Gambling on Humanitarian Intervention

Does humanitarian military intervention save lives as intended? Or does it perversely embolden rebels and ignite the spiral of violence that it seeks to prevent?

Such questions lie at the heart of a new and lively controversy in international politics. “Gambling on Humanitarian Intervention” explores whether the emerging norm of intervention backfires in conflicts such as Kosovo, exacerbating the ethnic cleansing and killing of innocent civilians. Leading academics investigate this problem, including when and where it is most likely to occur, and how to avert the unintended consequences without abandoning intervention. Sceptics weigh in as well, pointing out potential errors in blaming intervention for civil violence, and offering alternative explanations. Several authors conclude with prescriptions to ensure that future interventions mitigate violence as intended, rather than tragically worsening it.

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Gambling on Humanitarian Intervention

Moral Hazard, Rebellion and Civil War

Edited by Timothy W. Crawford and Alan J. Kuperman
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Introduction: Debating the Hazards of Intervention

TIMOTHY W. CRAWFORD & ALAN J. KUPERMAN

The concept of moral hazard invites controversy because it appears to impugn the motives and character of seemingly innocent victims. It argues that, when people are protected by insurance, some of them will behave fraudulently or irresponsibly, becoming victims because of the resulting insurance payout. The controversy only intensifies when this logic is carried over to humanitarian military intervention, which can be seen as a type of insurance policy to protect sub-state groups from genocide and ethnic cleansing. The implication is that some groups engage in risky rebellions because they expect to benefit from international intervention if the state retaliates. In short, rebels provoke genocidal retaliation against their own group because of the expectation of humanitarian intervention.

This volume explores that controversial thesis by engaging several debates: the definition of moral hazard in the context of intervention; the theory’s theoretical novelty and ability to describe and explain dynamics of internal conflict; its empirical record in recent cases of genocidal violence; and the policy implications for reforming the conduct of humanitarian intervention.

Debate starts with semantics because ‘moral hazard’ actually encompasses two different, though related, dynamics. The first occurs when over-insurance causes the insured to behave fraudulently—e.g. burning down one’s house because the insurance pays more than the house’s value. The second occurs when any insurance (not necessarily over-insurance) causes the insured to behave irresponsibly because it is not worth the effort to behave responsibly—e.g. parking one’s car on the street rather than paying for a more secure garage because the car is fully ensured against vandalism. The original definition of ‘moral hazard’, which is still reflected in common usage, includes both dynamics. But some economists, and Robert Rauchhaus in his rational-choice contribution to this volume, insist that only the latter dynamic is moral hazard, whereas the former is a
Introduction

problem of inappropriate contracting. The distinction is interesting but, as another rationalist Harrison Wagner notes in his contribution, it is the former problem that is usually meant by the moral hazard of humanitarian intervention. He explains that vulnerable groups are unlikely to rebel if they expect intervention merely to cut the cost of failed rebellion. But they are more likely to rebel if they expect state retaliation to trigger a level of intervention on their behalf sufficient to enable achievement of otherwise unattainable political goals. As he puts it, “Calls for humanitarian military intervention are demands that outsiders participate in the renegotiation of the contracts that define a state”.

Even if we accept this broader meaning of moral hazard, there remains a second definitional matter. Namely, if the prospect of intervention leads some groups to rebel and thereby provoke state retaliation, must that provocation be intentional? In other words, does the perception of over-insurance lead groups to behave fraudulently or only recklessly? As Alan Kuperman observes, most dictionary definitions of ‘provoke’ do not require intentionality, which matches his contention that the prospect of intervention can lead groups either intentionally to provoke or merely to run a high risk of provoking retaliation. (Interestingly, the distinctiveness of the latter definition evaporates as the risk approaches 100%.) This debate on intentionality is exemplified by the volume’s opposing views of Bosnia’s 1992 secession from Yugoslavia. Jon Western insists the republic’s decision to declare independence was not intended to provoke the Serbs and thus did not arise from moral hazard. Kuperman, however, contends that Bosnia’s Muslims consciously refrained from declaring the independence that would trigger war until receiving promises of international recognition, because they thought such recognition carried a guarantee of protection; thus moral hazard is indeed to blame. More generally, Timothy Crawford says that in order to blame moral hazard a rebellion must be both a perverse and unintended—though not necessarily unanticipated—consequence of intervention. Thus he implicates moral hazard whenever intervenors did not aim for or want rebellion, even if they anticipated it as a side-effect of their intervention. By contrast, Arman Grigorian and Rauchhaus argue that, if intervenors persist after realizing they are inciting rebellion, then moral hazard cannot be blamed.

