadvantage for Serbia, I am truly convinced that it is in its advantage'. At the ICTY, while the prosecution in the Milošević case did bring expert witness Ton Zwaan to describe and define (legitimising) dehumanisation (ICTY, 2007, 31181), very few examples were actually cited. Some comments from Republic of Serbia leaders were mentioned; Vojislav Seselj's statements about Croats were reportedly phrased 'in [such] a way that will make them the object of dislike, hatred, and ultimately of dehumanisation' (ICTY, 2007, 43819–43820). It was generally observed that (during the later Kosovo conflict) 'statements of about [sic] Albanians by Milošević could be characterised of dehumanisation of another group' (ICTY, 2007, 155). In each case, however, these were indirect and scattered instances, and do not characterise Milošević himself as a regular practitioner of motivational dehumanisation.

This contrasts clearly with the speech of Bosnian Serb leaders like Karadžić and Plavšić, who routinely publicly warned of the threat of the 'toxic all-destructive Islamic octopus' (ICTY, 2009, 549), or the supposed 'degenerate', 'genetically deformed' Bosnians (Sells, 2002, 58). This latter group supposedly used rape as a strategy of reproducing themselves (de la Brosse, 2003, 19–24). This shows a very different repertoire of images from that employed by Milošević.

These attitudes, and the broader pattern of dehumanising and threat-evoking rhetoric, were consistently directed more against Muslims than against Croats. The party bulletin in Sanski Most warned of the threat that non-Serb groups posed:

> *'What they had in mind was to gouge our eyes out and carve our insides, hack up our bodies in parts, to rape women and girls in front of their beloved, to circumcise, to destroy our religion, to crush us, just because we happened to be Serbs … [the SDS has been making Serbs] ready for a bitter battle with the other two people, the Muslims, if indeed they are a people, THEY ARE NOT, and the Croats, who have forever carried in their pathological desire and urge to kill those better and more honest and, do we need to say this, stronger than they are.' (ICTY, 2009, 549)*

Throughout, Bosnian Muslims, rather than Croats, are emphasised as a particularly barbaric, dehumanised threat. While both groups are described as posing a threat to the audience (with the now-familiar repetition of the trope that the victims were stronger, more moral, and more honest than their weak, deceptive, but extremely harmful attackers), and both are described as pathologically harmful, it is the Muslims whose status as a 'people' is called into question, and who are described as carrying out invasive and sexualised brutality. Their personhood is questioned, while that of Croats is not. Thus, in Bosnian Serbia, while both groups were subject to dehumanisation, this suggests it was much clearer and more intense against Muslims. While only a single example, from a single district, this closely aligns with similar dynamics observed across my cases.

From this, I identify two dimensions of within-case dehumanisation. In the Republika Srpska, elites used motivational dehumanisation extensively, typically directing it against Bosnian Muslims, rather than Croats. In the Republic of Serbia and the speech of Milošević, by contrast, this was typically much less intense. Based on this, my theory would predict particularly intense forms of violence against Bosnian Muslims in the Republika Srpska – all other factors being equal – compared to less specifically genocidal forms of violence against non-Bosnian Muslim groups in the Republic of Serbia, since the entirety of the former group was presented as posing an existential threat in a way the latter did not.

How much variation in the form of violence (on national grounds – in the Republic of Serbia against Croatia vs in Republika Srpska against Bosnia – and on religious/ethnic grounds – Croats vs Bosnian Muslims) can we observe?

At the national level, it is indeed visible. While it is difficult to compare two different national groups' experiences of ethnic violence, and both conflicts saw extensive ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, the violence perpetrated by the Republika Srpska and affiliated paramilitary groups, largely against Bosnian Muslims, was more intense than that enacted by the Republic of Serbia, largely against Croatians. In the two ICJ cases on the topic – between Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republic of Serbia in 2007 (ICJ, 2007), and between Croatia and Serbia in 2015 (ICJ, 2015) – the ICJ found large-scale crimes against humanity in the latter, representing a pattern of terrorisation and displacement rather than genocide (ICJ, 2015, 124–127). In the Bosnia-Serbia case, the Court found that genocide *had* been committed by the Republika Srpska against Bosnian Muslims (with the Republic of Serbia culpable of failing to hand over Ratko Mladic, one of the genocide's authors) (ICJ, 2007, 19–20). The violence took on a more exterminatory and systematic character (rather than a terrorising, population-displacing one) in the case with more evidence of motivational dehumanisation of the targeted group expressed by leaders.

More fine-grained variation can be observed within Bosnia. Killings and extreme mistreatment were directed disproportionately against Bosnian Muslims, rather than Bosnian Croats, by Republika Srpska forces. To demonstrate this, I examine the camps set up by Bosnian Serb paramilitary groups around Prijedor, in Omarska, Keraterm, and Trnopolje. Following the Serb takeover of Prijedor in April 1992, local Serbian militia broadcast anti-Croat and Muslim propaganda, and, in response to a rumoured uprising against them, set up 'collection centres' targeting supposed anti-Serb elements (ICTY, 2001a, 1). Extreme and excessive violence was directed against detainees, with the ICTY Judgement on the Omarska case describing how 'an atmosphere of extreme mental and physical violence pervaded the camp', and indiscriminate killings, beatings, and torture were routine (ICTY, 2001a, 21). Much of this violence served limited tactical use, especially since the supposed original purpose of these camps was to gather information on supposed revolts, and detainees were held for long periods beyond this. The violence involved extreme levels of sadism and mistreatment that did not serve the purpose of interrogation, and indeed were distasteful to the guards. This included using beatings to prevent inmates from using otherwise available bathroom facilities so that they were forced to soil their own clothing (ICTY, 2001a, 20), and refusing to disinfect interrogation rooms that routinely saw bloody violence, such that one guard described 'a stench, a bad smell, … every day I had to wash myself and wash my clothes to wash the smell out' (ICTY, 2001a, 21). Where washing was provided for detainees, it was sometimes linked with dehumanising imagery, with one witness recalling a hose being used to 'hit the *balija* [and] knock them on the ground'. The use of imagery of a filthy, degenerate ethnic enemy, and the imposition of conditions that would make those images seem more accurate, recalls the similar phenomenon in the Holocaust.

While Omarska was not a death camp, and much of the violence there ended up taking the form of systematic extreme mistreatment rather than extermination, camp personnel did kill large numbers of detainees on a systematic and routine basis. In addition to deaths from mistreatment, daily killing and mutilation took place at the 'Red House' and 'White House' sites in Omarska (ICTY, 2001c, 28–29). At the 'Petrovdan' and 'Hambarine' massacres, an unknown but considerable number of Muslim detainees were killed; a witness recalled that ‘it took 5 or 6 round trips for all the bodies to be removed [with a truck that] had 7 or 8 cubic metres of loading space’ (ICTY, 2001c, 30–31). Conditions in the Keraterm and Trnopolje camps were reportedly similar. In the ICJ Bosnian Genocide Case, the court found that the forms and intensity of this violence did meet the levels of ‘systematic … massive mistreatment, beatings, rape and torture causing serious bodily and mental harm’ required by the Genocide Convention, but did not find conclusive evidence that they were committed with the specific intent to destroy Bosnian Muslims as a group (ICJ, 2007, 119). Nonetheless, I suggest that the levels of extreme and excessive violence in these cases do suggest that it was not far off the mark.

This violence was directed disproportionately against Bosnian Muslims, rather than Croats. In Prijedor, the closest large municipal area to Omarska camp, the 1991 census found 49,351 Bosniaks and 6,316 Croats (approximately one Croat to every 7.8 Bosniaks) (Bosnia-Herzegovina Institute of Statistics, 1991). Internal Republika Srpska reports, by contrast, found that 'of the total of 3,334 persons brought in to the Omarska Investigation Centre between 27 May and 16 August 1992, there were 3,197 Muslims, 125 Croats, 11 Serbs and one other' (approximately one Croat to every 25.6 Bosniaks) (ICTY, 2001c, 7). The scale of this discrepancy strongly suggests that Muslims were specifically targeted. It is paralleled by similar discrepancies elsewhere in the Republika Srpska. In the Sanski Most area, where 28,136 Bosniaks and 4,322 Croats lived, or 1 Croat:6.5 Bosniaks (Bosnia-Herzegovina Institute of Statistics, 1991), the same report lists the *Betonirka* camp as containing 1,538 Muslims and 122 Croats (or 1 Croat:12.6

Bosniaks) (ICTY, 2001c). Additionally, many of the contemporary accounts of persecution in Prijedor and Omarska suggest Muslims were singled out. This is evidenced by the Hambarine Massacre described above, and the conquest of Prijedor, where Muslims were ordered to identify themselves from among the populace, resulting in many being subsequently taken to the camps (ICTY, 2001a, 10). The special focus on Muslim prisoners in extremely harsh and often-murderous detention in Republika Srpska camps – in the targeting of genocidal violence - does correlate with the focus on the supposed Muslim threat in dehumanising propaganda.

These findings should not be taken as unambiguous support for my original hypothesis. While deeply inhumane, camp violence seemed less of a categorical attempt to exterminate ethnic enemies than the other cases I have examined. While Serbian and Bosnian Serbian leaders did strikingly vary in their use of motivational dehumanisation, a wide range of other strategic, demographic, and political concerns also varied between the two cases. This makes it tricky to identify the exact role played by dehumanising attitudes and discourses. Variation in levels of violence directed against different groups might also be explained by different local factors. Additionally, the small numbers of Croatian detainees and residents may exaggerate the degree to which Muslims were selectively targeted as opposed to Croats (although the fact that the discrepancies are all in the same direction – disproportionately anti-Muslim – is suggestive).

Nonetheless, there is clear internal variation in both dehumanisation and forms of violence across the former Yugoslavia, in ways that my theory would have predicted. In the Republic of Serbia, there was much less motivational dehumanisation, and the violence was more instrumental and less intense than in the Republika Srpska, where violence was more clearly genocidal. Additionally, Bosniaks, who were targeted by motivational dehumanisation, were likewise subjected disproportionately to brutal, inhumane, and often extra-lethal violence. Croats, who were less intensely targeted by these forms of propaganda, were less intensely subjected to this kind of ethnic violence, even when living in the same communities.

7.1.2 INTERNAL VARIATION IN THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Yanagizawa-Drott offers one attempt to assess internal variation in the Rwandan genocide - examining different levels of participation in genocidal violence across Rwanda, and comparing it to radio coverage (as measured by distance from transmission towers and modified according to the intervening landscape). If those areas with high levels of radio coverage were also those with high levels of violence, and those where the radio did not reach had less violence, this would be a strong argument that hate radio such as RTLM (not specifically dehumanisation, although as I have seen this was key to RTLM's content) played a major role in promoting, stirring up, and coordinating genocidal violence. Using quantitative methods, Yanagizawa-Drott determined that 'when a village has full radio coverage, compared to zero radio coverage, civilian violence increased by 65 percent and organised militia violence by 77 percent', and that 'approximately 10 percent … of the participation in the violence during the Rwandan Genocide can be attributed to the effects of the radio' (Yanagizawa-Drott, 2014, 1947). The radio served an important role in coordinating violence, and, had less effect in more-well-educated areas with access to other independent media sources.

At the same time, these findings have seen criticism. Danning notes that several writers have found difficulties replicating Yanagizawa-Drott's findings (Danning, 2018, 8) across Rwanda, suggesting that radio coverage did not have as significant an effect on violence as he claimed. Additionally, as seen in my Chapter 4 and the introduction to this section, many individual reports of RTLM's listening habits suggested that its messages diffused far beyond their original audiences, intimating that radio coverage is likely to under-estimate the impact of radio messages, in unpredictable ways. Because it is difficult to ascertain exactly how far such influence spread (different writers have found different levels of influence in interviews – see, for instance, Li, 2007), geographical variation is difficult to ascertain in this case.

Accordingly, instead of using variation over space, I suggest that variation over time, and analysis of individual case studies, might provide a more useful approach. I can look at how dehumanisation played a role in promoting specific moments of change (increases or transformations of violence) by examining the ways that leaders and perpetrators behaved before and after such discourses were articulated.

The example of Antoine Sibomana – the burgomaster of Mbazi in Butare province – provides a case study of this. Des Forges describes how, from the beginning of the genocide on 7 April 1994, Sibomana had opposed genocidal violence, even incarcerating those involved in anti-Tutsi violence (including his own brother), and had 'coordinated an effective defence of Hutu and Tutsi against attacks from the adjacent commune of Maraba, in one instance killing several of the assailants' (Des Forges, 1999, 683). Such a stance led to criticism from one grassroots militia leader, who described him as 'trying to hold back the revolution' (Des Forges, 1999, 703), as well as disapproval from his political superiors, but does also seem to have gathered popular support – his followers were willing to use violence to defend Tutsi.

Following a meeting with other burgomasters on 20 April, however, Sibomana reversed his position. He released those responsible for having attacked local Tutsi (Des Forges, 1999, 705), and the next day, delivered a public speech at a stadium that – although seemingly not whole-hearted, with one witness describing his wording as 'very complex' – nonetheless deployed dehumanising imagery. During this speech, he suggested that 'in killing a snake curled around a gourd, you break the gourd if you must to kill him' (Des Forges, 1999, 703), meaning that indiscriminate and total violence should be deployed against Tutsi, no matter the cost.

According to interviews and testimonies gathered by the NGO African Rights, the mood rapidly turned against Tutsi after this, with 'lists of Tutsi houses and families [being] compiled' (African Rights, 1995, 171). Later, Sibomana suggested that all vulnerable Tutsi should gather and attend a meeting at the local Mutunda stadium. This turned out, however, to be a massacre, with local soldiers arriving at the stadium that afternoon and killing large numbers of Tutsi. While Sibomana – in another African Rights piece – is quoted as defending himself, saying that he was helpless and 'overwhelmed' by the situation, other witnesses described him as having 'invented a pretext to ensure they would all be in the place designated for the slaughter', and having stationed police to try to kill those fleeing the massacre (African Rights, 2000, 81).

Thus, Sibomana changed his stance from objection to genocidal violence (before 20 April) to supporting it. When he did so, he directly invoked dehumanising imagery that was familiar from genocidal propaganda, and whose logic encouraged an uncompromising and categorically violent campaign against Tutsi living in Mbazi. After this, the atmosphere in the town turned against them dramatically, culminating in a massacre in the same stadium that Sibomana had given his speech four days before.

Is this an example of dehumanisation causing and shaping genocidal violence?

It is possible to read this account as suggesting that dehumanisation was epiphenomenal to the broader case. Perhaps Sibomana's initial opposition to violence was crushed at the burgomasters' meeting on the 20th, and his subsequent speech and actions (including his own claim that he asked local troops to protect local Tutsi (African Rights, 2000, 81)) represented an attempt to rationalise his behaviour, and thus was causally insignificant.

Additionally, this change from a state of relative resistance to anti-Tutsi violence, to coordinated and wholesale massacres, may have had a strategic rationale. Des Forges describes how 'given the limitations on the numbers of troops at their command, authorities made it a priority to massacre Tutsi who might have a chance of reaching and crossing the [southern] frontier' into Burundi (Des Forges, 1999, 385-6). Accordingly, soldiers were sent to carry out massacres in regions closer to the border, before moving north to areas like Mbazi. This might explain the changing character in violence from scattered violence to coordinated massacres – variations in the form and incidence of killing may have been the result of strategic concerns, not dehumanisation.

Contemporary accounts do suggest dehumanisation played some causal role, however. In a series of interviews by Straus, one farmer from Butare reported that, following a speech by the burgomaster, local Hutu militias began to argue that 'if the serpent wraps himself around the calabash, to kill the serpent you have to break the calabash'. While Straus does not identify the burgomaster in question, or exactly where this report came from, the combination of the date ('near the end of April, the twenty third or fourth'), the initial reluctance of the burgomaster, and the location, indicate that this was probably a repetition of what Sibomana had said. The farmer in question told Straus that he understood these aphorisms to mean that the violence had to be uncompromising, suggesting that ‘if there were Hutus who hid Tutsis, they had to be killed along with the Tutsis’ (Lyons and Straus, 2006, 48). He also explained how it affected the targeting of violence:

> *How did one explain to oneself killing women and children? Weren’t they Tutsi? If one said you had to kill the Tutsis, that meant women and children. Why were they considered an enemy? The enemy was the Tutsi, it was said. The small snake was still a snake. (Lyons and Straus, 2006, 48–9)*

This textbook example of motivational dehumanisation as a spur to specifically genocidal forms of violence is striking. In light of his earlier quotation of Sibomana, it suggests that dehumanisation by the burgomaster did help transform a contested local environment in Rwanda into one that saw not just violence, but specific forms of violence – uncompromisingly eliminationist, directed against the entire population (including neighbours and children), and extremely thorough no matter what the cost was – against Tutsi. The role played by motivational dehumanisation was not a simple one – it took place in the context of a wide range of other local and national factors, and this is only one empirical example from across the entire genocide. However, this does illustrate how dehumanisation helped transform behaviour in Rwanda, leading not merely to violence but specifically genocidal forms of violence. In short, it shows a clear variation *over time*.

7.1.3 INTERNAL VARIATION IN THE HOLOCAUST

Of the three case studies examined in this piece, Germany was the most unitary and centralised state (its own internal rivalries and divisions notwithstanding). Internal variation is less easy to distinguish in the German case, given the greater centralisation and training of troops in the Wehrmacht, SS, and other groups. As seen in Chapter 3, dehumanising imagery, films, and literature were deliberately disseminated across entire Nazi organisations, spanning the entirety of the territory controlled by Germany. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify cases of variation in exposure to dehumanising propaganda, which seems to be linked with changes in behaviour and forms of violence amongst troops responsible for enacting the Holocaust.

One example of this would be found in the work of Barber, Miller, and Bakar who examine the relationship between propaganda exposure and soldier motivation. They found strong evidence that those soldiers who had ample exposure to propaganda tended to be more strongly motivated to follow the orders and ideology of Nazi Germany. Using a quantitative approach similar to writers like Yanagizawa-Drott (Barber et al., 459), the authors drew on a representative random sampling of over 17,000 German troops from all branches of the armed forces in one of Germany's eighteen military recruitment districts, charted their radio exposure based on terrain features and distance from the nearest broadcast source, and compared it with their wartime record;

specifically, their receipt of medals and commendations, as well as, later, their willingness to surrender.

They found 'that soldiers with increased potential exposure to radio broadcasts [were] more motivated', both in terms of their increased willingness to become a member of the Nazi party, and the likelihood of being decorated for outstanding service for the Wehrmacht (Barber et al., 2019, 475–481). The writers used a wide variety of alternate tests to verify that the proxies they used for various concepts (radio reception and exposure to propaganda, and decoration for ideological motivation) were convincing, as well as numerous controls, together reducing the issues Yangizawa Drott faced with a similar approach. They also employed temporal variation, examining the degree to which German soldiers recruited in the immediate aftermath of major propaganda events like the Nuremberg rallies differed from those recruited just beforehand while keeping other factors – such as radio exposure – constant. From this, they found a 'positive and significant [correlation] across all our models' leading them to conclude 'that soldiers exposed to propaganda were more motivated than other soldiers.' (Barber et al.,, 2019, 488).

These findings address the relation between propaganda exposure and behavioural change in the form of greater military obedience and motivation, and do not directly address dehumanisation or participation in specifically genocidal forms of violence. The most that could be said was that propaganda (in which threatening and dehumanised images of the enemy were a key part, as seen in previous chapters) led to greater enthusiasm and obedience among the German military, especially in dangerous or difficult combat situations. Specifically genocidal violence – such as extermination via *einsatzgruppen* or camps – might not have been a combat situation or dangerous in its own right, but was an extreme form of behaviour that would require some level of enthusiasm and obedience beyond normal military service. It is difficult, from Barber et al.'s studies, to go beyond this extrapolation, particularly regarding the specific responsibility of motivational dehumanisation for genocidal actions. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that this indirectly supports the notion that motivating dehumanisation in propaganda has an impact on genocidal behaviour. Their work specifically demonstrates the ways that propaganda made German soldiers less willing to disobey orders (or more willing to obey them), and face more extreme danger or extreme military actions such as participation in genocidal violence. Thus, this provides some evidence of the role of propaganda in genocidal violence, especially when supported by the anecdotal examples that Barber et al. themselves cite (such as one account in which 'after listening to a radio broadcast of one of Hitler's speeches, local Germans spontaneously gathered in the town square to wave swastika flags … and attack Jewish-owned businesses' (Barber et al., 2019, p.466). This finding is supported more broadly by Adena et al.'s quantitative study of the link between Nazi-controlled radio and antisemitism, which found strong and significant links between civilian exposure to radio propaganda and antisemitic behaviour (both in the form of deportations, and letters to *Der Stürmer)*, especially among those with existing antisemitic inclinations (Adena et al., 2015, 1928).

It is also possible to draw a few indicative links between the way that German military units committed large-scale categorical violence against Jews, Poles, and Russians on the Eastern Front, and German exposure to dehumanising propaganda that blurred the line between public health information and genocidal incitement. While there was some dehumanising propaganda that used the language and imagery of public health on the Western Front – including handbills in occupied France that likened Jews to 'tuberculosis, syphilis, [and] cancer' (USHMM, 1942) – the majority of examples tend to focus on, or be published in, areas like occupied Poland and the Soviet Union, where epidemic diseases like typhus were of particular concern among the German military. *The Eternal Jew* showed one of the largest concentrations of Jews (using methods that clearly echoed diagrams of the spread of epidemic disease) in Russia and Eastern Europe; *Fighting Typhus* focused on Poland, and seems to have been associated with '*fleckfieberpsychose*' on the Eastern Front; many of the examples of dehumanising posters and public information sources cited in Chapter 3 were published in occupied countries on the Eastern Front. Conflicts in Western and Eastern Europe varied in many other ways, too – in terms of the character and purpose of the war and occupation, the attitudes towards local people, and the local environment – but this does offer some variation in the incidence of a very distinctive form of motivational dehumanisation.

Noting a similar phenomenon, Chapoutot draws links between the 'the discourse of pathological psychosis' whipped up by dehumanising imagery, and the specific Nazi forms of killing. The use of medicalisation as a justification for ghettoisation is a clear example of this. The policy of concentrating Jews was repeatedly justified in terms of 'quarantining' the '*Judenmilieu'*. According to a 1941 General Government official publication, this community was full of 'dirt, dirt, and more dirt … [an] incubation tank for vermin, dirt and disease'. Ruppert, the author of this publication, also refers to Jewish reproduction as the 'breeding of pustules', another familiar invocation of reproductive imagery (Chapoutot, 2014, 92). Similar sentiments in the SS daily newspaper *Das Schwarze Korps*, and the weekly *Berliner Illustrierter Zeitung* echoed these official statements. The same 1941 publication also explained that 'a severe restriction of the Jewish population is necessary, and must be accompanied by a physical isolation, and even, if necessary, closing off Jewish habitations'. This desire to restrict a supposedly plague-bearing and highly mobile Jewish population was reflected in the language and justifications used to establish and police the ghettos. Notices on ghetto walls warned that 'by decree of the German authority, a centre of epidemic disease is isolated by an enclosing wall' (Chapoutot, 2014, 93), and orders by Hans Frank that 'Jews leaving the ghetto must be brutally repressed', subject to the death penalty without trial if necessary (Chapoutot, 2014, 101). These policies would rapidly become self-realising. Subjecting Jews to inhumane conditions with poor sanitation, overcrowding, and lack of access to healthcare would mean that, whatever state ghetto inhabitants were in initially, they would rapidly become sick enough to ‘justify’ incarceration and restrictions on their movement to Nazi policymakers. Nazi use of ghettos was exclusively in the East (with some Western European Jews being deported into ghettos in the East) despite a history of pre-war ghettos in Western Europe, suggesting some variation in approach.

Chapoutot also notes several differences in tactics and training across the Eastern Front, including the widespread ‘cleansing’ use of military technology like flamethrowers, and training based on the supposedly pathological nature of the very environment in the Eastern Front. A 1940–1941 series of orders (entitled ‘*Warning of Insidious Soviet Warfare*’) to the Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS, and German police warned of the environment in the East being a source of contamination and pestilence – specifically calling out 'door knobs' and 'water pump' arms as vectors of disease that should be avoided as much as possible (Chapoutot, 2014, 92). While not explicitly targeting Jews, it is certainly suggestive as an outgrowth of the intense motivational dehumanisation preceding it.

While eventual murder in death, concentration, or labour camps was the end-goal of Nazi treatment of Jews, there was a focus on population transfer and deportation in the West, and a focus on ghettoisation and other supposedly public-health motivated approaches in the East that was not repeated in the West.

From this, it is possible to identify a possible linked variation in the use of dehumanising (specifically medicalised, public-health oriented) language and discourse in Nazi-occupied territories, and the resulting forms that genocidal violence took. Many other factors contributed to varying German strategy in Western and Eastern Europe; this is a clearly multicausal and complex phenomenon. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the latter saw greater use of dehumanising typhus and epidemic imagery, as well as a greater focus on segregation, the imposition of inhumane conditions to destroy targeted populations, a prevention of 'spread' (whether through migration or reproduction), and 'cleansing' violence that was not as evident in Western Europe. Genocide still took place in the latter – through killings, incarceration, and deportation to death and concentration camps – but this violence did not take such a 'public health' oriented tone.

7.1.4 ASSESSING VARIATION ACROSS GENOCIDAL STATES

Together, these three investigations show limited, often indirect, but suggestive findings. While violence was common across all three examples – which were all conflict situations – violence was different in cases with more intense motivational dehumanisation. It disproportionately targeted groups already subject to these discourses, intensified after these frames were articulated was used, and took on distinctive forms (categorical violence, 'cleansing' activities, targeting a community's ability to reproduce itself). Additionally, there is evidence – weaker in Rwanda, stronger in Germany – that soldiers and killers exposed to radio propaganda were indeed more willing to pursue extreme state policies such as genocide than those who were not.

The kinds of variation I have examined have been different in each case – disproportionality of targeting and genocidal vs population transfer-focused violence in Yugoslavia, temporal variation (before and after a dehumanising conflict-framing in a particular community) in Rwanda, and geographic and tactics and methods variation in the Holocaust. This ad hoc approach reflects the evidence available, and the very different nature of genocidal violence in each case. In turn, this makes it very difficult to draw clear cross-case comparisons across the three cases – I have offered evidence of three different forms of variation in three different forms of violence in three different contexts. Any cross-case conclusion would be limited as a result. Even so, the variation is consistently in the same direction, as predicted by my thesis. Where there was more widespread and clearly articulated motivational dehumanisation against a target group, especially from political leaders, eliminationist forms of violence were more common, targeting the entirety of target populations and using 'cleansing' tactics (from flamethrowers to high-pressure hoses, preferring 'smashing' target groups even if it carried with it extensive possibility for 'collateral damage'). This is what my account of motivational dehumanisation would predict for the forms taken by genocidal violence.

7.2 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND THE 'INTERNAL LOGIC' OF DEHUMANISATION

As well as tracking variation between the independent variable (the incidence of discourses of threat perception/motivational dehumanisation) and dependent variable (specifically genocidal forms of violence) another means of investigating whether or not there is a causal link between them would be to draw upon psychological and cognitive approaches. Based on experimental evidence, how would I expect socially pervasive motivational dehumanisation to shape behaviour? What individual and social changes in cognition and behaviour might exposure to motivational dehumanisation, or similarly emotionally evocative material, encourage?

A key difficulty with studying the impact of dehumanisation is that it operates largely on an internal, cognitive basis. Even if it is a shared, discursive, or intersubjective phenomenon, its impact on behaviour would largely be through changing cognitive processes and perceptions, and would operate alongside a wide range of other priorities, motivations, and interests.

This thesis *has* demonstrated that people in genocidal states were exposed to significant and prominent dehumanising propaganda, and some of them participated in forms of violence that seemed to reflect the 'internal logic' of that propaganda. The causal impact, extent, and role of this in determining behaviour is not easy to investigate, however. Especially in historical cases, where perpetrators are dead, I cannot 'look inside people's heads' in order to examine how far dehumanisation was the key influence on their thinking and behaviour, unless they left accessible records of their thoughts and motives such as diaries, letters, or post-genocide interviews. I have found examples of these for all my case studies – letters from SS officers on the Eastern front describing their attitudes towards killing Jews, interviews with Interahamwe members, or memoirs by Bosnians Serb leaders, all attesting to the role of dehumanising attitudes and conflict frames in their participation in violence. However, in some of these cases, there are issues with the sincerity and accuracy of the accounts, as well as the broader representativeness of such cases, as mentioned at the start of this chapter. Even examining variation can only illustrate potential correlations between the spread of dehumanisation and the incidence of specific forms of genocidal violence (and only then when other factors can be controlled for, which is difficult), rather than illustrating the causal mechanisms between them.

Social psychology scholarship, however, *does* allow us to examine the internal processes that link dehumanising imagery/propaganda, and individual/societal action. Using observational and experimental techniques to keep other factors constant, social psychological studies can provide us with strong evidence that humans exposed to certain stimuli or ideas tend to react in a certain way, and offer explanations as to the origins of these behaviours. Even if the relationship between dehumanisation and genocidal forms of violence is a lot more complicated in the real world than what can be replicated in a lab, this can still offer a better understanding of the causal mechanisms and processes linking dehumanisation (and related phenomena) and genocidal violence. In this section of the chapter, I start by examining social psychology scholarship specifically aimed at dehumanisation, assessing how convincingly it elaborates on the causal link between the discourse and behavioural change. I then move on to examine the concept of disgust, which as seen in Chapter 6, more clearly describes the main discursive component of dehumanising rhetoric. Since 'disgust' is a more distinctive and easily identified emotion (compared to dehumanisation, a more complex and diffuse phenomenon), I hope to be able to use it to more effectively identify a causal link between it and behavioural change.

7.2.1 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSING DEHUMANISATION

As discussed in my literature review, dehumanisation has been studied extensively in psychology, which has often linked it to a wide range of forms of violence, including genocide.

A wide range of writers – such as Haslam (2003), Opotow (1990), and Kelman (1973) – suggest that treating certain groups as less than human can result in violence or marginalisation against them. This finds experimental support: Littman and Paluck find that participation in violence is 'aversive and distressing' for most ordinary individuals, and that violent groups attempting to secure their participation would have to engage in a number of strategies including 'making violence normative', and 'increasing psychological distance to the target of the violence' (Littman and Paluck, 2015, 90–91). Likewise, Harris and Fiske's review of neurological and survey-based studies finds significant support for the idea that dehumanising imagery and discourse can significantly change people's attitudes and perceptions of dehumanised groups. Experimental participants consistently tended to react less positively to ethnic and other outgroups depicted using dehumanising imagery, typically assigning them less internal consciousness, or lower degrees of personhood (Harris and Fiske, 2009). Several of the studies they cite show that this sort of dehumanisation also took place against groups who were culturally considered to be less valuable or desirable, such as stereotypical drug users or homeless people, especially when compared to images that inspired patriotism, such as astronauts or athletes kneeling before the flag. Harris and Fiske conclude by outlining how these dehumanising perceptions 'facilitat[e] harm normally limited to non-human objects [and] destructive behaviour otherwise not permissible towards humans' (Harris and Fiske, 2009, 192).

Bandura, similarly, notes that dehumanisation was an aid to violence, suggesting that it was 'difficult to mistreat humanised people without risking personal distress and self–condemnation' (Bandura, 2002, 109). He finds clear experimental evidence of the role of dehumanisation in disinhibiting aggressive and punitive behaviour (Bandura, 1975, 266–268), and cites the behaviour of Nazi camp commanders as real-world evidence of this (Bandura, 2002, 109).

This is, of course, a familiar phenomenon from the genocide studies literature. It is a clear example of legitimising dehumanisation, and evident throughout my case study, as seen in references to Jews, Tutsi, and Bosniaks as 'pieces' or 'merchandise' to be inventoried and used for their value, 'brush' to be cleared, or 'packages' to be transported to killing sites respectively, for example, often when concentrating large numbers of the target population in one place. This would fit with the above account of legitimising dehumanisation; such language use reduced the distress caused by transporting large numbers of people to their deaths). Questions about the specific reliability of his accounts notwithstanding, Hatzfeld's accounts also repeatedly show this, as demonstrated by the account of victims being dehumanised into disaggregated body parts, against which violence could be done without consideration that this involved an actual act of killing (Hatzfeld, 2008, 18).

Motivational dehumanisation was employed for different rhetorical effects, but also contributed to this. Referring to the enemy as a seething, deindividuated horde of plague rats may have been primarily intended as a securitising move meant to evoke a particular kind of threat, but would still serve to weaken human moral restraints against doing violence to its targets, as Haslam and others suggest.

Even so, this thesis has clearly observed that discourses of dehumanisation seemed to be about more than portraying ethnic enemies as less than human. The key images used by genocidal propaganda were of threat, monstrosity, and aversion, rather than the subjects' supposed lack of humanity. When Goebbels referred to Jews as 'poisonous eczema on the body of our sick nation' (Ginsborg, 2014, 315), or propaganda posters displayed a leering skeletal Jewish face overlaid with a typhus-carrying louse, the intended message appears to have been to create revulsion, hatred, and aversion, rather than simply apathy to the human status of Jewish victims. It is not clear why calling a group of Jews 'pieces' would lead to the Holocaust with its intense, exterminatory forms and targeting of violence against them, for example – but the typhus image does seem more clearly linked with this.

This distinction has not gone unnoticed in the literature. Bar-Tal's concept of 'delegitimisation', for example, includes not only exclusion from human norms of conduct, but also dehumanisation ('labelling a group as inhuman … referring to negatively valued superhuman creatures such as demons, monsters, and satans') and 'trait characterisation' ('the attribution of personality traits that are evaluated as extremely negative and unacceptable to a given society … aggressors, idiots, or parasites') (Bar-Tal, 2000, 122). Based on his observations and review of experimental psychology scholarship, Bar-Tal provides a six-point summary of delegitimisation that is worth quoting at length:

> *1. Delegitimizing beliefs are characterized by extremely negative, salient, and unique contents [including] carriers of infectious political and physical diseases, primitives, and savages.*
>
> *2. Delegitimization implies inclusion of the delegitimized group in categories that are completely rejected by the norms and/or values of the delegitimizing society … the exclusion is often not temporary or conditional but permanent and persistent.*

> *3. Delegitimizing beliefs are accompanied by intense negative emotions that derive from their extremely negative content … individuals usually feel hatred, fear, aversion, anger, or disgust toward the delegitimized group.*
>
> *4. Wide-scale delegitimization is usually regulated by social norms that maintain and encourage this process … sometimes enforced by political institutions or by legal code.*
>
> *5. Delegitimization indicates not only that the characteristics of the delegitimized group are extremely undesirable and absolutely unaccepted by the norms or values of the delegitimizing society but, more important, that this group … may endanger the delegitimizing society or other societies.*
>
> *6. Delegitimizing beliefs also have behavioral implications for the delegitimizing society. Because the delegitimized group does not deserve human treatment, it should be treated negatively, sometimes even to the extreme: for example, used for forced labor. These extreme actions are taken because the delegitimizing society feels an obligation to avert the danger to its values and norms and to protect its existence. (Bar-Tal, 2000)*

This psychological phenomenon is similar to motivational dehumanisation, albeit on a more generalised basis. Motivational dehumanisation characterises its subjects as an extremely harmful or pathogenic force (1). By virtue of being in some way non-human, they could not be persuaded, even by communicative or exemplary violence or intimidation, away from their harmful nature (2), meaning that any response would need to remove them as a threat entirely. Motivational dehumanisation is carefully crafted to inspire repulsion and disgust in its audiences (3), and such discourses are disseminated by governments, media, armed forces, and other elite groups and norm entrepreneurs (4). Their pathogenic nature was existentially threatening to the audience (5), and thus they needed to be destroyed (6) – because, as mentioned before, there was no way of reconciling with them or persuading them to abandon their threat (2). While, in my case studies, motivational dehumanisation demonstrated a range of recurrent features, quirks, and patterns not captured by Bar-Tal's approach to delegitimisation, it clearly is the same broader phenomenon. That motivational dehumanisation fits into a pattern observed by a broader psychological theory with empirically demonstrated behavioural implications, suggests that dehumanisation did indeed play a role in both promoting genocidal violence, and shaping it. Bar Tal notes that when 'the [delegitimised] group is presented as a threat … certain behaviors become legitimate' (123). While he does not go into detail illustrating how exactly how it encourages specifically genocidal behaviours he does provide a wide range of historical case studies showing how delegitimisation allowed the emergence of highly discriminatory regimes, both as a cause in its own right, and as an intervening variable between economic/strategic/ethnic insecurity, and ethnic violence (129-136). Thus, according to Bar Tal's research, threat-based delegitimisation/motivational dehumanisation allows the deployment of new tactics and forms of ethnic violence against its targets – something that clearly echoes securitisation theory.

For the most part, however, Bar Tal's work (Bar-Tal, 2000, 121–136; Bar-Tal, 1990, 72; Bar-Tal, 2013, 169–181) on the topic focuses on providing a typology of behaviour based on existing empirical research, rather than an in-depth study of the context, origins, and specific impact of delegitimisation. To gain greater insight into this, and a more secure understanding of its impact on audiences in promoting violence, it is useful to look at the specific imagery and metaphors that it invoked.

7.2.2 DISGUST

As seen in the previous chapter, one of the main findings of this thesis has been that genocidal discourse typically went beyond simple 'dehumanisation', to focus on creating a sense of disgust and visceral aversion to some sort of corrupting, intimate threat. This was not simply an exclusion of the targeted group from the universe of human moral responsibility, as much prior literature has suggested, and nor did it simply depict its targets as 'threatening' animals, like monsters, or predatory wildlife. If one of the key commonalities of dehumanising imagery – snakes, lice, cancer, bloodsuckers, tuberculosis, genetic corruption – was a sense of disgust and infestation, then it makes sense to focus on this more specific emotional response when looking for the psychological foundations of violence.

The social psychology literature on disgust is extensive. In a review of this literature, Curtis suggests that the ‘new synthesis’ understanding of disgust sees it as disease avoidance behaviour (Curtis, 2011, 3478), noting an ‘ancient and ubiquitous’ aversion to substances and phenomena associated with disease, especially when they risk entering the body. Tybur et al. go further, suggesting that these attitudes may have deep-seated evolutionary and cognitive roots (Tybur et al., 2013). In Curtis’ listing of these substances and phenomena, we can find many familiar ‘disgust elicitors’ associated with a range of diseases:

> *'sickly person[s] … nasal mucous, spittle, droplets, coughing … blood … deformity … pustules … exudates, refuse, rats, fleas, sick animals … flies … dog[s], bat[s]… undercooked beef [and] pork… worm eggs in meat' (Curtis, 2011, 3480–3481)*

Almost all of these – as well as the diseases that are associated with them (plague, tuberculosis, rabies, respiratory tract infections) – have been directly used by genocidal propaganda to evoke disgust or revulsion against targeted groups.

Davey adds to this, presenting physiological experimental evidence that disgust responses are linked to anxiety disorders aimed at small animals ('small rodents (e.g. mice, rats), reptiles and amphibians (snakes, lizards, frogs, etc), insects (e.g. spiders, cockroaches), and invertebrates (e.g. slug, snail, leech) … these disgust-related categories are found almost universally in different cultures across the world'), as well as 'blood-injury-injection'-related phenomena, and contamination more broadly (Davey, 2011, 3456).

Other staples of motivational dehumanisation fit readily into this paradigm. Decay and fungus are both disgust elicitors relating to contaminated food; bloodsucking not only touches on 'blood-injury-injection' triggers, but also on ideas of strength-draining and sapping illnesses; genetic contagion causes deformity. Even behaviours and phenomena that are not strictly pathological are closely related to these. Barbaric and 'subhuman' behaviours like cannibalism bring up images of injury and contaminated food; sexualised violence – as well being deeply traumatic and unwelcome in its own right – carries with it a sense of a violation of bodily propriety; unfettered reproduction and the 'demographic threat' is typically depicted in terms of epidemic spread, and described as ‘unnatural’. While evolutionary psychology 'just-so' stories and naturalising cultural responses is theoretically risky, the breadth of empirical evidence cited in these cases strongly supports these writers’ contentions about the existence of deep-seated disgust-based reactions.

Motivational dehumanisation, and the kinds of disgust seen here, are evidently closely related phenomena. Images of disease, vermin, and violation of the (literal or metaphorical) body are rife throughout dehumanising discourse, and are associated with measurable physiological and behavioural responses among individual people exposed to them. This suggests that dehumanisation could affect individual behaviour – but what about broader-scale social movements? Could disgust-related dehumanisation produce the kinds of mass social action required for genocide?

While direct replications of genocidal dynamics have not been carried out in laboratory conditions, several social psychology studies suggest that this is the case. Buckels and Trapnell do find direct evidence that, under experimental conditions, inducing disgust in a volunteer cohort made them more inclined to regard an outgroup as less human and more animal-like. While stressing the preliminary nature of these findings, and the limitations on interpreting this data (Buckels and Trapnell, 2013, 771, 776–779), this provides empirical support for the causal chains associated with accounts of genocidal violence. On a larger scale still, Curtis cites a wide range of public health campaigns that used disgust- and contamination-based imagery to great effect to change public behaviour on a national level (Curtis, 2011, 3481). He noted the 'social uses and abuses of disgust' that clearly conformed with avoidance of disease or other pathogens, including 'preferring to mix with insiders (ethnocentrism), avoiding outsiders (xenophobia), [and] excluding any individuals that show signs of infection (shunning)', as well as ethnic caste systems, and 'campaigns against abortion, homosexuality, and genetically modified foods' (Curtis, 2011, 3485). In each case, disgust was used (either alone, or in combination with other arguments) to significant effect, whether to change individual behaviours like hygiene choices across an entire nation, or to gather and reinforce allegiance to political movements. While none of these is as extreme as genocidal violence, it is a reasonable conclusion that even more forceful and widely disseminated imagery, during periods of perceived existential threat, disgust could be a powerful force for promoting more extreme actions, including genocide.

Based on this, disgust is a powerful motivator for social behaviour; partly deep-seated, partly culturally reinforced, it is widely associated with behaviours around avoiding, removing and cleansing the 'disgusting' entity from the body or community.

As a rhetorical strategy, motivational dehumanisation can tap into these psychological dynamics, using images of disease, vermin, and other disgust-causing agents common in the audience's environment to justify specific forms of behaviour, such as cleansing or purging violence against a target population. Davey, for example, links dysfunctions in normal disgust/pathogen aversion behaviour to behaviours such as obsessive-compulsive disorders, noting the 'intensive and persistent feeling[s] that the person has been polluted or infected [that] usually lead to excessive sanitizing and disinfecting of the self and the environment' (Davey, 2011, 3456). This does not mean that genocidal violence arising from dehumanisation is akin to an individual mental health issue writ large. However, the degree to which genocidal violence often does take on such 'disinfecting' characteristics and imagery suggests the existence of an analogous process during genocide, scaled up to a societal level. The language and metaphors of infestation and corruption, the involvement of health professionals and public health infrastructure in genocide, the focus on destroying and purging all members of a group so that none of them can grow back (rather than trying to use violence as a communicative strategy) all contribute to a dysfunctional version of the need to cleanse or purify the body – except that 'the body' could be anything from individual human bodies, to the personified nation. Such images, as I have shown, were used extensively in German and Serbian propaganda, where dehumanised threats were depicted as pathogens capable of sickening or violating both individual human bodies and the body politic.

Two factors made motivational dehumanisation particularly effective at eliciting disgust.

Firstly, motivational dehumanisation – with its focus on infiltration and the hidden threat – did not require its targets to *appear* disgusting or verminous for the recipients of dehumanising propaganda to see them as threatening. Instead such propaganda often suggested that the seeming innocuousness of its targets was *evidence* of their evil and corrupting nature. It portrayed them as sneaky, deceitful, and capable of infiltrating the homes and society of the audience, implying that it was too late to shun them because they were already among them. This could make them effective disgust elicitors on the grounds that they had already infested the audience's group, even if they were not conventionally disgust eliciting.

This ambiguity is reflected in the way that Jews were depicted simultaneously as bestial sexual predators (Plischke, 1935), and also a threat that needed to be specifically marked out and denounced using yellow stars and articles in *Der Stürmer*. They were both instantly recognisable and only obvious to those with a heightened Nazi awareness. Similarly, anti-Tutsi rhetoric stressed the inhuman, vermin-like deceptiveness of the Tutsi population:

> *'The simple fact that the Tutsi is called a snake in our language is enough and indeed says a lot. He is smooth-tongued and seductive and, yet, he is extremely wicked. The Tutsi is permanently vindictive. He does not express his feelings. He even smiles when he is in great pain.' (Kangura, 1993)*

With such an approach, Tutsi appearing pleasant and non-threatening was evidence that they *were* malign and threatening – but when media sources like RTLM wanted to stress the 'inhuman savagery' of supposedly cannibalistic

RPF fighters (RTLM, 1993), this was *also* taken as evidence that they were malign and threatening. Thus, according to the internal logic of motivational dehumanisation and state propaganda that spread it, *any* observations of or encounters with the target group could support a dehumanising disgust narrative.

Furthermore, as noted previously, motivational dehumanisation was self-reinforcing. The belief that the target group was monstrous and disgusting could lead to ill-treatment, mass detention, or ghettoisation, all of which could increase the spread of malnutrition, hygiene issues, and epidemic illness amongst the targeted population. This could, in turn, provoke further disgust, which would justify more ill-treatment, and so on, in a vicious and self-reinforcing cycle. This did not occur during the Rwandan genocide, where there was a rapid escalation from sporadic violence to widespread violent massacre, but was evident in cases like Omarska, where guards used high-power hoses to cleanse '*balije*' prisoners who were dirty because of poor sanitation provided for them by their guards. It was also particularly obvious in the Holocaust. Accusations that Jews were plague-bringers led to their incarceration or ghettoisation, which in turn led to higher rates of illness amongst them. Dirty, sick, malnourished detainees were prime targets for legitimising dehumanisation. Weindling notes how SS camp personnel used detainee hygiene as a means of aiding the killing process, and cites one survivor, Primo Levi, as describing how 'many … experienced these routines as profoundly depersonalising: delousing was intended to kill the individual soul if not the body' (Weindling, 2000, 291–293). Thus, discourses of disgust and dehumanisation were part of a positive feedback loop with genocidal violence, with violence creating the very disgust that was used to 'justify' it.

In short, social psychology scholarship suggests that the disgust implicit in motivational dehumanisation would affect behaviour, in much the same way as disgust has been shown to trigger aversion and hatred in experimental and observational settings, at both individual and group levels. Furthermore, I suggest that, given the environments of insecurity, suspicion and fear, which often gave rise to it, motivational dehumanisation was *particularly* effective. Once a person had accepted its basic premise, anything could demonstrate its 'truth', and anything could be a disgusting force, even superficially innocuous group members. Additionally, the disgust associated with dehumanisation could easily become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as groups suffering from genocidal mistreatment became more vulnerable to disease and vermin, and thus easier to justify mistreatment against because of their supposed 'verminous' status.

This is not a new observation. Social psychologists working on disgust have often recognised the significance of disgust-based attitudes in genocide (Buckels and Trapnell, 2013), with leaders 'yoking particular labels with cues that connote disease and disgust', even when such groups have 'little apparent connection to disease' (Oaten et al., 2011, 3433), and such attitudes could play a role in ethnocentrism and xenophobia more generally (Curtis, 2011, 3484. This thesis, however, has explored these findings from the historical, empirical, and causal ‘side’, demonstrating the clear political and rhetorical moves used to operationalise this response.

This psychological literature on disgust has not examined the large-scale, intense disgust responses that I have observed in genocidal societies. Cases where the ‘disgusting’ traits are largely attributed to the subject group by propaganda, where they are mixed in with existential insecurity and threat, and where entire social groups are mobilised against each other (rather than individuals against environmental contaminants), are on a significantly grander scale, and with greater intensity, than even the national public health campaigns cited by Curtis and others. Nonetheless, the striking similarity between individual aversion to infestation and other threatening and disgusting phenomena and campaigns of motivational dehumanisation during genocide suggests that similar phenomena may be at work.

Scholarship on disgust identifies certain characteristic responses to the emotion, that are clearly mirrored in genocidal *forms* of violence. Davey, for example, suggests that a behavioural impact of disgust is the 'intensive and persistent feeling[s] that the person has been polluted or infected usually lead[ing] to excessive sanitizing and disinfecting of the self and the environment’ (Davey, 2011, 3456). Genocidal motivational dehumanisation clearly enacts all parts of this, on a grander scale. It warned the audience that their society had been polluted or infected (or was about to be, and that they had been alerted to their plight just in time), and ensuing genocidal violence often took on qualities that were 'excessive, sanitizing and disinfecting'. They targeted entire ethnic groups (not just military units), and attempted to 'cleanse' them utterly, deliberately avoiding 'half measures' that might allow the return of a subsequent generation, often literally employing the techniques and imagery of cleanliness to pattern violence, whether in the form of pest control or medicalised mass killing.

Motivational dehumanisation, therefore, seeks to evoke disgust in its audience; social psychology literature suggests disgust leads to extreme 'cleansing' behaviours; these behaviours are what we often observe during genocidal violence. Taken together, this offers a convincing causal account, supported by empirical evidence and experimental observation, of motivational dehumanisation contributing to genocidal violence.

7.3 CONCLUSION

As stated at the start of this chapter, demonstrating and charting the impact of motivational dehumanisation is difficult. It is difficult to disaggregate its impact from that of other causes of violence, to gauge its spread as an idea, and to replicate experimentally (many of its key elements are either impossible or deeply unethical to replicate in the lab).

Nonetheless, based on the approaches employed in this chapter, it does seem reasonable to conclude that it did have a definite impact on the three cases I examined in shaping violence.

Issues with gauging internal variation notwithstanding, there are several cases where increased dehumanisation – in particular areas, against particular groups, or during particular periods – was correlated with an increased incidence of distinctive forms of genocidal violence. In some cases, such as that of Antoine Sibomana and Mbazi, it is even possible to develop a causal chain showing how dehumanisation may have contributed to the process of killing, from higher-ranking authorities to those directly involved in violence.

Even if genocidal dehumanisation cannot be studied under laboratory conditions, many of its constituent phenomena that I have identified – legitimising dehumanisation, delegitimation, and perhaps most importantly, the use of disgust to trigger deep-seated aversions to the target – have been demonstrated to have an impact. Genocidal dehumanisation merely seems to have been these phenomena writ large. If we know, from experimental evidence, that people respond to disgust, dehumanisation, and delegitimation with aversion and cleansing-based responses, then it is reasonable to hypothesise that more intense and all-pervading versions of these phenomena at a society-wide level would have a commensurately dramatic impact. These more psychological and cognitive effects dovetail neatly with more conventional and material arguments put forward by genocidal policymakers, that clearly fit into the securitisation model; they added a (sometimes literally) visceral dimension to more material concerns about invasion or fifth-column forces, designating target populations as threatening in their entirety.

Thus, in Chapters 3–5, I have demonstrated it was *possible* for motivational dehumanisation to have an impact on genocidal violence, given how widespread, politically supported, and viscerally striking it was as a technique. In this chapter, I have found that a causal influence on violence was *plausible* (social psychology literature, and the internal logic of dehumanisation, suggest that this media would have had an influence) and in some cases, *demonstrable* (where there is either a correlation between dehumanisation and particular forms of genocidal violence or where I have been able to identify distinctive causal chains between dehumanising ideas and violence). If, in the next chapter, I observe similar patterns when I examine other cases – instances of disgust/insecurity/dehumanisation imagery being tied to genocidal violence, and violence taking on a more categorical, extermination-based character during periods where there was violence from a perceived threat – then this further strengthens my contention that the balance of evidence suggests a causal relationship between dehumanisation and the perpetration of genocidal violence.

8. DEHUMANISATION FURTHER AFIELD

In the past chapters, I have developed a model of motivational dehumanisation; where I would expect to see it, what its common elements were, how it spread, and how it had an impact on the forms taken by genocidal violence. I have suggested that dehumanising discourse, when it was widespread (particularly among decision-makers such as military and political leaders), influenced the forms taken by genocidal violence, exacerbating and contributing to the aspects of it that were particularly *genocidal*. I have also provided evidence that this was occurring, including a link (not especially clear, but certainly present) between the independent variable of perceived/constructed existential threat and the dependent variable of genocidal forms of violence, mediated by an intervening variable of dehumanising discourses. I have also identified social psychology scholarship that describes a similar link between dehumanisation and disgust on one hand, and genocide-analogous 'cleansing' and 'purifying' responses on the other.

How far can I generalise from these cases and analysis to genocide more broadly? While my three cases were very different, they did highlight consistent and recurring patterns in how different elites used language and images, and how these permeated through military and political bureaucracies leading to violence. This, together with the causal work in the last chapter, represents the beginning of a convincing model, but it is only built on three cases, albeit important ones. In order to develop this further, I would need to show that these findings 'travel' – that they remain more or less true in a wider variety of historical, geographical, political, and social contexts. This case selection does already demonstrate some variation – an early twentieth-century industrial state, a post-communist European state with significant religious divisions, and a postcolonial sub-Saharan African agricultural state – but it is necessary to go further to produce a truly generalisable theory

Furthermore, broadening my cases also allows me to explore a further degree of variation between my independent and dependent variables – seeing how the incidence of dehumanisation interacts with the incidence of genocidal forms of violence. As Kuper notes, history provides many examples of 'massacre without dehumanisation, and 'dehumanisation without massacre' (Kuper, 1983, 92) – how does my approach account for such cases? While I do not argue that dehumanisation is a necessary condition for genocidal violence, it was important nonetheless – what accounts for those cases in which genocide occurred without such a discursive infrastructure underpinning it? Conversely, dehumanisation was not a sufficient cause of genocide on its own, and so cases of 'dehumanisation without massacre' would not be unexpected, but still instructive. What is *missing* that prevents societies where dehumanisation is rife from developing into genocide? If motivational dehumanisation could serve as an early warning for genocide (it preceded mass killing by years in all three cases) then this would suggest a period of ‘dehumanisation *before* massacre’ is usual. In short, studying other similar cases, with varying forms of dehumanisation and varying forms of violence, allows me to establish a set of scope conditions for when motivational dehumanisation *does* lead to genocidal forms of violence, as well as exploring other causal pathways that do not involve motivational dehumanisation.

As such, this chapter looks at three broad categories: cases with motivational dehumanisation *and* genocide, cases with genocide *but not* motivational dehumanisation, and cases with motivational dehumanisation *but no* genocidal violence. If these cases conform, broadly, with the conclusions drawn from my three main case studies, then this would suggest that my approach was sound. If not, then I would need to account for these differences, either by refining my model, or narrowing its scope by identifying ways in which the cases in question differed from the ones I have examined so far. In addition, it could indicate pathways for future research.

8.1 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION *AND* GENOCIDE

8.1.1 GENOCIDE IN ARMENIA (1915)

The Armenian genocide was the systematic killing of approximately 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire between 1915–1916, by starvation, forced expulsion, and direct massacre. It was the conclusion of a series of massacres of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire around the turn of the twentieth century, in what Dadrian describes as a 'developmental event, punctuated by a history of accumulative tensions, animosities, and attendant sanguinary persecutions … [a] constantly evolving and critically escalating perpetrator-victim conflict'

(Dadrian, 2009, 52) between the politically uncertain Ottoman/Turkish state and Christian Armenian (and other) minorities.

Motivational dehumanisation was clearly evident in the use of medical imagery by the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide to justify and encourage violence. As Dadrian notes, ‘doctors in particular and medical personnel in general played a central role in the entire process’ (Dadrian, 1986, 169), bringing with them a range of imagery, arguments, and practices rooted in the idea of ‘curing’ the biological threat that the Armenian population supposedly posed.

Mehmed Resid, a doctor turned governor of Diyarbekir province, who was personally involved in enacting violent categorical killing, offers a clear example. During the genocide, he reportedly explained his motivation to a colleague:

> *Armenian traitors had found a niche for themselves in the bosom of the fatherland; they were dangerous microbes. Isn't it the duty of a doctor to destroy these microbes? Either the Armenians would liquidate the Turks and become proprietors of this land, or they would be liquidated by the Turks. (quoted in Ümit Üngör and Polatel, 2011, 151)*

This repeats the now-familiar evocation of the enemy as a tiny, insignificant-yet-dangerous threat to the continued existence of the state, that would nonetheless need to be excised before it could grow to a point at which it would threaten the audience. Such violence would have to be total ('wipe them out'; microbes similarly would grow back if not exterminated), ruling out political, selective, or exemplary violence. The violence he reportedly committed – including mutilation, crucifixion, and burning Assyrian children alive

(Dadrian, 1986, 175) – might be understood as part of this attempt to destroy the targeted groups utterly and excessively. If he sincerely did believe Armenians were akin to a disease, his medical training provided a reason to pursue their eradication. Even if not, it gave him a language, set of symbols, and repertoire of imagery to spur and justify his participation in violence.

Dadrian lists a wide range of other doctors responsible for similar acts of violence and atrocities, many of whom similarly framed their actions against Armenians in medical terms. These ranged from high-ranking officials, to those involved in actually implementing violence. Leaders like CUP (the ruling party) founders Behaeddin Sakir and Mehmet Nazim – formerly a chief physician and a professor of medical ethics respectively – also engaged in dehumanisation, the latter repeatedly referring to Armenians as ‘abscesses’ (Kaplan and Walter, 2012, 158). Witnesses at the trial of Ali Saib, Director of Trabzon Public Health and Sanitation services, described his use of 'medicine' and 'disinfection' as rhetorical covers for his medical killing of Armenian civilians (Dadrian, 1986, 176–177). Brigadier Suleyman Numan Pasha (chief medical officer of the Ottoman Armed Forces), responsible for massacres in several provinces, was later indicted on charges of instructing ‘his sanitary staff to murder, by poisoning [the target populations] under the pretext of safeguarding the healthy part of the population against epidemics’ (Dadrian,1986, 174). This echoes the strategy seen in Germany, by Buhler: using dehumanising language to stigmatise the target group as contagious plague-bearers, thus justifying their eradication.

The use of medical dehumanisation was not limited to doctors and other medical personnel, but was also used more broadly. A series of anonymous threatening letters to the Armenian press and the Armenian patriarch warned their audience that 'the Young Turks have awakened now', and that 'the Turks have committed themselves, and have vowed to subdue and to clean up the Armenian *gavurs* [infidels] who have become tubercular microbes for us' (Dadrian, 2003, 216). Later accounts by Turkish police suggested that these were written by Huseyin Azmi, the Director-General of Istanbul police, inspired by Mehmet Nazim's anti-Armenian sentiments. This repeats many of the key tropes of motivational dehumanisation around the 'awakening' of the *génocidaire* group – Nazi propagandists used similar language, and *Kangura* literally meant 'awaken'. These letters also evoked the now-familiar designation of the enemy as a slow but deadly wasting disease. Likewise, looking back at his military career assisting the Ottoman Empire in enacting the genocide, General Bronsart von Schellendorf, the German military attaché and advisor to Turkey, described his perspective on the killings: 'the Armenian is just like the Jew, a parasite outside of the confines of his homeland, sucking the marrow of the people of the host country … hence, the hatred which, in a medieval form, has unleashed itself against them as an unpleasant people, entailing their murder' (Facing History and Ourselves, 2004, 97).

In short, a similar set of arguments and ideas seen in my three core case studies are also clearly evident in Armenia. Given the heavy representation of doctors and medical personnel among the planners and enactors of the genocide, this commonly took the form of medical imagery. Gordon quotes summaries by several writers illustrating this – according to one, Balakian, Ottoman state ideology ‘envisioned the Armenian as an invasive infection in Muslim Turkish society’ (quoted in Gordon, 2017, 34). As seen here, medicalised methods were often then used to address this infection.

This was partially mirrored in the broader strategy and approach of the Ottoman state towards Armenians. Herr describes how, in the lead-up to the genocide, 'the characterisation of Armenians as an internal enemy was strengthened by demonising terms the CUP used to define the ethnic minority as traitors, saboteurs, vermin, and infidels' (Herr, 2014, 35). The specific accusations made by Turkish authorities to support this, such as the use of sophisticated and country-specific networks (in this case, via newspapers and prayer services) to disseminate propaganda about the 'discovery' of hidden caches of Armenian arms (Gordon, 2017, 35), are highly reminiscent of similar techniques employed in *Kangura*. Bloxham notes that, while these searches did take place against a backdrop of concern that the Armenians would rise up in support of the Entente powers, the actions taken to enforce this were ‘blanket, and made no attempt to investigate genuine guilt’ (Bloxham, 2005, 70–71); in short, they were a pretext for broader ‘defensive’ violence, rather than a sincere expression of specific security threat.

That said, the *form* taken by the violence did not always match up with that seen elsewhere, or which would be predicted by the logic of a campaign of motivational dehumanisation. Even though mass deportations of Armenians were either directly, or in effect, mass killing campaigns, Bloxham observes a range of ‘provisional and inconsistent’ (Bloxham, 2005, 71) exemptions from this, often for converts, who represented 5–10% of the Ottoman Armenians. Women and children, in particular, were converted and spared deportation, instead subject to forced marriage and sexual slavery. Armenians in essential military professions such as military doctors were subject to 'forced Islamisation' rather than mass killing. This contrasts with cases like Germany and Rwanda, where valued members of the targeted group (whether on national levels, like Jewish scientists and doctors, or personally, like Tutsi wives of military leaders) were singled out for violence. Neither does it fit well with the 'logic' of dehumanisation. If Armenians represented a biological, infiltrating threat to the existence of the Turkish people, then sparing some of them for temporary military benefits or bringing them inside one's home and family unit does not make sense. Instead, this behaviour implies that Armenians were perceived as an ideological or political threat that could potentially be dealt with by means other than categorical violence.

Thus, while motivational dehumanisation does appear to have played a role in motivating leaders and killers (by their own statements and admission), many instances of violence during the Armenian Genocide reflect other motivations and ways of seeing the conflict. This would suggest that motivational dehumanisation is not an absolute determinant for the form taken by genocidal violence, and that other factors can play a role.

8.1.2 GENOCIDE/AUTOGENOCIDE IN CAMBODIA

After taking power in Democratic Kampuchea in 1975, the quasi-Maoist Khmer Rouge state, led by Pol Pot, attempted to transform the country into an agrarian state and rebuild after American bombing in the early 1970s. This effort– as well as causing large numbers of deaths from starvation, over-work, and disease – also involved large-scale direct political violence against the Cambodian population. This targeted ethnic and religious groups, including the largely Muslim Cham, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese, and several other minority groups (Kiernan, 2008, 251–306), but also ordinary Cambodians more broadly (along class and other lines). Taking several measurements of the death toll, Kiernan finds that approximately 1.5–1.6 million died during this period (Kiernan, 2008, 456–460), including a disproportionate number of Cham. While there is scholarly debate about whether this 'counts' as genocide (given that much of it was unfocused violence against a state's own ethnic group) I suggest that the clear use of motivational dehumanisation against a supposedly parasitical and infiltrating, dangerous yet effete target group suggests it counts for this thesis’ purposes.

Motivational dehumanisation was present, albeit sporadically, in records of high-level internal state discussions. This is clearly demonstrated in a collection by Boua, Chandler, and Kiernan of party documents, selected from private discussions and policy plans by Pol Pot and other party members. Here, discussions about disease, vermin, and sickness were often literal (Chandler, Kiernan, and Boua, 1988, 93, 103), as party members discussed how best to stave off famine and other health/economic disasters. Dehumanising imagery was still very present, however. In one document produced just after the consolidation of power by Pol Pot, the '*Summary of the Results of the 1976 Study Session'*, the Khmer Rouge warned about infiltrators who 'furtively steal their way into and hide themselves in our revolutionary ranks and in the ranks of the Party' (Chandler, Kierna, and Boua, 1988, 170). Such infiltrators are repeatedly described as 'worming [their] way inside' the party (Chandler, Kierna, and Boua, 1988, 173, 176), calling to mind corruption, rot, and decay. Likewise, a variety of high-ranking Party members refer to the risk of enemies and harmful ideas 'seeping' into the state, bringing corruption with them (Chandler, Kierna, and Boua, 1988, 203, 208). The repeated calls for vigilance against this 'seeping' threat clearly evokes similar concepts of contamination in the imagery of motivational dehumanisation.

Not all these examples are so ambiguous or indirect. In a report of a policy planning meeting in December 1976 – which Chandler describes as 'ferocious', and a key document in establishing the CPK's doctrine of internal 'defence' against 'a nest of traitors who are impossible to locate or discern' – Pol Pot directly and vividly equated threats facing Cambodia with disease-causing agents:

> *There is a sickness inside the Party, born in the time when we waged a people's and a democratic revolution. We cannot locate it precisely. The illness must emerge to be examined … we search for the microbes within the Party without success. They are buried … [but] we can*

> *locate the ugly microbes … we are encouraged to expel treacherous elements that pose problems to the Party and to our revolution. If we wait any longer, the microbes can do real damage … if we scratch the ground to bury them, they will rot us from within. They will rot society, rot the Party, and rot the army. (Chandler, Kiernan, and Boua, 1988, 183–4)*

This speech – given to set the direction of Khmer Rouge policy – clearly incorporates many of the key themes of motivational dehumanisation. It identifies the threat as internal to Cambodia, capable of appearing innocuous (if it could be located at all), and seriously harming all elements of Cambodian society and politics, especially if there was not a concerted effort to extirpate it, with no half measures. At the same time, such a threat was seen as weak and easily rooted out, if only the audience would wake up and sufficiently rally behind the Khmer Rouge project.

From this, it would seem that motivational dehumanisation, and the broader pattern of securitisation of minority groups or subdivisions of the population as latent and hidden internal threats, were common refrains among high-ranking policymakers and politicians. These images were used to explain, conceptualise, and stir up support for the images of these specific threats.

This impression is further supported by the degree to which these same tropes and ideas were repeated in public and political life – in aphorisms, public-facing statements, state propaganda, and everyday sayings. This is clearly demonstrated by Locard's *Sayings of Angkar*, a compilation of statements and sayings circulating in Cambodia during the early Khmer Rouge period. Locard collects a range of slogans and instructional sayings that the central government spread, from interviews with survivors and perpetrators after the fact. There are methodological issues with Locard’s approach. By his own admission he does not provide much context to the slogans he gathers (Locard, 2005, 15), and the fact that he gathered them over a decade after the genocide does raise questions about the accuracy of their recall. What he does find, however is a startlingly clear invocation of the themes and images of motivational dehumanisation.

Worms and parasites were a common metaphor for enemies of the state – typically emphasising the idea of worms as invasive, threatening, and body-penetrating creatures, rather than worms as lowly or worthless. Cambodians were exhorted ‘do not ever let the worm wriggle under your skin’, and ‘never [to] allow the worm to gnaw at your bowels’ (Locard, 2005, 201). Monks, in particular, were ‘tapeworms gnawing out the bowels of society’ (Locard, 2005, 171). They lurked within safe and wholesome social spaces, such as food, and had to be flushed out into the open – ‘boil water and pour it over the *prahok* [a fermented fish paste used as a Cambodian staple], only then will you see the worms come out’ (Locard, 2005, 200). In each case, the equation of counter-revolutionary elements with parasites on human bodies is visceral and disgusting, emphasising the need for such a group to be expelled from society.

Scatological and eating-related dehumanisation was also common. The 'new people' (city dwellers and urban undesirables) were said to 'bring nothing but stomachs full of shit and bladders bursting with urine' (Locard, 2005, 185), further emphasising the notion that the enemies of the government were disgusting and worthless. Elsewhere, an extensive effort was put into identifying and rooting out the 'disease' of counter-government thought; hunger and a desire not to work were repeatedly characterised as an 'illness', making the sufferers 'sly as rabbits' in their wasteful overconsumption of food (Locard, 2005, 190–191). While not an existential threat, the recharacterisation of immediate everyday concerns such as food shortages as bestial, or innate pathologies does operate according to a similar logic to motivational dehumanisation.

When responding to the supposed dehumanised threat, these aphorisms typically used the ‘logic’ of this danger to justify total and categorical violence against the target group, not sparing any of them or allowing them any quarter. Imagery of invasive ‘parasitic plants’ (Locard, 2005, 185) were commonly used for this, with injunctions that ‘when pulling out weeds, remove them roots and all’ (Locard, 2005, 77) and that their trunks should be ‘hit to destroy [them] absolutely all’ (Locard, 2005, 78). A failure to do so was highlighted in a public radio broadcast as a reason for the ongoing unsettled state of the country:

> *Some of our cadres were not sufficiently vigilant to cleanse them of enemy elements. In other words, the movement whipped up to wipe out the enemy within the cooperatives was not vigorous enough ... only when you have a seething hatred of the enemy ... you will remain vigilant in your efforts to weed out and exterminate the enemy. (Phnom Penh Home Service, 1978, 580)*

This argument does not use the same language of eggs or tumours as seen in other case studies, but its internal logic is much the same. Any failure to be sufficiently dedicated to wiping out the enemy would only allow them to return in future.

Finally, motivational dehumanisation could also take on a more conventionally racialised characteristic. Vietnamese people were also targeted (although, judging by Locard's sampling, to a lesser extent than equivalent groups in my other case studies) by dehumanising language. He cites examples of them being referred to as voracious 'vermin' (Locard, 2005, 178) who threatened to 'devour' ((Locard, 2005, 176) Cambodian land, as well as interviews with members of military units who describe being encouraged to think of their enemy as 'nothing but loathsome monsters' before going out to kill (Locard, 2005, 178). Neilsen and Williams find several cases of dehumanisation of ethnic minority groups, quoting an alleged Vietnamese plan to 'swallow Cambodia's territory', and that Vietnamese people were 'a black dragon that spits poison' (Williams and Neilsen, 2019, 503), amid a range of broader references to toxification in Khmer Rouge discourse.

Taken together, this clearly represents a pattern of motivational dehumanisation that, while not directed at a particular external ethnic group (save for the Vietnamese examples), still bears many of the hallmarks of these discourses.

This also demonstrates the way that the metaphors used in each case of dehumanisation were context-dependent. Reported state discourse tended to use imagery of agriculture, intestinal parasites, and ravenous hunger to dehumanise its targets. This might be explained in terms of the highly agrarian nature of the Khmer Rouge ideal, and the way 'Cambodia teetered between food shortage and famine' (Locard, 2005, 190), which, as seen earlier, was the other key concern discussed by state elites both in private and public. While specific choices of wording and metaphor are difficult to account for, I *have* seen elsewhere that motivational dehumanisation typically employed imagery its audiences were familiar with. State propaganda that characterised threats in terms of invasive and destructive attacks on domestic and intimate processes such as food storage or human digestion would seem part of the same pattern, especially given food shortage in Cambodia at the time. The fact that propagandists employed metaphors that made sense to their audience is not particularly surprising. However, it does serve as a reminder of the importance of examining the underlying ideological structures, functions, and logics of dehumanisation, rather than the more surface-level forms used to describe the targeted group.

How effective was this? Did this imagery of threat have a genuine impact on behaviour, or was it an ideological gloss put on the conflict by a state over a materially-motivated phenomenon, or an emergent by-product from some other phenomenon?

To begin with, my investigation so far suggests that motivational dehumanisation was at least influential enough among high-ranking Khmer Rouge elites to shape the way that state and party bureaucracies talked about and presented policy. Many of the images, concerns, and fears expressed by Pol Pot and other senior figures in private discussions were reflected in the aphorisms and propaganda slogans that Cambodians recalled hearing later, suggesting that they were effectively spread throughout the Khmer Rouge state. Additionally, Locard notes the striking level of uniformity of this across all of Cambodia (Locard, 2005, 15), while Williams and Neilsen note that these slogans 'were regularly cited in interviews, showing that the rhetoric of the regime at the time did reach the low-level cadres' (Williams and Neilsen, 2019, 506). Even if I cannot easily investigate how this spread, it still strongly suggests that dehumanising messages permeated throughout society, and were at least striking enough to encourage people to remember them.

Evidence of its direct impact on killing on a day-to-day basis is less clear, however. In their interviews of genocide perpetrators, Neilsen and Williams find that, while perpetrators sometimes raised examples of toxification/motivational dehumanisation, they overwhelmingly explained their participation in more down-to-earth terms. These included supposed 'mistakes' on the parts of the victims, a desire to fit in, or for opportunistic reasons, such as a long-standing grudge or desire for the material rewards that would be associated with participation (Williams and Neilsen, 2019, 504). They conclude that the perpetrators were exposed to an intense and consistent form of propaganda during the Khmer Rouge period, 'perhaps play[ing] an important part in providing a broad ideological framework for these actors, within which their actions [made] sense and [were] made legitimate’, but argue that the specific actions themselves were motivated by other sources (Williams and Neilsen, 2019, 508). It does, however, align with my wider findings that motivational dehumanisation provided a broader social atmosphere of worry about internal and invasive threats, with specific acts of violence being spurred on and justified using other arguments for the majority of perpetrators.

Legitimising dehumanisation, for its part, was more common during the commission of violence. Kang Kek Iew, the chief of the Tuol Sleng S-21 prison camp where extermination took place, had used motivational dehumanisation in his policy directives. He likened regime enemies to 'weevils that bore into wood', 'worms', 'germs', that attacked Cambodia 'the way oil permeates' (calling to mind the 'seeping' metaphors discussed above) (Chandler, 2000, 44). When prisoners were in his custody, however, he employed a distinctively different rhetorical approach. Following his conviction by a Cambodian court for crimes against humanity, he later told an interviewer that 'people who got sent there were already corpses. Human or animal? That's another subject'. Other former S-21 staff followed his lead, describing prisoners as 'like pieces of wood', 'half human and half corpse. They're not humans, and they’re not corpses. They’re soulless, like animals’ (Panh, 2014, 9–10). This, again, would fit with the model of motivational and legitimising dehumanisation, and when the two were used.

While the circumstances of the Cambodian genocide did vary considerably from many of the other genocides examined here, motivational dehumanisation can be observed in its expected role. The exact role it played in individual participation in genocide is less clear, but dehumanising ideas and the notion of a conflict against an existentially threatening enemy provide a strong ideological framework for violence.

8.1.3 ANTI-COMMUNIST POLITICIDE AND GENOCIDE DURING THE COLD WAR

As well as the more commonly known cases of genocide described above, there were also several cases of Cold War-era genocide, that blended ethnic insecurity and prejudice with anti-communist sentiment. This led to conflicts that were at once struggles over national political economy and identity, and categorical attempts to exterminate all members of a target group. By looking at these, we can assess the degree to which political and economic groups could also be targeted with dehumanising rhetoric, and how 'mere' political struggles could quickly escalate into genocidal violence using motivationally dehumanising/threat-framing discourse to justify violent measures.

In Guatemala, for example, Brett describes how a conflict beginning in 1962 'transformed [from] a class-based, armed rebellion with little, if any, ethnically driven dynamics [to] a conflict with profound ethnic dimensions, waged between a formidable counterinsurgency state and rebel forces embedded within, and, to differing degrees, supported by indigenous communities principally situated in the country's highlands' (Brett, 2016, 33–34). Following an initial attempt to win over these latter communities, Guatemalan leaders organised a 1978–1983 series of systematic massacres and 'scorched earth campaign[s]' to wipe out large numbers of the indigenous Maya/Ixil population. This conflict killed approximately 200,000 people, the overwhelming majority being from indigenous groups (Price, 2018), although Brett questions whether this was a categorical genocidal approach (most of the massacres occurred in ‘red zones’ where there were already elevated levels of insurgent violence). Such an approach, Brett argues, was motivated and 'justified' by anti-indigenous racism that dated back to the colonial period. Brett suggests that the military's anti-communist campaign, with the covert support of the CIA, fused with a dehumanised view of the indigenous population. In his summary of the attitudes of *génocidaires* at the time, Brett suggests that the Ixil had long been seen as 'sub-human, untrustworthy, gullible, stupid and envious … the internal enemy [that] must be annihilated' (Brett, 2016, 64). The lowly status of the largely Ixil population supposedly had to be maintained (eventually by large-scale massacre) in order to prevent the supposedly 'primitive and slovenly' native population from 'coming down from the mountain' to erode the livelihoods and threaten the lives of the Ladino community (Brett, 2016, 215). He finds a distinctive combination of vulnerability and threat that combines legitimising dynamics (with land-ownership-based claims reminiscent of the colonial genocides discussed later in this chapter, mixed with Cold War anti-communism) with motivational ones, reflecting fear and a sense of threat (Brett, 2016, 65). This gives more credence to the idea of a ‘reservoir’ of dehumanising discourse, which was always present but rose to prominence as the Guatemalan military became increasingly concerned about their inability to contain or oppose a military threat. Elites and audiences in Guatemala could evidently recharacterise political strife in the country into ‘long-standing’ ethnic security threats that needed to be dealt with using genocidal violence.

In Indonesia, similarly, CIA-backed military and civilian militias carried out massacres of members of the communist PKI party, as well as ethnic groups including ethnic Chinese and Abangan people, supported by arguments rooted in motivational dehumanisation. Between 1965 and 1966, approximately 500,000 people were killed across Indonesia as part of these attacks, which followed a military coup by General Suharto. Robinson notes that, while ethnicity did play a part in the targeting, the violence was mostly carried out based on political affiliation (Robinson, 2018, 118–122). Politicide is not technically genocide by the Genocide Convention definition, and political beliefs are ostensibly mutable, contrary to motivational dehumanisation’s ideas of an unchangeable, intrinsic malign essence.

Nonetheless, a wide range of writers on Indonesia do observe dehumanising language used throughout the genocide, much of it motivational. Melvin notes that the PKI, as a largely atheist group, were portrayed as being outside the religious-national community, therefore lacking rights as fellow Indonesian citizens and needing to be killed because they were 'incompatible' with the Indonesian national identity. She suggests that this was a form of dehumanisation (Melvin, 2018, 49), and notes that internal military correspondence shows that they deliberately promoted these ideas, even if few leaders actually believed in it.

Other military files cited by Melvin do more closely reflect my account of motivational and legitimising dehumanisation more closely. She notes the 'avoidance in the Indonesian genocide files and in testimonial accounts of the genocide of direct words like "murder"', and the use of terminology such as '*oknum*' ('element') which were 'cleansed' (Melvin, 2018, 297), as well as terms such as 'inhuman', 'devils', and 'dogs' to describe the targets of violence. Likewise, Pohlman notes the Army Commander, General Nasution, instructing anti-communist student groups to 'quarantine' communists and other minority targets, and cites newspaper editorials that claimed mass violence was the only way to avert the 'diabolical plan' of the PKI, upon which rested 'the fate of the state and the nation' (Pohlman, 2014, 19). Bevins relates how supposed (and in fact fictitious) 'depraved demonic ritual[s]', and mutilations of abducted military officers carried out by members of Gerwani (the Indonesian feminist movement, closely associated with the PKI) played upon fears of home invasion, emasculation, and sadistic infiltration, and were used by Suharto and the military to stir up violent paramilitary action (Bevins, 2020, 236–256). One of his interviewees – a member of Gerwani – described being raped by police officers during the genocide, who saw her as 'not a human being, and not a woman, but a sexually depraved murderer. An enemy of Indonesia and Islam. A witch' (Bevins, 236). This clearly illustrates the sense of threat, monstrosity, and the need for 'reprisal' or 'defensive' violence that characterises motivational dehumanisation. Thus, Indonesia shows that motivational dehumanisation – even if not the main discursive framing of the genocide (which emphasised nationalism, religion, and anti-communism) – could readily be stirred up against a political group, as well as an ethnic one.

Taken together, both Guatemala and Indonesia provide examples of motivational dehumanisation. In Guatemala, this drew upon long-standing colonial attitudes, and seems to have been genuinely believed in by elites, while Melvin suggests that dehumanisation was, in fact, a cynical approach by the Indonesian military leaders. Nonetheless, in both cases, it played a major role in promoting, shaping, and targeting violence. This demonstrates the versatility of motivational dehumanisation as a tactic; it appears to have been compelling in a wider range of circumstances that we would expect. The broader imagery of lurking, corrupting threat could be applied and deployed in a wide range of other cases of mass categorical violence.

8.2 GENOCIDE, *BUT NO/LITTLE* MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION

I understand motivational dehumanisation to be an important part of the process of mobilising populations to carry out genocidal violence and creating a powerful incentive to participate in, or at least support, killing processes.

What, then, explains genocidal violence where such discourses are not present? While I do not suggest that motivational dehumanisation is *essential* for genocide, I do suggest that it has a highly significant impact on making it happen, meaning that something else must be happening in cases of 'massacre without [motivational] dehumanisation'. Looking at how such cases deploy dehumanisation differently – typically in a legitimising form, that clears out moral objections against massacres committed for more evidently material reasons – suggests that different social conditions and differing levels of perceived existential threat may account for some of this variation.

8.2.1 GENOCIDE OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA

On initial examination, dehumanisation was clearly in evidence across the genocidal colonisation of North America. This is especially apparent in massacres of Native populations, and so-called 'reprisal' attacks, where settlers attacked Native American communities in retaliation for supposed violence, or planned attacks. As early as the sixteenth century, Savage notes, European settlers in Virginia described indigenous people as 'cruel beasts', with 'a more unnatural brutishness than beasts', and 'more brutish than the beasts they hunt' This clearly denoted them as an inhumanly cruel and threatening force, while also subtly alluding to a potential response to this force in the way that 'beasts' were 'hunted' (Savage, 2009, 302). Indeed, Savage goes on to quote a formal proposal in 1703 by Reverend Solomon Stoddard, one of the most prominent New England clerics, to the Massachusetts Governor, 'that the colonists be given the financial wherewithal to purchase and train large packs of dogs to hunt the Indians as they do bears'. This, Stoddard suggested, was right and proper: while 'if the Indians were as other people it might be looked upon as inhumane to pursue them in such a manner', the Native population were like wolves 'and are to be dealt withal as wolves' (Savage, 2009, 298). Before the Wounded Knee

Massacre in South Dakota in 1890, L. Frank Baum (the editor of the state paper), noted that 'the nobility of the Redskin is extinguished, and what few are left are a pack of whining curs who lick the hand that smites them … better that they should die than live the miserable wretches that they are' (Savage, 2009, 294).

While this pattern may partly be an artefact of the instances Savage selects, these examples suggest a clear progression through different types of dehumanisation. American settlers started with a clear evocation of the threat and monstrosity of the targeted group, with implicit calls to attack them to stave off their cruelty. They then moved to a characterisation of them as a wild predator animal that needed to be hunted down and driven off from safe communities (and against whom violence was acceptable because they were not worthy of human respect). Much later, they characterised them as a pathetic and unworthy obstacle to white/settler domination of the continent.

While these examples do show the emergence of genocidal thinking and discourses, they represent development over a very long period. Genocide of Native North Americans (or rather, *genocides*) took place on a much wider scope than the other examples covered in this thesis, taking place across multiple centuries, by a wide range of European actors, against a wide range of Native groups. As Ostler relates (Ostler, 2014), genocide was committed not just through genocidal massacres, but also the imposition of harsh conditions leading to death, deaths from smallpox and other epidemic diseases (which in some cases were deliberately spread, in other cases were inadvertent impacts of colonialism), and environmental destruction. Thus, the Native American genocide actually represented a collection of approaches (some of which – including the coercive removal of Native children (Jacobs, 2014) – run counter to the reasoning of motivational dehumanisation, as discussed in the Armenian case above), rather than a single largely unitary campaign as seen elsewhere.

By looking at the expansion into the American West – states including Colorado, California, and Nevada – a more tightly focused historical and geographical approach can be gathered. In this way, I can chart the incidence and use of dehumanising discourse and its relation to genocidal violence.

The 1864 Sand Creek massacre – where a force of US Army cavalry led by Colonel John Chivington murdered 150–200 non-combatant Cheyenne and Arapahoe villagers – provides a good example of this. An eyewitness reports that Chivington's troops systematically mutilated the bodies, including those of children, 'in the most horrible manner' (Kane, 1999, 83), including scalping, cutting off of fingers, and mutilation of genitalia. These acts were reportedly carried out 'with the knowledge of J.M. Chivington', and so represent a consciously encouraged campaign of violence that went beyond killing. Indeed, two months before this massacre, Chivington had announced in a public speech that his policy was to 'kill and scalp all, little and big; that nits made lice', citing the threat that they had posed to white settlers in the region (Kelman, 2013, 14). This argument – almost identical to rhetoric in Germany and Rwanda – not only tried to *justify* the killing of children but argued *for* it, because they would only grow up into threats themselves, and was reflected by his soldier's conduct. As such, it closely matches the model of motivational dehumanisation and genocide discussed thus far in this thesis. Across the American West, similar 'Indian War' massacres were recharacterised as 'legitimate' armed conflict (Pessah, 2014, 1628).

A particularly clear example of this is given in Madley's study of the genocide of Native Californians, whose population dropped from 150,000 in 1846 to 30,000 in 1870 to 16,277 according to one census in 1880, as a result of 'diseases, dislocation, starvation … abduction, de jure and de facto unfree labour, mass death in forced confinement on reservations, homicides, battles, and massacres' (Madley, 2016, 3). While previous historiography has suggested that these actions were the result of 'unscrupulous individuals exploit[ing] the opportunities provided in a lawless frontier', Madley illustrates how this was part of an active, concerted effort by the government, military, and media (Madley 2016, 353). While there was no single order or specific plan to destroy California's Native population, Governor Peter Burnett publicly declared in a January 1851 speech that 'a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the races, until the Indian race becomes extinct'. Such sentiments were common throughout Californian politics, and reflected in actions including the creation of a climate of legal impunity, dozens of state-funded and authorised militia 'expeditions', and Army raids against Native populations (Madley, 2016, 354–355).

Madley argues that dehumanisation of Native Americans played a major role in directing and legitimising this violence. He explains this in terms of 'further erod[ing] the moral restraints of Anglo-Americans, Californios, and Europeans against killing California Indians [his term], while simultaneously stoking aggression and desire for revenge among their victims' (Madley, 2016, 59). This distinction neatly corresponds with the legitimising/motivational distinction I have drawn throughout this thesis, with most of his examples being of the former. When describing the way that John Sutter, a major Californian pioneer who would later be involved in massacres of local Native Americans, treated his Native slaves, Madley quotes contemporary (1848) observers who noted how Sutter fed them offal and grain from the troughs 'like so many pigs'. An article in the *California Star* in February 1848 suggested that Native Americans were 'a burden and pest to the country … the nearest link of the sort to the quadrupeds … gladly would I behold the exit of every one of these miserable creatures from the world', potentially by 'a continual war … till all are exterminated' (Madley, 2016, 65). In such a reckoning, Native Californians were a bestial but lowly obstacle to be removed rather than a genuine threat.

In other instances, Madley does encounter the threat-based dehumanisation mentioned above, which typically depicted Native Americans as wild animals and opportunistic predators, but with different imagery and connotations to my main three case studies. A prospector, Theodore T. Johnson, recalled Sutter's accounts of Oregonian migrants 'commenc[ing] a war of extermination against Native Californians, shooting them down like wolves'

(Madley, 2016, 86). *The Californian*, another of California's first newspapers, responded in 1847 to reports of horse theft with a proclamation that 'we shall urge the organisation of interior defences sufficient to protect the property of citizens from the depredations of the wild indians' (Madley, 2016, 61). Dr William M'Collum, a memoirist of this period, similarly noted that Native Americans 'need watching about as much as the wolves' around mine heads (Madley, 2016, 91).

Again, though, these evocations of a supposed Native threat quickly gave way to language using these same animal descriptors to lessen the moral weight of massacres, and justify vigilante/'preventative' killings. M'Collum describes how Oregonian 'backwoodsmen … hunt them as they would wild beasts' (especially in response to reports of Native 'outrages') (Madley, 2016, 93). A supposed reprisal attack in 1859 on the Native community of Pit River Valley by the paramilitary (but state-supported) white 'Pit River Rangers' resulted, according to an eyewitness, in children 'overtaken, slaughtered like wild animals, and thrown into piles' (Madley, 2016, 273). Much later, in 1935, the Indian Affairs Commissioner characterised the 'swift depopulation' of Native Californians as stemming from their removal from the land and property, 'treat[ment] as wild animals, shot on sight', and slavery and being worked to death (Committee on Indian Affairs, 1935, 6), suggesting that the examples listed above were hardly isolated incidents.

Pigs, wolves, dogs, bears and non-specific wild beasts represent a very different set of images to those seen in Germany, Rwanda, and Bosnian Serbia (cancer, snakes, parasitic insects, and disease). White settlers used these images to demean the Native population, eroding moral restraints against killing or severely mistreating them, but, even when this language described its subjects as more threatening, they took on different connotations. None of them carried the same sense of infiltration, subversion, poisoning, existential threat, or corruption that was a key feature of motivational dehumanisation during the wartime genocides. Native Americans were seldom described as a 'cancer' on the body politic of the American West or described as a poisonous or malign presence that could destroy or dominate white settlers. Instead, animal metaphors tended to carry connotations of wild or verminous animals – threatening, but only outside the borders and control of 'civilisation'; dangerous and opportunistic predators, but not representing an aggressive or insidious threat.

Based on this survey, dehumanisation did indeed play a major role in the genocide, as Madley suggests, but predominantly through legitimising dehumanisation, enlisted to make genocidal violence (itself seemingly conducted for material reasons of land acquisition) easier to enact, with few examples of motivational dehumanisation.

Far from contradicting my account of dehumanisation, however, I would suggest that this supports its predictions. Motivational dehumanisation is strongly linked with a perception among the genocidal community that the targeted group posed an existential threat against them, particularly in terms of their ability to subvert or infiltrate the communities of the former group. This state of affairs simply did not exist in the United States. While a few early settler communities did portray themselves as under existential threat, such as the Puritans during the Pequot War in 1637 (though even this is debatable (Ostler, 2014)), this was not true more broadly. In the self-image and narrative of conflict held by the settler population – let alone in the real world – the notion of Native American groups seriously threatening settler Americans as a whole was difficult to take seriously, and settler/Native relations often carried a sense of patronising contempt by settlers for Native peoples (Grim, 2014, 23) (Wilkinson, 1987, 17–18) not present in Germany or Rwanda. Small communities did continue to feel insecurity (feigned or genuine) from local Native populations, and the brutal 'reprisal' massacres that often resulted from this were frequently justified or described using dehumanised animal images, characterising it as 'hunting'. In this, they used the same tactic of painting the enemy as a sinister force that needed to be responded to using 'pest control' methods, and who were not part of the human 'universe of moral obligation', but on a much smaller scale. At the nation-state level, however, this kind of threat perception was not convincing even to racist settlers. Given the expansionistic character of the settler state, its clear military supremacy, its (coercively enforced) resettlement of the target population into individual territories and reservations nominally separate from white settlers, and its overt paternalistic attitude to its victims, the ‘lurking powerful infiltrators’ myth could not even notionally be applied.

While the genocidal killing of Native Americans saw little motivational dehumanisation (and much legitimising dehumanisation), this is largely consistent with the model proposed earlier in this thesis. Killings of Native Californians and Tutsi, for example, were both genocidal, resulting in deaths of a large percentage of the victim populations, but they were very different types of genocide. The former was committed primarily as a conquest and expropriation of territory. The latter was committed in part to root out and destroy a supposedly malign threat that was both a fifth column for invading forces, and a long-standing, almost supernatural, and verminous danger to Hutu. There was some overlap – individual settler communities (claiming to be) fearful for their lives launching 'reprisal' massacres that killed entire Native communities in the United States, elaborate anti-Native ideology, as well as seizure of land and property, score-settling, and more material concerns in Rwanda – but overall, they do represent two different phenomena, and different forms of violence.

If the genocidal expansion of the United States were motivated by a desire for colonial and territorial gain (both at a state and individual level), combined with a paternalistic, dehumanising view of Native Americans as 'savages' or otherwise lowly creatures, then I would expect less fear and more justifications for not treating Native lives and land ownership with respect. This is indeed what I have found. One might expect fears about fifth-column Tutsi, however, to be expressed using and stoked by discourse about insidious internal threats – and, again, this is what I saw.

This would suggest that the association of motivational dehumanisation with a particular form of 'defensive' genocide continues to be a strong one. While not all mass killing of an ethnic, religious, or cultural group, with intent to destroy that group (not all genocides) involved motivational dehumanisation, those concerned with rooting out a supposedly dangerous internal minority did.

8.2.2 GENOCIDE OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS

From this, colonial genocide appears somewhat different to what I observed in my main three case studies.. Dehumanising state and popular discourses typically took a more legitimising character, with its targets portrayed as wild but lowly beasts to be cleared from the land, rather than threatening predators. As opposed to the urgent, rapid, and total 'defensive' approach taken in genocides like the Holocaust, the forms taken by genocidal violence represented a piecemeal, ad hoc, and opportunistic 'offensive' approach. How far does this pattern – of more clearly colonial/piecemeal genocide for purposes of land acquisition and territorial control justified using legitimising dehumanisation – hold? To explore this, I turn to the genocidal persecution of Aboriginal Australians.

Judging the scale of this genocidal violence from the outside is tricky. As Harris notes, lack of accurate survey data, the paucity of witnesses, the prioritisation of listing settler deaths in newspapers, and state and social desire to minimise complicity in genocidal violence make it difficult to ascertain, and political highly contested. Harris' detailed literature review, however, finds a 1788 population of Aboriginal Australians of anything from 300,000 (a very low estimate), to over one million, and a collapse to a census estimate of only 58,000 'full-blooded' Aboriginal Australians in the 1920s (while there were more 'half-caste' Aboriginal Australians, there was a concerted policy to eliminate 'full-bloods'). This represents a conservatively estimated decline of 80% from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century (Harris, 2003, 81). Barta highlights that smaller groups suffered even more. In what would become Victoria, for example, the local Aboriginal population declined from approximately 10,000 in 1835 to 1,907 in 1853 to somewhere between 402–586 in the 1920s – 'a point dangerously close to the extinction of a people' (Barta, 2001, 43–44).

Many contemporary observers suggested that this was simply inevitable or providential (a point of view that was hotly disputed, even at the time), but Harris identifies three distinctive and intentional causes for the population decline. He identifies sexual violence (which could reduce the population through forcibly assimilating future generations into a mixed-race 'half-caste', severely traumatising Aboriginal women, or simply rendering them unable to have children follow sexual abuse), massacre (particularly during land acquisitions), and epidemic disease. To support this, he cites a startling array of contemporary reports listing these as major causes for population decline (Harris, 2003, 83–4).

Rape and sexual violence during this period were extremely violent and dehumanising (even more so than rape 'usually' is). Harris notes a widespread practice of rape by white men of Aboriginal women and girls, typically justified by perpetrators denying their victims personhood, and seeing them simply as another part of the continent to be exploited. In 1896, for example, William Willshire – a policeman who had just been dismissed for his role in a massacre of non-combatant Aboriginal Australians – wrote that God had intended for white men to 'make use' of black women, because 'he had placed them wherever the pioneers go' (Harris, 2003, 95). Similar attitudes persisted well into the twentieth century, both in popular culture and political institutions. As late as 1945, an internal report on the Native Affairs Branch reported that 'young women are regarded as part of the wages paid to keep [European] men on the stations', (Rose, 2001, 155). Seen by colonisers as another resource to be exploited and traded, Aboriginal Australian women were certainly dehumanised and placed outside the universe of human moral obligation - there was not the same sense that they were dangerous, as seen in Rwanda or Bosnia.

Likewise, there is not much evidence of the deliberate use of disease as a weapon of genocide (Tatz, 1999, 11–13). Settlers did spread epidemic disease to Native populations, which was extremely harmful given the lack of resistance to settler diseases, but the sheer scale of the decline and the fact that it continued to occur many years after the first European-Aboriginal Australian contact, suggest that other features were at work. Harris points to the displacement and non-camp concentration of Aboriginal Australians as areas where disease did play a considerable role. He points to displacement of large numbers of Aboriginal people from their land into unsanitary and overcrowded shantytowns, as well as the establishment of 'Lock Hospitals' housing people suffering contagious disease (Harris, 2003, 97–8). This suggests that little human compassion or respect was shown towards Aboriginal Australians, but does not echo the pattern previously observed in the Holocaust or the Armenian Genocide, where a disease was routinely identified with the target group, allowed to spread amongst them, and then used to justify their direct and systematic extermination as a 'hygiene problem'.

Direct genocidal violence did occur across Australia, typically taking the form of massacres on the frontier and individual killings, rather than a large-scale industrialised process (although some attempts at this were made, such as in Tasmania). Soldiers, settlers, and police forces were involved in a series of massacres of local Aboriginal populations. In an analysis of recorded massacres, killings were most commonly carried out as 'reprisal' actions for the killing of settler civilians (Allam and Evershed, 2019) (which typically meant massive escalations by settlers following ongoing skirmishes; figures cited by Harris give a 10:1 Aboriginal: settler death rate in these battles). The perpetrators of these attacks changed over time – from detachments of British soldiers to police and settler actions, to native police commanded by white officers, supporting farmers and land claims. In short, this follows a similar pattern to that observed in the United States. As Marcus notes, there was no clear centralised plan of violent elimination (though individual groups of settlers and pastoralists did hold such designs). However, overall, settler policy 'assumed without question the right to destroy Aboriginal civilisation through expropriation of land, essential to its existence' (Marcus, 2001, 61).

Thus, deliberately eliminationist genocidal violence came from individual groups of settlers seeking to destroy or drive off individual Aboriginal populations. Centralised colonial policies certainly did aim towards the elimination of the Aboriginal population, through demography, displacement, neglect for their welfare and livelihoods, and failing to prevent (and in some cases participating in) a culture of massacre on the frontier. However, there was no concerted programme of direct mass extermination; as mentioned above, different forms of violence were deployed instead.

While there were occasional examples of motivational dehumanisation (Aboriginal Australians being referred to as ‘loathsome’ ‘vermin’, and ‘hideous to humanity’, with such arguments being portrayed by elite and low-level perpetrators alike as justifying violence against them (Tatz, 2003, 79), genocidal dehumanisation in Australia focused on legitimising dehumanisation.

Settler discourses (similar to the American case) portrayed Aboriginal Australians as common pests and nuisance creatures to be removed as part of the process of 'taming' and settling the land. While the notion that Aboriginal

Australians were legally classed as 'flora and fauna' is an urban legend (Das, 2018), this is not a complete misrepresentation. In 1902, King O'Malley, a member of the Commonwealth Parliament declared that 'there is no scientific evidence that the Aborigine is a human being at all' (Savage, 2009, 261), arguing that this meant they should not be enfranchised or given other rights. In a survey of language and metaphors used in contemporary media, culture, and politics to describe Aboriginal Australians, Savage cites examples of them being described as 'crows' (Savage, 2009, 288), 'brute beasts' that should be 'hunted down … and destroyed' (Savage, 2009, 300), 'monkeys' ((Savage, 2009, 304), a 'hated marsupial' (like a kangaroo) (Savage, 2009, 304), that should be eliminated. Indeed, he observes that 'one common practice was to report 'the hunting and shooting of "kangaroos" instead of … the hunting and shooting of Aboriginal men' (Savage, 2009, 309). Taken together, these have very different connotations to the disease and infiltrator imagery seen previously. Rather, they deny the humanity of Aboriginal Australians, making them out as lowly creatures that should be swept aside – 'vermin to be cleared off the face of the earth', as Australian High Commissioner Arthur Hamilton Gordon wrote to UK Prime Minister William Gladstone in 1883 (Savage, 2009, 282). In short, this was a clear example of legitimising dehumanisation being used to make a programme of colonial violence and land appropriation easier for settlers. The 'internal logic' of the dehumanising discourse closely matches the form taken by the violence.

The way that ideas about Aboriginal Australian reproduction and demography were used to call for, shape, and justify genocidal violence complicates this impression, however. Dehumanising ideas about 'contamination' and 'blood purity' were regularly invoked during early twentieth century policymaking discussions about the elimination of the Aboriginal Australian population, but took eugenic tones rather than the exterminatory demographic approach seen in Bosnian Serbia.

One of the most notorious elements of genocidal policy against Aboriginal Australians, especially during the twentieth century, would be the policy of the forcible removal of children – the 'stolen generation' – as documented in the 1997 state-convened *Bringing Them Home* report. In the late nineteenth century, citing the apparently inexorable decline and poor conditions of Aboriginal Australian populations, colonial authorities enacted a range of programmes that separated Aboriginal children from their parents, placing them in foster care or educational institutions, typically training them for domestic or agricultural servitude (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997, 22–130). Not only did this separation represent genocidal mistreatment in itself (forcibly removing children of the group to destroy that group is specifically addressed in the Genocide Convention), but the victims of this policy were also subject to wide-ranging forms of physical, economic, sexual, and emotional abuse (Commonwealth of Australia, 131–153). While exact numbers affected are difficult to determine, surveys in the late 1980s and 1990s suggest that between 30–47% of Aboriginal Australians reported having been separated from both parents in some way (Savage, 2009, 31). Such a policy, while deeply inhumane, runs counter to fear of contamination and exterminatory violence associated with motivational dehumanisation. This would abhor adoption of the target group's children, since they would be seen to grow up to replicate their group's dangerous and unpleasant traits. Instead, it sought to use them as an exploitable labour force that could be 'civilised' into a second-class group. Additionally, the personal testimonies cited in the 'Bringing Them Home' report, while routinely including details of mistreatment and inhumane conditions, indicating that white colonial authorities did not think much of the victims' humanity, do not mention the kind of imagery seen in Chapters 3–5.

Fears about contamination, infiltration, and the need to retain ethnic purity still underpinned the broader policy of forced ethnic assimilation, as Bartrop's study of genocidal bureaucrats and marriage law in the early twentieth century illustrates. In his *Official Report for 1919*, J.W. Bleakley, the Chief Protector and Director of Aboriginal Affairs in Queensland, noted that 'race-mixing' between white settler Australians and Aboriginal Australians was to be forbidden, with 'complete separation' mandated, in order to 'safeguard the purity of our own blood' (Bartrop, 2001, 77). Over in Western Australia, Chief Protector A.O. Neville similarly explained how 'full-bloods' should be 'rightly excluded from any association likely to lead to [a marriage with another non-'full-blood]' (Bartrop, 2001, 77). If they were to be allowed to have children with mixed-descent Australians, this risked 'forc[ing] our coloured people back to the black'. He laid out a plan, summarised by Tatz, in which 'the "full-bloods" would die out … [the white state would] take "half-castes away from their mothers"', and discourage inter-community marriages in favour of marriages with whites until white Australians would 'forget that there ever were any Aborigines in Australia' (Tatz, 2001, 25). Others agreed, including Cecil Cook, the Chief Protector in the Northern Territory, who suggested that a sufficiently concerted effort could ensure 'the complete disappearance of the black race, and the swift submergence of the progeny in the white'. At the Canberra Conference – a meeting of all State and Federal Aboriginal affairs administrators in 1937 – this policy of 'absorption' was agreed upon, over objections of even more extreme proposals such as the mass sterilisation of all 'half-castes'. Echoing the observations made in this thesis' case studies regarding the political salience of such discourses, these were 'not isolated cranks simply playing with their favourite theories [but] men invested with enormous power over their aboriginal charges [and] the power to hire and fire the white officers given the task of carrying out their policies' (Bartrop, 2001, 80)..

In short, this would suggest a similar, but subtly diverging, approach to demographic fears than that seen in Bosnian Serbia. Both saw the reproduction of the targeted group as an essentially corrupting force, whether through 'degenerated DNA' or through assaults on 'the purity of our own blood' that could 'force people back to the black', and took coercive measures – through paramilitary violence or legally-enforced restrictions – to ensure this. Perhaps because of their own perceived insecure position in the disintegrating Yugoslav state, Serbian paramilitary groups carried out large-scale campaigns of sex-selective killing and sexual violence. In Australia, however, the combination of the idea of the ‘half caste’ population, together with the secure ethnic dominance of white Australians and their belief in their ethnic and cultural superiority, led to a different outcome (although sexual and sex-selective violence certainly did occur as part of the genocide (Tatz, 1999, 14)). As laid out through policies such as those agreed upon at the Canberra Conference, white authorities believed that any 'corruption' was not insurmountable and that a careful programme of eugenics could eliminate it by overwhelming it with white identity. Thus, Australian policies of genocide did not represent a break with the genocidal demographic fears and dehumanisation seen elsewhere, but a variation on it, portraying the contaminating threat as one that could be overcome and subsumed, rather than destroyed.

Just as with the massacres of Native Americans in the United States, dehumanisation did appear to play a role in shaping the Aboriginal Australian genocide, both in individual instances of killing, and in the broader state policies of gradual extinction. This was, however, typically legitimising rather than motivational. Save for instances of threat-designating dehumanisation, typically used to justify brutal 'reprisal' attacks for real or imagined instances of violence, dehumanisation in these cases was frequently legitimising, and used differently. It was used to make the process of land expropriation, colonial rule, and intensive coerced physical work easier, by denying its subjects their rights to land, autonomy, and ownership of their labour, and recharacterising them as pests before ‘clearing them from the land’.

From this, a distinction can be drawn between legitimising dehumanising discourse to reduce the opposition to genocidal violence used to seize land or control over an area, and motivational dehumanisation used to increase the perceived urgency of violence to neutralise an encroaching threat. There was some overlap. As noted in my literature review, some violence in wartime/'defensive' genocides like the Holocaust and the Rwandan Genocide was motivated by a desire for material gain. On the other hand, there were some cases in these colonial genocides where settlers did claim to feel that they were under threat, and needed to lash out to eliminate the threatening force before it could harm them further. These were, however, the exception rather than the rule, especially when it came to state policy.

Ultimately, while the two sets of large-scale organised killing show a wide variation in the way they used threat-framing and motivational dehumanisation – ‘massacre without [motivational] dehumanisation’ – this can be explained by their very different patterns of violence, with different goals and approaches to killing. More investigation would be needed to confirm this assessment, looking at other cases where colonial or land expropriation goals were more prominent in genocidal violence, or where they were mixed with the more threat-centred ‘defensive’ characterisations. Nonetheless, the Australian and American cases arguably *support* a motivational dehumanisation-based approach to understanding some genocides, by highlighting the close links between motivational dehumanisation, a securitised target group, and particular forms of genocidal violence.

8.3 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION, *BUT NO* GENOCIDE

So much for 'massacre without [motivational] dehumanisation' – what about '[motivational] dehumanisation without massacre'? As mentioned above, I do not claim that motivational dehumanisation alone is sufficient to cause genocidal killing. In my three main case studies, dehumanisation worked particularly effectively in times of armed conflict and insecurity, where there was a perceived existential threat from the target group, a belief that they had victimised them in the past, and where local and opportunistic factors and grievances could encourage people to participate in violence. As such, the existence of some cases where dehumanisation was present, but the other factors were not, does not unsettle or damage my model; such an examination would help to identify how dehumanisation is related to other causes of genocide.

Additionally, if motivational dehumanisation preceded instances of mass violence – providing an ideological 'reservoir' of images, prejudices, and metaphors, that became widespread in media, popular, and elite discourse – then some of the cases of 'motivational dehumanisation without massacre' would actually be 'motivational dehumanisation without massacre *yet*'. An observer in Rwanda in 1991, Germany in 1931, or Bosnia in 1990 might observe such ideas becoming mainstream but without any genocidal violence occurring (at that point), suggesting that we should not be over-confident that just because there is no genocide now does not mean that it may not occur in future.

Alternatively, suppose motivational dehumanisation could emerge before genocide took place, and was not a necessary precondition for it. In that case, some cases of dehumanisation without massacre may be cases where the other causes did not manifest, or where countervailing social pressures prevented genocidal violence from occurring.

In any of the scenarios, it is worth examining what did occur in such circumstances. How did dehumanising discourses manifest in popular culture? What forms (if any) did state or popular violence against the target group take? What appears to have been 'missing' that might explain why violence had not yet occurred?

8.3.1 ANTI-MUSLIM DEHUMANISATION IN CANADA, THE USA AND THE UK

To explore some of these issues, I specifically examine the case of anti-Muslim sentiment (a phenomenon that commonly overlaps with anti-Arab/anti-Iranian/anti-south-Asian/anti-black racism, but does not exclusively do so), in Western Europe and North America since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. Anti-Muslim sentiment preceded this (Runnymede Trust (1997) but saw particular intensification after 2001. As an example, this bears several advantages. Much of its material is in common with that used during genocidal violence in the former Yugoslavia. It is English-language, and thus, highly accessible to me as a researcher. Finally, it offers a variety of different groups that employed dehumanisation in different ways – the media, political figures, the military, and far right organisations – allowing a better insight into how these ideas circulated and the different impacts they had in different contexts.

To begin with, motivational dehumanisation was a common tactic used in mainstream media in the years following the September 11th terror attacks, with verminous and animal metaphors routinely used to describe (interchangeably) terrorists, extremists, 'Islamists', leaders of Arab states, and Muslims more broadly. Steuter and Wills observe what is now a familiar pattern in media portrayals: 'animals, dirt or germs, things that require domination, cleansing, or elimination'. Such violence took on a very specific character – 'when our enemy is inhuman, especially when metaphorically figured as toxic, spreading, insidious, and contaminating, it becomes a civic, even a moral duty to inhibit its pernicious spread' (Steuter and Wills, 2009, 37). They list over 70 headlines from American and British mainstream (local and national) news outlets discussing this, and find several patterns. In some cases, especially when targeting Muslims overseas, generic 'monster' imagery was used – militants and Iraqis more broadly were described as 'beasts' and 'monsters' (Steuter and Wills, 2009, 74–76) who needed to be 'hunted down' in their 'nests' and 'swamps' (Steuter and Wills. 2009, 73). They also find a particular use of vermin and disease imagery. A leading article from the *NY Daily News* opened by remarking that 'the vermin have struck again … does there today remain any safe haven on this Earth from beasts who slither out of their murderous holes to wreak their havoc'. Steuter and Wills find a slew of distinctive linguistic framings of, variously, Iraqis, Muslims, or terrorists, using specific animal metaphors. These included depictions of Iraqis/Muslims/insurgents as rats (‘equated with destruction, disease, and the spread of plague’), snakes (‘a primal fear … [creatures with] a drive to poison us that is, like a snake’s, instinctive, natural and irresistible’, that must be met with ‘a deadly counterattack’), cockroaches (‘enemies there for the squashing’), and microbes/bacteria/viruses/cancer (where ‘extermination and eradication become the logical, responsible, even humane response [where] it would be ludicrous to try to separate out the individual bugs which have harmed us’) (Steuter and Wills, 2009, 76–83). Widely shared editorial cartoons took a similar approach, with Iran being depicted as a leering serpent with radioactive eggs warning ‘don’t worry, my babies will be harmlessss [sic] …’ (Cox and Forkum, 2006), demonic 'Islamic' serpents hypnotising Arab populations or writhing in their multitudes from a beheaded corpse, and cockroaches crawling over the Canadian flag, subtitled 'Terrorists: even the best homes get them'. These recall the senses of vulnerability and defilement common across motivational dehumanisation (Steuter and Wills, 112–118).

Gauging how much of an impact this dehumanising imagery had on behaviour – and whether it represented a concerted ideology to dehumanise Muslims – is difficult. Unlike the examples seen in my analysis of the media in my main case studies, these examples came from a much wider and more diffuse media environment, often online. As they were (for the most part) not from state-run media, or representing a group capable of committing organised violence, they cannot be taken as direct reflections of state/paramilitary ideology either. As Ahmed notes, YouGov and Gallup polling found that non-Muslim Britons became dramatically less trusting of British Muslims over this period, seeing them increasingly as part of a hostile internal minority (Ahmed, 2014, 192), but it is difficult to say if this translated into explicit genocidal intentions and how much role the media had in shaping this.

One way in which these news stories and cultural cartoons *would* have a noticeable impact, however, is the degree to which they were shared and disseminated online, in the sphere of far-right anti-Muslim prejudice. The advent of the internet reduced the barriers to communicating dehumanising images and allowed them to be shared with different audiences. A lurid and disturbing cartoon by 'D.T. Devereaux', depicting a demonic Prophet Mohammed smeared with blood and with a beard made of cockroaches, would not remain a disturbing but marginal illustration in the artist's circle, but would continue to be circulated nearly a decade later, on Facebook, a small plethora of blogs, and even by high-ranking members of right-wing groups such as the Tea Party (Good, 2010); a ‘reverse image’ search finds the cartoon reposted on hundreds of Google-archived sites. While it is important not to overstate the significance of an individual post, examples like Devereaux’s illustration show that marginal ideas can become widely spread by networks that took them to heart – enough to be circulated and used to illustrate articles, blog posts, and statements for years after they were originally made.

While acknowledging the difficulty with charting the impact of dehumanising metaphors in media on individual worldviews, it does seem that there is a widespread and distinctive pattern of these metaphors being used. Although not taking place in the context of widespread genocidal mobilisation, this dispersal of dehumanising images may be tentatively likened to the creation of a reservoir of dehumanising imagery. It may not be widely subscribed to, but nonetheless was able to inform behaviour by creating images and framings of ethnic relations that could be readily adopted later.

This discussion of dehumanising mainstream media also highlights the role of the far-right in disseminating genocidal ideas, both on- and offline. As one of the political groups that is highly associated with the actual commission of violence to exterminate, punish, or drive out Muslim populations, this bears some particular attention.

Far right blogs, comment sections, and other social media sources are replete with such comments. Steuter and Wills note the repeated use of familiar metaphors, including cancer ('a little bit of Islam is like a little bit of cancer', with the spread of the religion being 'like a cancer spreading over the body'), snakes (‘once the rattlesnake has bitten your child and killed it, you are unlikely to allow it and its family to continue to exist’, ‘Britain has fed a snake at its bosom and has been bitten by the snake’), and vermin ('It is time for Americans to unite—and for us to help root out every last one of these vermin hiding within our country’) (Steuter and Wills, 2009, 84). Their litany of such ‘low animal' metaphors clearly echo the forms taken by motivational dehumanisation, emphasising the need for total and categorical (rather than exemplary or targeted) violence and excision of the target population, the dangers of naïveté when vermin were amongst one's own population, and the notion of an intimate threat. Charles Johnson – a former prominent member of the anti-Muslim far-right, compiled a similar list of comments and posts from prominent anti-Muslim sites following the April 2011 attacks on UN personnel in Afghanistan. In a single day, he found a litany advocating genocide, often on dehumanising lines – calling for 'the muslim rats ... to be exterminated', arguing that they were 'evil impersonating human beings' and 'cruel evil demonic monsters' not fit to live among civilised societies, and advocating to 'cut off the head of the snake' (Johnson, 2011). Individually, these were insignificant - anonymous internet commenting makes it easy to post extreme statements for status, or to shock and outrage – but the consistency of such remarkably similar comments is striking. Together, these represent an extremely widespread corpus of anti-Muslim sentiment that – drawing on fears of terrorism, economic decline, cruelty, and demography – emphatically advocate for genocidal violence to avert this supposed threat.

Among more organised far-right groups with an offline political or physical presence, outright dehumanisation equating targets with cockroaches, cancer, or other vermin is not quite as obvious, at least in official statements. Much more common were arguments about a 'demographic threat', which, echoing 1990s Serbia, warned of the supposed threat to the West from the ‘inhuman’ fertility of Muslims, and called for violent or coercive responses to this. One example of this would be the far-right 'Britain First' group. In one of its first newsletters, founder Jim Dowson warned that Britain faced an 'apocalyptic … onslaught' from British Muslims, who threatened to undermine and destroy the non-Muslim population (Dowson, 2012, 6–7), 'withering' them, in the words of Dowson's colleague Paul Golding (Golding, 2011, 7). Dowson describes this using familiar terminology, contrasting ‘indigenous’ Britons who give ‘birth’, and Muslims, who ‘breed’ as commanded by their 'perverted religion', and threaten to 'devour … our once green and pleasant land'. This was presented alongside specious charts and graphs threatening explosive exponential growth in Britain’s Muslim population. While not explicitly calling for anti-Muslim violence to avert this, his policies - including inculcating ‘military prowess and a perpetual martial upbringing’, and ‘secur[ing] a safe refuge for themselves and their children’ – clearly implied an imminent existential violent conflict. Taken together, there are clear equivalencies to motivational dehumanisation here.

It is questionable how significant Britain First has been as a movement. Despite some instances of prominence from their ‘mosque invasion’ campaign, large online presence, and a (later withdrawn) retweet by US President Donald Trump (BBC, 2018), they have had a numerically small offline presence (Hope Not Hate, 2017). They do, however, exemplify a much wider pattern of motivationally dehumanising discourse about demographic threats. This ranged from niche cartoonists (Devereaux's 'The other Islamic bomb', published in 2006, depicted a Muslim woman as a skeletal grim-reaper figure, lifting her burqa to reveal she was 'pregnant' with a fizzing bomb (Bracke and Aguilar, 2020, 690-691)) to controversy-seeking political commentators (Mark Steyn, a Canadian conservative writer, wrote that ‘the Serbs figured that out … if you can't outbreed the enemy, cull ‘em’ (Steyn, 2008, 4–6)) to articles in major newspapers (the UK Daily Telegraph published multiple articles warning of the ‘demographic earthquake’ (Thompson, 2010) and ‘demographic timebomb’ associated with British Muslims (Michaels, 2009)). Together, these formed a trend that Bracke and Aguilar describe as a ‘paranoid and apocalyptic … weaponisation of the womb' (2020, 692), by which 'alien bodies' threatened to enact a 'replacement' of white Europeans and Americans. While seldom explicitly calling for genocidal violence, they nonetheless evoked a threat from the 'breeding' and reproduction of an inferior and less-than-human foe, encouraging some form of coercive response against them.

Taken together, this demonstrates a very strong tradition in Western media and discourse – especially online – of motivational dehumanisation. Muslims (a grouping that often also includes migrants and refugees from Muslim majority countries) are portrayed in this worldview as a verminous threatening group, that undermines Western society through economic and social parasitism, seeks to replace white European populations through a ‘demographic bomb’, and commits terrorism, savage acts of cruelty, and other socially corrosive acts. Between these, and broader, less intense forms of social prejudice towards Muslims, it seems safe to say that motivational dehumanisation was, and continues to be, widespread in anti-Muslim discourse.

This has not led to genocidal massacres or policies, as with my main case studies. Far-right violence, terror attacks, and violence against mosques are often traceable to belief in an imminent religious or race war (Hartleb, 2020, 92–105), and are often encouraged by online far-right networks, but do not represent a concerted, society-wide programme of extermination. Groups like Britain First fared poorly in elections. How did mainstream political groups and leaders react to motivational dehumanisation?

Among military actions during the War on Terror, dehumanising discourse was certainly present, but seems to have taken the form of legitimising dehumanisation in support of the brutal treatment of Muslim or Arab detainees. This is particularly clear in cases such as Abu Ghraib (Steuter and Wills, 2009, 60) and Guantanamo Bay (Simon, 2019) prisons, where there have been detailed reports of American troops mistreating captives in ways that clearly reflected legitimising dehumanisation. Smith quotes Major Geoffrey Miller, who, in his instructions to the new commander of Abu Ghraib, reportedly said that ‘they are like dogs and if you allow them to believe at any point that they are more than a dog then you have lost control of them’ (Smith, 2011, 28). Dehumanisation here seems to have been carried out more as a means of maintaining control over incarcerated populations, breaking their will to resist, and carrying out wanton cruelty, rather than as a prelude to mass murder. Among frontline combat troops, there is also evidence of dehumanisation. Livingstone quotes one lower-ranking soldier describing how ‘a lot of guys really supported the whole concept that if they don’t speak English and they have darker skin, they’re not as human as us' (Smith, 2011, 63), as well as US General Richard Myers' description of Fallujah (shortly after a US massacre there) as 'a huge rat's nest' that was 'festering' and therefore needed to be 'dealt with' (Smith, 2011, 263). With the exception of Myers' quote, this language does not seem to carry the same sense of monstrous existential threat requiring a violent response. Instead, dehumanisation seems largely to have been used in service of making individual acts of (often extremely violent and inhumane, but not exterminatory) violence justified as part of the broader goals of the Iraq war.

To the degree that Muslims have been designated as an internal security threat to the United States and the United Kingdom, governments and security services have responded using heavy-handed anti-terrorism laws and policies to detain and surveil Muslim populations, with explicit use of motivational dehumanisation by low-level politicians being censured rather than upheld (BBC, 2020). In the UK, for example, programmes such as 'CONTEST' and 'PREVENT' have been accused of disproportionately targeting Muslims, designating entire communities as suspect and potential threats (Panatazis and Pemberton, 2009). In the United States, programmes such as the National Security Entry-Exit Registration system led to the securitisation, large-scale detention and threatened deportation of tens of thousands of Muslim visitors (Ahmed, 2014, 196). This saw a particular intensification during the early Trump administration, with severe restrictions on travel from Muslim majority countries, the appointment of anti-Muslim intellectuals and civil servants such as Mike Pompeo, Steve Bannon, and Sebastian Gorka, as well as a tendency to position Muslims and Islam as a threat to the USA more generally (Shipoli, 2018, 239–251). This systemic and individual anti-Muslim prejudice has not developed into genocide or other forms of categorical violence or mass incarceration. Instead, as Pertwee notes, ‘the counter-jihad had effectively been subsumed into a broader, translocal white nationalist movement that sees Trump as its key political figurehead', alongside a wide array of other far-right concerns and movements (Pertwee, 2020, 222–223), especially anti-immigration discourse. To the degree to which non-Trump leaders and elites did perceive Muslims as a singular security threat, there was not the same sense of imminent, luridly described existential danger, and they were able to address the perceived threat using less extraordinary, and more institutionally ‘sophisticated’, measures.

What explains this? What is present in cases like Bosnian Serbia that is not present in the United Kingdom and the United States? Explaining this in full is beyond the scope of this thesis, but a few differences in circumstances do present themselves.

To begin with, I suggest that the context and location of the threat were important. The perception of a militarised intimate threat from within the body politic is less apparent in anti-Muslim prejudice. While far-right groups in the UK and USA both do subscribe to notions of 'demographic threat' and sadistic Muslim behaviour within the borders of their own states, and several intellectuals and leaders do suggest the existence of a totalising civilisational conflict between Islam and the West, this is largely not shared by political establishments or the mainstream media. These sources typically locate dehumanised threats outside the state, capable of striking at the West but not annihilating it, while securitising domestic populations but not positioning them as existential threats. The vast majority of Steuter and Wills' example headlines, while often freely equating Muslims, Arabs, and non-human threats, tended to focus on populations in the Middle East, where the US was fighting (or planning to fight) wars. While this might make it easier for leaders justify violence against them through legitimising dehumanisation, it does not fit the same kind of dire internal threat that I observed in my own case studies. This would underline the importance of the location of the threat described by dehumanising discourse: to encourage a violent reaction against a supposed infiltrating threat, that threat would need to be convincingly described as a threat 'at home', rather than 'abroad'.

Another explanation might be that the United Kingdom and the United States are very different from the states where motivational dehumanisation did lead to genocide. Perhaps the liberal commitment to individual human rights, the democratic process, or other institutional features of these societies may have prevented motivational dehumanisation from sparking outright violence. While this may be true to some extent, it is not what I have found here. Rather, greater state capacity, lower levels of armed conflict, combined with a much less intense sense of existential threat among high-ranking political elites (unlike my three case studies, there was never the same sort of existential conflict in the War on Terror), seem to have encouraged governments to respond to what threats they did perceive in a more conventionally securitised manner, using targeted (if disproportionate and prejudicially applied) policies such as anti-terror policies and immigration restrictions.

Taken together, this would suggest that 'dehumanisation, but no massacre' resulting from anti-Muslim prejudice in the UK and North America might be explained in terms of the character of the perceived threat and its internal logic, the actual lack of a large-scale conflict, and the state's capacity to address it. If the supposed ethnic threat is hard to portray as an internal, existential, corrosive threat to society at large, 'defensive' internal and categorical violence is harder to justify. Unlike cases such as Germany, Rwanda, and Serbia, there is much less sense of insecurity, and states have much more institutional capacity to respond to perceived securitised threats on a more targeted basis. Where security services did express large-scale suspicion against Muslim populations as a security threat, they were able to employ surveillance measures and policing to address this 'threat', assisted by the fact that they were in peacetime. If these resources became strained, and dehumanising framings of Muslims as an existential threat that were trickier to contain became more prevalent in government, then the situation would be more akin to the cases where genocidal violence did occur.

8.3.2 ANTI-AFRICAN RACE RIOTS IN TEL AVIV (2012)

One example of this increasing perception of an ethnic minority as an existential threat giving rise to more concentrated large-scale violence and political action would be the 2012 anti-African race riots in Tel Aviv. While also not genocidal, this case does represent an escalation of violence in conjunction with motivational dehumanisation and similar threat-framing discourse.

Large numbers of refugees from sub-Saharan Africa (largely Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea) have sought asylum in Israel, crossing over into Israel through Egypt. Very few have been granted refugee status, and many are either held in long-term detention facilities or concentrated in inadequate housing in south Tel Aviv. As a group, they have faced high levels of prejudice and everyday harassment (Graham, 2018).

This took on a particular intensity in early summer 2012. In May 2012, a range of high-ranking cabinet ministers, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Interior Minister Eli Yishai, and Energy Minister Uzi Landau described black migrants from Africa as 'infiltrators' (who must be stopped before '60,000 infiltrators are liable to become 600,000') as well as a 'strategic' and 'very serious' threat to the country's 'identity as a Jewish and democratic state' (Efraim, 2012). Shortly afterwards, at a violent rally in Tel Aviv following the rape of a non-black Israeli woman, Knesset member Miri Regev claimed that ‘the Sudanese are a cancer in our body’ (Rickman, 2012) and that ‘we won’t allow the aliens to spread like cancer’. Her subsequent apology was to people with cancer, for having supposedly shamed them with the comparison (*Haaretz*, 2012). A subsequent survey by Tel Aviv University found that 47% of Israelis agreed with her comments (compared to 49% who disagreed – still a striking percentage) (Evens Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, (2012). These words led to a ‘night of unprecedented violent disturbances against African migrants in south Tel Aviv’ (Lappin, Eglash, and Keinon, 2012), with perceived African migrants attacked and shop windows smashed (Tracy, 2012). While accusations of genocidal incitement by Israel should be carefully considered – in light of the way atrocity propaganda has been used against Jews to justify violence against them – several prominent Israeli politicians and media figures drew this connection to genocidal incitement explicitly. Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin noted how Regev and Netanyahu’s words were ill-considered in light of Israelis knowing the impact of ‘incitement and harassment’ by antisemites (Kalman, 2012). Haaretz deputy editor Aliyana Traison went further, explicitly likening this riot to Kristallnacht (Traison, 2012), an important step on the road towards genocide. The language of infiltration and cancer immediately preceding a one-sided ethnic riot clearly indicates the presence and effectiveness of motivational dehumanisation, shared more openly by high-level politicians than the earlier case study of Western anti-Muslim prejudice. Nonetheless, it does not represent a concerted and ongoing campaign of systematic anti-African extermination.

To explain this, I turn to the social and political context of these dehumanising discourses.

To begin with, demographic discourse is a more central part of Israeli politics than in many Western countries. Official state policy in the UK and USA might not emphasise 'demographic replacement' (even if far-right groups push for such an approach, and many supporters of Donald Trump openly share 'great replacement' theories by which black, Muslim, Jewish, or Hispanic people are demographically undermining the white population (Bracke and Aguilar, 2020, 9)). Demographic voting blocs and territorial control are, however, a much more politically mainstream concern for many Israeli politicians, as they may have ramifications for any one- or two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Many Israeli politicians – from David Ben-Gurion to Ehud Barak (Lustick, 2019, 142, 146) have addressed this as a key part of their immigration, border, and security policy in what Lustick describes as a 'red thread' throughout much of Israeli politics. Thus, Netanyahu's dire warnings of the threat posed by 'infiltrators', and Regev's imagery of cancerous, exponential, internal growth, addressed existing fears and uncertainties in Israeli political discourse. African migrants as a whole could be portrayed using dehumanising and similar language as an urgent threat to the Israeli state in a more intense way than Muslims were to the UK or USA. While the latter may have been perceived in a racist manner as a population that contained security threats, the existence of the group itself was not itself existentially threatening in mainstream assessments.

At the same time, while this threat was seen as coming from the black Israeli group as a whole, actual numbers and political significance of migrants were small enough that this was not always seen as pressing. Noam Sheizaf, an Israeli journalist, suggested that they were largely ignored by politicians save as a tool to whip up political tension on an ad hoc basis (Sheizaf, 2012). Thus, the kind of threat that black Israelis supposedly posed was sufficiently linked to existing concerns and anxieties to lead to intense ethnic violence, but was sufficiently marginal that it did not lead to categorical eliminationist violence. Rather, violence took a sporadic, riot-based form.

This was further bolstered by the perceived location of the 'threat'. While figures like Regev identified African migrants as 'cancer' and intimate threat within Israel, many still depicted it as an external threat. Netanyahu, for example, suggested that a 'physical barrier' could avert the threat to Israel's 'identity as a Jewish and democratic state' from the 'flood' of African migrants Efraim, 2012), implying the existential threat was an external one. MK Danny Danon, who addressed the rioters alongside Miri Regev, identified the entire African-background population as a threat that should be subject to 'expulsion', but did not call explicitly for their killing (Zarchin and Lior, 2012). While Danon might thus be an outlier to this, that the Prime Minister located the threat as an external one (rather than an internal, extremely powerful one) might help explain why motivationally dehumanising rhetoric did not lead to a concerted, state-led campaign of internal violence. That this issue was largely localised to Tel Aviv, was much less obvious to most Israelis than the supposed threat posed by Israel's neighbours and Palestinian/Arab populations, and because the threat was much more of a perception by politicians rather than a military reality, might also account for it not rising to prominence.

8.4 CONCLUSION – SCOPE CONDITIONS FOR MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION AND GENOCIDAL VIOLENCE

These additional case studies have sought to test my main theory of the dynamics and internal logics of motivational dehumanisation, seeing how far the conclusions I draw from Germany, Serbia, and Rwanda 'travel', and investigating variation across the universe of cases. To quote Kuper, what explains cases of 'dehumanisation without massacre', where motivational dehumanisation took place without mass, genocidal violence? What explains cases of 'massacre without [motivational] dehumanisation', where genocidal took place without a pervasive, dominant narrative about the supposedly contaminating, existentially threatening nature of the enemy?

I summarise my findings, and offer some answers, in the form of a table.

	Genocidal violence	No genocidal violence/violence at a level below genocide
Motivational dehumanisation	**Form of violence:** Exterminatory violence as part of a military/paramilitary project. **Location of target:** Target group among the audience's society. **Nature of target:** Entirety of group thought of as inhuman in some way; this cannot be changed. **Context**: Wartime/conflict threatens the homeland. **Type of dehumanisation:** Dehumanisation typically motivational - targets are threats to the body politic. Some legitimising dehumanisation during violence. **Perception of threat:** Threat is seen as existential to the ongoing security of the society, and strategies below the level of total destruction likely to backfire. **Examples:** Germany, Rwanda, Bosnian Serbia, Cambodia, Armenia*, Cold War anti-communist politicide/genocide*. * These cases are borderline with the no/little motivational dehumanisation/genocide category, discussed below.	**Form of violence:** Sporadic violence by mobs/security forces, political speech, no consistent or exterminatory campaign of violence. **Location of target:** Target group somewhat inside the audience's society, but less of a sense of an insider population. **Nature of target:** Entirety of group thought of as inhuman in some way; this cannot be changed. **Context:** Peacetime/military conflict taking place largely outside borders. **Type of dehumanisation:** Dehumanisation typically motivational - targets are threats to the body politic. Some legitimising dehumanisation during violence. **Perception of threat:** Threat is seen as existential by a fraction of the population/policy establishment, but this is not a mainstream view. Security/policy/military establishment either do not support these views, or adopt strategies less extreme than total destruction to deal with the threat. **Examples:** Anti-Muslim prejudice in Western Europe; race riots in Tel Aviv.
No/little motivational dehumanisation	**Form of violence:** Genocidal violence as part of a colonial project, or potentially a broader campaign of more 'conventional' violence. **Location of target:** Target group not among the audience's society (even if on same territory). **Nature of target:** Entirety of group thought of as inhuman in some way; on some occasions, the target's group were thought of as 'reformable', or able to be forcibly integrated into the audience's society. **Context:** Peacetime, internal colonial violence. **Type of dehumanisation:** Dehumanisation is typically legitimising - targets are not entitled to human considerations/land ownership. **Perception of threat:** target group may be seen as threatening to individuals or small communities, but not to society more broadly. **Examples:** California, Australia. As noted above, some cases of genocidal violence in cases like Armenia and Cold War politicides may show aspects of this, especially where violence was not solely exterminatory, but was also used to terrorise or forcibly change the character/allegiance of target groups. As such, there was less sense of inherent, inevitable threat.	This is the 'null scenario', in which neither motivational dehumanisation nor genocidal violence occur. As such, it could cover a range of situations, including domestic (non-genocidal) persecution or oppression, 'ordinary' inter- and intra-state violence, and peaceful coexistence.

Such a summary illustrates the wide range of variables at work. It is, therefore, difficult to draw out a single decisive factor or relationship between dehumanisation and genocidal violence. Nonetheless, it does highlight the links between specific forms of genocidal violence (systematic massacres to annihilate a specific population in its entirety, for its own sake, as well as the 'urgency' with which genocide was enacted), motivational dehumanisation, and social and political contexts. Motivational dehumanisation seems to have been particularly associated with genocidal violence during periods of perceived national insecurity, when it was felt that they needed to wage a 'terrible war of defence' against a civilian group enmeshed in their society, which, despite being ostensibly harmless, allegedly posed an existential threat.

In my analysis of 'massacre without dehumanisation', the two case studies of colonial genocides also support my account, albeit in a more indirect way. Many policymakers, journalists, and military groups seem to have employed much more legitimising dehumanisation, portraying indigenous targets of genocide as lowly beasts who should be swept out of the way in order to expropriate their land, or consolidate a settler state. This shows how a different set of material, geographical, military and ideological circumstances gave rise to a very different form of genocidal violence. Expanding into and colonising a region populated by Native peoples, genocidal settler colonial groups did not typically argue that they had been infiltrated by an existential threat, or that they needed to urgently 'wake up' to the danger that conspired to subvert their communities. Instead of using the motivational dehumanisation language presented so far, they depicted their targets as native fauna unworthy of human consideration or property rights.

Where motivational dehumanisation was present, it was more common at a local level, where individual settler communities claimed to be threatened (often groundlessly) by local killings, and launched massively disproportionate ‘reprisal’ attacks against foes characterised as lethal vermin. Chivington’s ‘nits make lice’ policy of killing Native children during the Sand Creek Massacre to prevent the resurgence of the ‘pest’ group, and to prevent violence by violence, is a clear example of this. In the Australian case, while genocidal authorities did think about (and extensively debate) the supposedly malign demographic influence of Aboriginal Australian reproduction, colonial leaders saw this as a problem to be overcome through coercive marriage laws, that also netted them a labour force. While still genocidal, violence here took on a different form that seems to align with the difference in political speech.

Thus, while both the 'wartime' genocides (examined in my main case studies) and the 'colonial' genocides (examined in this chapter) led to a massive population decline of the targeted group, they represented different types of violence, motivated by very different concerns. One focused on concerted attempts to destroy a supposed threat and prevent its resurgence, and the other on dispossessing and scattering a targeted 'lesser' population that was blocking national expansion. This is the kind of behaviour that I would expect in cases where motivational and legitimising dehumanisation respectively were prominent, suggesting that my account of the internal logic and impact of each discourse is accurate.

By contrast, my analysis of 'dehumanisation without massacre', while addressing only two cases, does highlight how motivational dehumanisation might not need lead to genocide. Perceived threats were largely located outside the national community (with the urgency of the dehumanising rhetoric increasing to the extent that the threats entered the national community). They were generally not perceived as such by leaders or elites; such perceptions were usually found on the extreme fringes of ephemeral political discourse. 'Threats' were responded to using a targeted or technocratic approach rather than categorical violence; the sense of urgent danger was missing from contemporary politics. This also recalls the Australian marriage laws example, described above, where *génocidaire* officials identified a 'corrupting' threat among their target population, but felt sufficiently free from danger that they could 'merely' use coercive eugenic and legal methods, rather than mass sterilisation campaigns; still genocidal, but a different form of violence.

In both main case studies, while the perceived threat was constructed in much the same way as my examples of genocidal motivational dehumanisation, several factors seem to have prevented its mainstreaming, and more widespread adoption. The geographical separation between the target and the audience, the lack of an intense perceived wartime threat to the integrity of the nation, and the existence of countervailing forces among elites (whether in the form of those actively opposing racial animus, like Rivlin and Traison, or intelligence and policing agencies that proposed less extreme securitisation measures, like the Prevent programme); all of these seem to have contributed to genocidal motivational dehumanisation not finding purchase in government policy. Alternatively, on a more pessimistic note, this dehumanisation-without-massacre might simply represent the groundwork and myth-making for possible future violence.

In short, these shorter case studies do support my broader theoretical model, and further clarify the scope conditions under which motivational dehumanisation could be influential. Motivational dehumanisation was a recurring and causally significant phenomenon that directed and shaped genocidal violence in cases where:

- **There was a perceived existential threat to the integrity of the state, nation, or 'loyal' citizens.** This threat could be founded in reality (such as war or the threat of war, or politically dissident movements who sought to radically reshape the state), or imaginary (as typically seen in conspiracy theories about enemy ethnicities seeking to subvert and destroy other populations). In either case, this played a major role in making the 'internal logic' of motivational dehumanisation convincing.
- **The threat was identified as coming from *within* the society in question.** While the target of dehumanising discourse might be

accused of having some external backing, the notion of a powerful 'fifth column' hidden within the society was key in increasing the sense that drastic measures had to be taken.

- **There was a sense of urgency or lack of state capacity that mean that it is impossible to deal with the 'threat' in other ways.** Entrenched, settled states, with extensive security or control apparatus and little sense that the threat was urgent, had a repertoire of approaches at their disposal other than genocidal killing.

Taken together, these represent a set of scope conditions under which the causal process I have observed throughout this thesis could occur. They led to the emergence and deployment of motivational dehumanisation which in turn shaped genocidal violence. Where these phenomena were absent, or modified, I observed different outcomes that, while still sometimes genocidal, had different characteristics.

9. CONCLUSION

At the start of this thesis, I quoted a set of short vignettes from three instances of genocidal violence. In each, the targeted population was described as some form of vermin- or disease-like creature, an infestation that posed an existential threat to the integrity – and indeed existence – of the 'body politic'. When genocidal violence took place, years or decades later, I found examples of these images being repeated and reiterated in instances of killing. *Génocidaires* – both elites and many 'ordinary' killers – used dehumanising language before and during periods of violence, reflected dehumanising metaphors in their the forms of violence that they employed, (carrying out attempts to purge and destroy the target group with approaches described using the language and techniques of pest control), and targeted victims based on the internal logic of dehumanisation (for example, by targeting women specifically as the dehumanised progenitors of the next generation).

Throughout my thesis, I have sought to investigate this phenomenon, seeking to understand its internal 'logics' and dynamics, and its relationship to genocidal attempts to categorically destroy an entire target group. I asked whether or not this was indicative of a broader pattern in genocidal societies (RQ1), and what role it played in shaping and causing the resulting violence (RQ2).

Based on my research, the answer was that dehumanisation – specifically, the distinctive motivational dehumanisation identified above – was widespread and consistent across a wide range of cases. It played a significant – if sometimes difficult to measure – role in shaping violence. Far from being a scattered and inconsistent set of discourses, or one that emerged as a by-product of an unrelated conflict dynamic, motivational dehumanisation offered a distinctive set of framings of the threat supposedly posed by an enemy, and the desirable and optimal tactics to deal with them. Targeted groups were described as innately and existentially threatening (through their ability to invasively undermine and corrupt social structures, as opposed to force of arms), as lurking within the audience's nation and community, and as lowly and weak, able to be stamped out by a dedicated and aware national population. This schema is highly versatile, and recurred, with different details, across a wide range of cases, with varying levels of internalisation. It seems to be effective in encouraging participation in genocide and contributing to shaping the form that it eventually takes.

9.1 PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

These conclusions built on my survey of genocide studies and social psychology literature in Chapter 2. Some of this literature has extensively discussed legitimising dehumanisation, and the exclusion of dehumanisation's subjects from the universe of human moral obligations, but less attention has been devoted to motivational dehumanisation, taking it for granted, or not systematically interrogating its internal logics or use.

In my case studies – Chapters 3 (Germany), 4 (Rwanda), and 5 (the former Yugoslavia) – I observed how dehumanising discourse consistently incorporated several key themes. It repeatedly tapped into deep-seated notions of uncleanliness, pests, disease, degeneration, and inhuman behaviour, portraying its targets as a corruptive and disgusting force that would infect, destroy, or subvert the population if not opposed. The specific images varied in each case – a focus on typhus in Germany, and snakes in Rwanda, for example, all pests that would be particularly familiar in each country – but the relationship between the supposed threat and the audience was the largely same in each case, suggesting that it is the underlying patterns of discourse on which we should focus. Motivational dehumanisation portrayed its subjects as an inherently malign force that could not be reasoned with (and so needed to be destroyed in its entirety, to prevent the next generation growing back from its 'eggs'). They were supposedly capable of destroying the nation-state by means other than force of arms (meaning that the entirety of the target population was a threat). Finally, they had already inveigled their way into the 'body politic' – this was no border skirmish or attempt to keep an enemy out, but rather an internal attempt to purge the foe. In doing so, and portraying the enemy as a group that was both incredibly deadly and pathetically weak, reliant on the fact that it was non-obvious, and that the audience could easily defeat after they 'woke up' to the threat, it also flattered the audience's strength.

This provides an explanation of the ‘domination-vulnerability paradox’ observed by Straus (2015, 56), which noted the curious way that genocidal states simultaneously required extensive state control and power to enact a genocide, but often did so to avert a current or future existential threat that the target group supposedly posed, which would imply their hold on power was tenuous. Motivational dehumanisation represented an ‘intuitive’ working-through of this. By presenting the enemy as an intensely threatening but easy-to-destroy pathological force, using imagery that the audience would be viscerally familiar with, it could effectively present an outlook in which domination and vulnerability were both present. This helps to tie my findings in with the literature on material/rationalist approaches to genocidal violence, and develop a convincing synthesis position. It shows that fear, disgust, and other emotional factors could conjure very real material policy implications for those who espoused them. Far from being a non-specific ‘ethnic hatred’, it was readily recognisable as a distinct securitising move akin to other political discourses around threats to national security.

As well as examining the internal logic of dehumanisation, I also examined how and where it was used, expanding the ‘macro/micro’ approach used by Williams and Neilsen (Williams and Neilsen, 2019). By collating examples of motivational dehumanisation in Chapter 6, and systematically examining where it emerged from, how different groups used it, and how far it spread, I identified important context and areas of commonality between and within different cases.

Strikingly, there was relatively little commonality in the ideological background and history of dehumanisation that each case drew upon – no consistent pattern of steadily growing dehumanising ethnic prejudice that gathered more and more support until a genocidal state emerged. This may describe the growth of pre-Nazi antisemitism, but does not seem to be the case for the former Yugoslavia. There, despite dehumanising imagery being widespread, it does not seem to have had much of an impact on public attitudes until right before genocidal violence began. Nor is it the case for Rwanda, where eliminationist rhetoric about snakes, cockroaches, and eggs seems to have exploded into public discourse in the early 1990s. This, I suggested, was partly due to the versatility and compelling nature of dehumanising rhetoric. It was easy to draw upon people's everyday experiences of the kind of threats that it warned about, and in any case could easily 'make sense' in any given case. If there *was* a long history of stigmatising the target group, that was evidence that they were threatening. If there was not such a history, that was merely evidence that they were especially cunning and adept at concealing their natures.

I found that, in each of my three cases, leaders and elites often seemed to pioneer the use of dehumanising language, disseminating it down through bureaucracies and policy agendas, and via their public platforms. I found that – as far as can be easily verified – genocidal leaders did genuinely believe in these images at some level (as opposed to using them purely instrumentally). Many leaders seem to have continued to espouse dehumanising images in private after the genocide was over, or in cases where expressing such attitudes went contrary to their interests, such as during highly technical planning meetings, trials or plea bargains. This would suggest that they were not solely ideas or framings to be used to drum up support.

I also found that military bureaucracies employed dehumanising language throughout their chains of command. This included everything from military plans and training regimens, to attempts to stir up individual fighters by mid-level commanders, to speech uttered during the commission of violence. For the most part, I found that those involved in actually committing violence tended to use legitimising rather than motivational dehumanisation. As my model would suggest, the latter was more of a tool to establish the reasons to kill members of the target group, rather than making the act of killing easier. Additionally, dehumanising language such as '*inyenzi*' and '*balije*' often did find use as generic slurs, but typically only after these had been established as ways of denigrating target minorities. Internalisation was less clearly universal here, but I have still found evidence that it played a role in the desire of many to participate.

Finally, I found that state-run or state-friendly media sources typically played a major role in promoting and disseminating dehumanising images of the target group, using visceral imagery to portray them as vermin and play up or fabricate stories of the atrocities they had supposedly committed. These media outlets often did not have a particularly large audience, but typically were consumed by the more committed *génocidaires*, and their salacious and disturbing content often seems to have spread via rumours beyond their original audiences.

Thus, across Chapter 6, I found that there was indeed a consistent pattern of motivational dehumanisation across my three case studies, that pervaded society and political discourse at the time. I would, in Chapter 8, go on to find that these patterns held in a range of other cases of genocide. Historical examples that seemed to diverge from this (where there was a genocide but no strong tradition of motivational dehumanisation, or vice versa) can be explained by the fact that they existed in very different contexts of threat. Colonial genocides, for example, did not see the same level of dehumanising rhetoric because they did not have the same supposedly 'defensive' character. The cases of motivational dehumanisation without genocide that I looked at either did not locate the supposed threat as an internal force, or were sufficiently marginal so as not to be able to persuade elites to support them.

In Chapter 7, I sought to assess the likely causal impact of such a pattern of motivational dehumanisation on the forms taken by genocidal violence; that is to say, can a chain of causation be drawn between securitising images of the enemy group as subhuman monsters, and attempts to destroy them in their entirety, using reproductive and eliminationist violence, without the possibility of a political settlement? While it is difficult to demonstrate or quantify the precise causal role played by genocidal dehumanisation (as compared to other factors), I have presented several arguments suggesting that it did indeed have a significant impact. In some cases, *génocidaires* directly ascribed their participation in mass killing to dehumanising ideologies. In others, variation in the use of dehumanisation (whether geographically, against different targets, or over time) correlated with levels and methods of exterminatory violence. Additionally, the social psychology literature shows that imagery evoking disgust and insecurity can motivate significant changes in behaviour – attempts to cleanse and remove the alien entity – at both individual and national levels. As I have demonstrated, motivational dehumanisation is an attempt to conjure just such images, and so we would expect it to have the same effect disgust-invoking imagery has elsewhere.

In short, I argue that motivational dehumanisation – the characterisation of an ethnic enemy as a vermin-like existential threat to the audience, lowly, superficially unthreatening and weak when discovered but intrinsically socially corrosive and poisonous nonetheless – can have a major effect in fomenting violence and turning it genocidal. According to this logic, all members of the target group – no matter how seemingly innocuous – need to be destroyed, because they are all harmful, and if only partially destroyed, will return stronger later, like an incompletely excised tumour.

I have claimed and argued – through archival, secondary literature, and social psychology evidence – that this phenomenon is:

- ***Coherent*** – discourses of dehumanisation possess a clear and distinctive internal 'logic' that supports genocidal violence.

- ***Possible*** – discourses of dehumanisation were pervasive throughout many genocidal states, across many strata of society, in the sense that they were widely accessible throughout society, and that many – especially in decision-making and policy-setting roles – had internalised them. In short, they were present and well-placed to influence would-be *génocidaires* to violence.
- ***Plausible*** – discourses of dehumanisation, based on social psychology literature and discourse analysis, could be compelling in encouraging people to participate in violence.
- ***Demonstrable*** – in several cases, there is strong evidence that increased levels of dehumanisation were correlated with increased incidence or intensity of genocidal violence. In others, it is possible to identify causal chains between dehumanisation and genocidal violence.

As such the null hypothesis – that dehumanisation is not a coherent phenomenon, or that it does not have any effect – is difficult to sustain. Dehumanisation played a major role in shaping, directing, and facilitating policies of genocide.

Such an approach – heavily rooted in the psychology, discourses, and ideology of genocide – is not incompatible with the materialist approaches to genocide discussed in Chapters 1 and 2; quite the opposite. In my case studies, I have shown and argued how motivational dehumanisation made a series of striking claims about specific areas of military, political, and social threats to the ‘body politic’, and encouraged the use of extraordinary militarised approaches to resolve them. Such an approach – drawing upon securitisation theory – does not require a sharp division between ‘ideas’ and ‘interests’ in genocidal societies, but rather describes how the perspectives and cognition of *génocidaires* could mediate perception of national security discourses. Thus, the concept of motivational dehumanisation can help bridge different approaches to understanding how genocidal conflicts emerge, drawing on constructivist notions of securitisation.

9.2 MOTIVATIONAL DEHUMANISATION IN BROADER CONTEXT

This thesis has focused on motivational dehumanisation, examining it as one of the key causal processes shaping and directing genocidal violence. In doing so, I have explored how dehumanisation was typically an act of securitisation – an attempt to identify and describe a distinctive form of existential threat, and direct certain forms of violence against those that supposedly embodied it. I have thus established a clear bridge between approaches to genocide that emphasise cognitive, cultural, and emotive reasons for genocide (motivational dehumanisation explains how these discourses evoke visceral responses of fear, hatred, and disgust towards their targets), and materialist approaches to genocide that emphasise concerns of security and the strategic logic of violence (the ‘domination/vulnerability paradox’, and the need to use overwhelming destructive force against an inherently uncontrollable and menacing threat).

Such a framework can thus incorporate disparate theoretical approaches to genocide, and illustrate the value of a combined/synthesis approach.

Motivational dehumanisation (even with the broader links, noted above), is not the only important causal factor for genocidal violence. While this thesis has not focused on these other factors, I bring them up here to provide some additional context and illustrate how this research might fit into the wider theorisation of genocide.

Firstly, researchers studying individual participation in genocide have found that many members of paramilitary or military groups involved in genocidal violence were not clearly motivated by strong emotional reasons, or concerns about national security. Rather, they have found evidence that economic (Aly, 2008), interpersonal (Fujii, 2011), opportunistic (Williams and Neilsen, 2019), sociological (Gagnon, 2006), or motives such as conformity with authority played a major role in motivating individual participation in genocide. Indeed, cases like genocidal violence in California (Madley, 2016) show that interpersonal, land-ownership, and economic factors could combine to produce outcomes of genocidal violence without much motivational dehumanisation (albeit copious legitimising dehumanisation), showing that it was not a necessary precondition for genocidal violence.

What I have found, however, is that motivational dehumanisation could form part of such an account. Motivational dehumanisation provided a core of alarming imagery and messages about threat and danger that could be 'reincarnated elsewhere as rumour[s]', as Li noted in the Rwandan case (Li, 2007, 99). In doing so, it could help direct and shape violence among people who were participating in violence for a wide range of other reasons. Such an assessment recalls Bloxham's observation of the role of an 'ideologised activist core' (2008, 230) that formed a nucleus around which genocidal actors motivated by other factors could gather, as well as Straus' observation of the importance of a 'small core of local … hardliner … actors' who employed dehumanising language, giving rise to a broader 'language of threat, danger, and war' among perpetrators, who were also motivated by other factors. Genocidal violence is a complex, multicausal phenomenon, and people participate for a wide range of reasons, which require other theoretical approaches to unpack – but motivational dehumanisation could often offer a powerful initial 'spark' to precipitate and justify violence. This could happen in several ways – through leaders using motivational dehumanisation to set policy directions that would be followed by their followers regardless (as seen at Wannsee), through training and instruction (as seen in *fleckfieberpsychose* amongst troops on the Eastern front), or through the decisions and rhetoric of individual political leaders (as seen in Rwanda and Bosnia).

Motivational dehumanisation also takes place in a wider context of debates about state capacity and opportunity surrounding genocide. As discussed throughout this thesis, it helps to understand what Straus describes the 'domination/vulnerability paradox' - the fact that genocide is simultaneously linked to high levels of state capacity and power, and to significant state instability, tension, and uncertainty. Such violence typically required sufficient legitimacy (or at least lack of non-compliance) from its population, territorial control, and resources to devote to the process of killing (as opposed to other purposes, such as direct military confrontations), but also was typically associated with significant state instability, tension, and uncertainty, resulting from war, economic hardship, or ethnic and political tensions. The former seems to present the opportunity and capacity for states to commit genocide (but not a motivation; just because a state has the capacity to commit genocide does not mean they will), while the latter seems to present the motivation to do so (but places limits on state capacity to do so). Williams (2020, 167-182) provides an extensive literature and case-study-based review of arguments on both sides of this seemingly contrasting set of factors relating to state capacity and genocide. By incorporating motivational dehumanisation into an account of state capacity and motivation (or domination and vulnerability), I suggest that we can better understand how genocidal movements balance these two factors when perceiving 'threats'. Such an account – especially when drawing upon securitisation theory – also explains how securitising actors could 'unlock' the capacity to enact extreme responses to supposed threats.

In short, motivational dehumanisation helps understand how genocidal movements see themselves as simultaneously extremely capable (of 'cutting out the cancer', 'squashing the snake, or other modes of genocidal violence), and also extremely vulnerable – they needed to act urgently or face destruction. It shows how campaigns of mass extermination balanced complex assessments of motives, means, and capacity, in order to enact genocidal violence.

9.3 FURTHER RESEARCH

By comparing three main case studies and several shorter examples of genocidal dehumanisation, this thesis has developed a model of motivational dehumanisation – what it is, how it varies across different cases, and what role it plays in shaping genocidal violence. How might such a project be developed and furthered? What additional research would carry forward the findings of this project?

As a comparative case-study based piece of research, the conclusions of this research can always be further developed by covering more material.

This might mean drawing upon a greater breadth of archival material. One example of this would be the work suggested by Richards et al. in their review of existing research on Rwandan hate radio. Assessing what Rwanda genocide scholars have written on the topic, they note four areas of particular methodological weakness: a lack of diversity in sources (only focusing on RTLM, not other outputs such as Radio Rwanda), the use of inconsistently sampled and incomplete databases, an over-reliance on ICTR translations (and not enough examination of Kinyarwanda material), and insufficient focus on validity and reliability in favour of 'nonsystematic content analysis' (Richards, Baele, and Coan, 2019). In short, the failure to deeply engage with the material leads to a skewed and incomplete assessment of this material. While my multi-case study approach renders issues such as translation unavoidable, and my focus on tracking the context and spread rather than solely assessing the content of texts reduces the criticism regarding content analysis, more detailed single-case study work would significantly refine my conclusions.

In particular, more use of original-language material and wider selections of archival sources – perhaps supported by fieldwork and interviews where appropriate – would be particularly helpful in investigating those directly involved in killing. Evidence of the spread of dehumanising discourses among elites and the media has been easier to track because there are fewer, more politically prominent actors, whose words have often featured in post-conflict legal proceedings, but it has been harder to assess how ordinary people – soldiers, members of paramilitary groups, or civilians – received, interpreted, and were motivated by these images. Diaries, personal accounts, statements, field research, and interviews could all help further clarify the causal chains linking dehumanising ideas, elite discourse, 'ordinary killers', and the act of killing.

Greater *breadth*, as well as *depth*, could also refine my theoretical approach. My Chapter 8 has highlighted how motivational dehumanisation occurred in a wide range of other genocidal states. Further research into these and other examples could strengthen my conclusions, further help analyse the cases in question, or highlight and render more unambiguous recurring features of motivational dehumanisation.

One observation made by this thesis, for example, was that the images and motifs used in dehumanising discourses tend to have similar internal logics, but deploy differing animal, disease, or pest imagery that was familiar to the audience, as seen in Germany, Cambodia, and Rwanda. If this is the case, then this would encourage a focus on the underlying dynamics of dehumanisation (the 'logics' it used to portray threats), rather than the specific images themselves. The cases I have addressed so far have might not be enough to support this, but, by broadening my research out, I could find further evidence to support this pattern.

Alternatively, patterns of dehumanising pro-genocide media consumption in Rwanda and Germany show surprisingly small core audiences of 'true believers', but with a message spread much further by rumours about more generic insecurity and threat, beyond the 'ideologised activist core' observed by Bloxham. Examining more cases of this could help investigate whether this was a larger pattern, and shed light on questions about how such ideological cores drive genocidal violence.

Other research could broaden the scope of motivational dehumanisation from genocide to other forms of political violence. I have focused on genocidal violence in this thesis because it is most commonly associated with dehumanisation, and the logic of dehumanising an inherently dangerous biological threat is clearly closely linked to genocide. However, other forms of mass political violence also invoke dehumanising imagery of an insidious, infiltrating threat group.

Bevins discusses how twentieth-century Brazilian anti-communism was characterised by references to left-wing Brazilians as 'a plague, a virus, or cancer'. These leftists supposedly crept into the homes and barracks of military figures to assassinate them by night (Bevins, 2020, 103).

In Argentina, Finchelstein discusses how far-right clerical leaders used the radio and children's books to spread stories about how 'it is better to kill the locust [of atheism and communism] when it is a little bug'. Fascist politicians like Juan Carulla described how they planned to ‘gather the *picana* [the electrified rod used to torture dissidents] [to] create the most patriotic broom …we will use this broom when the day of final cleansing comes’ (Finchelstein, 2014, 47–51).

While the Soviet Union officially rejected ‘*zoological* thinking’ as anti-materialist and either bourgeois or Nazi (with some counter-examples in practice, as Weitz suggests (Weitz, 2002, 4)), there is certainly evidence of the *biological* in the metaphors used to illustrate, stir up support for, and direct policies. Lenin often referred to perceived hostile groups of wreckers or kulaks as parasites or similar terms: ‘bloodsuckers … spiders … leeches [and] vampires’ in one letter (Lenin, 1918). How did this affect early Soviet policy? Similarly, Hagenloh summarises brutal Stalinist security policy in general (that is, not solely the ethnic minority politics) policing as the ‘identification, surveillance, and eventual excision from the body politic of those population cohorts identified by top Communist Party and police officials as socially dangerous or otherwise threatening to the regime’ (Hagenloh, 2009, 8).

Further investigation might examine how motivational dehumanisation fared when directed at political and economic, but not essentialised and racial, groups. While politicide and civil violence is often treated separately from genocidal violence, this would suggest that they shared many of the same underlying social processes.

Additionally, while this thesis has focused on examining how dehumanisation worked to support genocidal violence, I have not examined in detail those circumstances when it *failed* to do so. Why do attempts to promote genocidal dehumanisation fail, and what discursive and material strategies might be used to rehumanise a targeted population? In Chapter 8, I highlighted a pair of cases (anti-Muslim prejudice in the Anglosphere and anti-black racism in Israel) where motivational dehumanisation has not led to genocidal violence. I suggested that the lack of 'urgency' and greater perceived state security and capacity to deal with the target group may have played a part in this, as did the supposed location of the threat (typically in another nation's territory, rather than mixed in with the nation-state). By exploring these and other negative cases further, additional research could provide more detail as to why dehumanisation did not lead to genocide, and also contribute to discussions of how genocide might be opposed, countered, or restrained (Straus, 2019, 42–53).

9.4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

As well as developing our understanding of how genocidal policies emerge, develop, and are justified, the insights into motivational dehumanisation offered by this thesis could also contribute to policymaking, specifically in the field of genocide prevention and early warning. The notion that prevention is preferable to intervention or establishing post-genocide accountability is an attractive and obvious one. As Kofi Annan, then UN Secretary-General noted, ‘such crimes cannot be reversed, such failures cannot be repaired [and] the dead cannot be brought back to life’ (Annan, 2004) after a genocide – it is better to prevent these deaths from happening at all. Barnett’s account of the difficulties and dysfunctions involved in organising intervention against genocide in Rwanda suggests that prevention may be more practically workable than a ‘cure’ (Barnett, 1997).

As discussed above, a better understanding of dehumanisation – and the psychological mechanisms around disgust and threat that provide a powerful incentive towards genocide – might assist in developing ways of counteracting or restraining genocidal movements. This could take the form of promoting specific ‘rehumanising’ tactics to ‘cool down’ conflicts and promote inter-group solidarity (Hinton, 2002, 30), or simply improve conflict prevention efforts by highlighting the nature of conflicts. Gallo describes how failures to correctly parse and understand the specificities of ethnic and political conflict in Africa can have ‘seriously detrimental effects’ on both international and domestic efforts to prevent, mitigate and rebuild from genocidal conflicts (Gallo, 2012, 247). O’Tuathail describes how warring readings in the US government of the Bosnian War as a Vietnam-style ‘quagmire’ or a Holocaust-style genocide (as opposed to a distinctive instance of modern genocide with its own geopolitical specificities) made American foreign policy dysfunctional and even harmful (O’Tuathail, 1996, 148–176). A better understanding of genocidal dehumanisation might help craft better policies and social movements against genocide, and, perhaps more importantly, assist in domestic efforts by victims or bystanders to oppose proto-genocidal groups, by giving them better tools to forewarn of genocide.

Throughout my research, I have found that motivational dehumanisation typically preceded genocidal violence, and was used to encourage audiences to participate in, support, or at least recognise the 'need' for the categorical killing of a targeted group. As this is the case, motivational dehumanisation could be used as part of an 'early warning' system – a sign that a country was on a genocidal trajectory. Motivational dehumanisation is a more useful early-warning indicator than 'racism' or even legitimising dehumanisation more broadly. While the former might be associated with ethnic hierarchies or violence, chauvinism or supremacy does not intrinsically lead to exterminationist views. Motivational dehumanisation, however, seems closely associated with genocidal violence. If there is a distinctive precursor to genocidal violence that is difficult to misidentify as ‘normal’ racism or ethnic prejudice, then being able to point to this would allow for more effective mobilisation of efforts and resources at countering it. Such a clear early warning might allow for more effective actions at an early stage, and justify expenditure of political capital, energy, and resources on averting an event yet to happen.

This is not a new insight, and a range of NGOs and academics do list dehumanisation as a key risk factor for genocide. Stanton’s ‘*Eight* [later *Ten*] *Stages of Genocide’* (Stanton, 2020) are often cited by NGOs and educational groups (Wiener Holocaust Library, 2020; Borgen Project, 2014) as a schema to identify emerging genocides, while the *UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes* highlights dehumanising practices as an indicator that might reveal genocidal intent (United Nations, 2014). In academia, Woolf and Hulsizer offer a multi-stage schema of genocides and intervention strategies, where dehumanisation is a key part (Woolf and Hulsizer, 2005, 115–6). Neilsen identifies 'toxification' specifically as 'a more precise early warning sign to genocide than dehumanisation' (Neilsen, 2015, 83). Incorporating motivational dehumanisation could further refine such approaches.

The findings for dehumanisation as an early warning sign are a little bleak. While it often precedes these instances of genocide, there is seldom a long period of escalation of genocidal imagery, rooted in historical prejudice and steadily becoming more mainstream. This may have been more true (though not universally so) in Germany, but was not the case in Rwanda, where the dehumanising exterminationist lexicon seems to have emerged in the early 1990s, or Yugoslavia, where – despite there being a long history of anti-Bosnian and Muslim beliefs – the majority of Yugoslav Serbs seem not to have subscribed to them, as late as the late 1980s. Instead, both cases seem to have drawn upon a ‘reservoir’ of imagery – whether reconstructed out of imagined and reframed historical memory from the nation’s past, or fabricated from everyday and relatively universal experiences of animal pests and disease – that was ‘activated’ in order to assemble a genocidal ideology or political agenda. Taken together, this would suggest that genocidal motivational dehumanisation does not need to have continuous historical roots – it can spring up quickly, and any 'early warning' might only have a narrow window of opportunity to respond to it.

This does not mean that early warning approaches that examine ideological risk factors are fruitless. In my three case studies, there was a short period during which motivational dehumanisation was spread, before genocide took place, that might serve as a window of opportunity. It does mean, however, that any efforts to counter genocidal propaganda, rehumanise target groups, and diminish the sense of existential threat would need to be swift, and be practical to implement within this narrow window. My research does not suggest what such a program would look like, but does highlight the specific indicators to look for, and suggest some potential responses.

9.5 CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have offered an account of dehumanisation that understands it not merely in terms of the erosion of human obligation to one another, and the stripping of personhood, but also in terms of monstrosity, threat, and visceral discomfort at something threatening within one's own (collective and political) body.

Motivational dehumanisation is a compelling set of discourses. It draws upon ideas of rot, penetration of the skin, deadly sickness, and lurking poisonous beasts – ideas that cross cultures (the specific metaphors may change; the dynamics largely do not), and that are unpleasant and disturbing to consider. Fear of contamination and pests is deep-seated in humans, and there is a good case that it may be innate – a survival mechanism made dysfunctional and co-opted by people from Hassan Ngeze to Robert Ley to Biljana Plavšić. It also neatly aligns with broader fears about national security and war, escalating them and suggesting that they could be resolved by rooting out an internal enemy. It is hardly incompatible with more individual interests in taking the property of victims or settling old scores, either.

Dehumanisation also suggests its own very specific set of responses. The language of cleansing, curing, or clearing out pests can be presented as a banal but necessary hygienic duty, or a life-or-death struggle to root out invasive parasites violating the nation, community, family, or body, and 'save the sick patient' by cutting them out or poisoning them with harsh but necessary medicine, as the authors of dehumanising propaganda preferred. In each case, violence has to be categorical – attacking the group in its entirety, and preventing it from reproducing another generation, rather than discriminating valid targets or using exemplary violence to communicate a message. As propagandists often noted, there is no sense in only removing half a tumour, or killing a snake but leaving its eggs intact. Thus, dehumanisation offered – and offers – a set of clear, readily understandable aphorisms and understandings making participation in categorical violence more justifiable, and readily compatible with other approaches to violence.

So much for the greater theoretical understanding that this can offer into genocide on an academic level. How might this approach help *practically*? Much research on genocide is haunted by the spectre of the failed promise of 'never again'. Leaders and states have developed (and will likely develop in future) large-scale plans to exterminate vulnerable populations, and national, international, cultural, and individual resolutions to avert these plans have had very limited success. Understanding motivational dehumanisation cannot answer this problem entirely – far from it – but it does provide pointers about how we might understand genocidal states and ideologies. The dehumanisation that underpins them is not (always) a cultural tradition, but something more deep-seated within humans, that can turn dysfunctional and be invoked by leaders, elites, and media. It has been used to illustrate, gather support, and suggest tactics for a 'terrible war of defence' against the monsters that it claims lurks inside the 'body politic', communities, and even families of its audience.

Addressing this should not only focus on recognising the humanity of members of other groups – though this is part of it – but should also focus on deconstructing the sense of imminent existential threat typically underpinning dehumanising rhetoric. This is unlikely to be easy – especially since the propaganda of motivational dehumanisation warns that the supposed enemies might try to appear as innocuous and unthreatening – but it does represent a start.

If the field of genocide studies is motivated by a promise of 'never again', then we owe it to history and to the future, to interrogate our subject, see what makes it 'tick', and, most importantly – see it coming.

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