Semantics aside, this volume raises important questions about the theoretical usefulness of moral hazard as a new explanation for the escalation of ethnic conflict. As Crawford explains, the notion of moral hazard is linked to three more general social science concepts that have already been applied in studies of conflict and intervention: perverse incentives, negative precedents and unintended consequences. Moreover, several of our authors discuss how moral hazard has been applied to international relations outside the realm of security, for example the bail-out of bankrupt states by the International Monetary Fund. But it is a recent innovation to apply moral hazard to questions of military intervention, rebellion and genocide—and this volume shows the new application to be fruitful in at least three ways. First, it reveals the inherently double-edged nature of humanitarian intervention. Second, as Crawford, Grigorian and Wagner illustrate, it can raise new and interesting questions concerning the causes of internal war and the consequences of intervention. Finally, as Kuperman and Rauchhaus demonstrate, the moral hazard analogy may generate prescriptions to mitigate the dark side of intervention.

Several authors, however, question whether the two-player model of moral hazard is the appropriate theoretical tool to understand what is in reality a three-player game involving sub-state groups, states and potential intervenors. Grigorian and Wagner note that, if states and sub-state groups both act rationally and share common expectations about the prospect
of intervention, this prospect should have no net effect on the likelihood of violence between them but only on the ultimate bargain they reach, whether through war or peace. Western goes further by suggesting that a robust intervention regime could deter state violence, which would avert rebellions that he contends groups launch only in reaction to oppression. By contrast, Crawford and Kuperman argue that the prospect of intervention may embolden rebels without deterring states—because of factors such as domestic politics, biased perception, indivisibility of stakes and the rebels’ tolerance of casualties and desire for power—thereby making violence more likely. Grigorian and Wagner concede that the prospect of future intervention may encourage states to perpetrate genocidal violence preventively, so as to eliminate domestic challengers before they can benefit from intervention, but they insist that this problem cannot be attributed to moral hazard. Yet the dynamic does stem directly from the increased proclivity of groups to rebel if they expect intervention, which is the problem of moral hazard. Accordingly, Crawford labels this a second-order effect, or ‘thin’ version, of moral hazard theory.

Empirically there is debate over how much recent inter-ethnic violence can be attributed to the moral hazard of humanitarian intervention, both in specific cases and across the universe of conflicts. Or, to phrase this as a question in social science parlance: even if moral hazard has been correctly identified as an independent variable, how much of the variance in violent outcomes does it explain? In his detailed case study of Kosovo, Grigorian acknowledges that the USA exacerbated violence but argues that this stemmed from a deliberate goal of punishing the Milosevic regime, rather than being a perverse consequence of a benign intervention policy designed to prevent violence, as Crawford and Kuperman contend.

Western offers another dissenting view, arguing that, both in the Balkans and more broadly, the causes of civil wars are so complex, involving long histories of jostling among groups seeking to maintain or usurp power, and struggles within those groups over how to do so, that the simple logic of moral hazard will explain very little, even if it appears to fit at a superficial level. He acknowledges that adversaries in internal conflict will almost always seek external intervention on their behalf, so that one can almost always find evidence suggestive of moral hazard, but he argues that it is not causally significant for the outbreak or perpetuation of violence. He also correctly observes that the prospect of humanitarian intervention cannot plausibly explain most historical cases of genocidal violence because they occurred well before such intervention even arguably became an emerging norm.

Crawford and Kuperman accept that moral hazard can explain only part of the story of violent internal conflict, but contend that it is an especially significant part because it is less than obvious and yet is very proximate to and decisive for the outcome of war. They concede that antecedent historical domestic processes of conflict escalation set the stage for potential violence. But they insist that such processes do not inevitably lead to internal war, which requires momentous decisions (agency) at key moments by states and sub-state groups. The least intuitive of these decisions, they say, is that of vulnerable groups to take up arms against stronger states that have threatened genocidal retaliation. (Indeed, the vast majority of the world’s at-risk minority groups do not launch such rebellions.) Kuperman and Crawford say that governments should be expected to forcefully resist challenges to their authority, especially when rebels threaten the regime’s monopoly on force. What they consider puzzling is why members of groups that are potentially so vulnerable to the state would dare, nevertheless, to challenge it forcefully. Moral hazard offers a potential
explanation of this important puzzle in certain cases, and thus may provide insight on how the international community can inhibit the escalation of internal conflict.

Although the recent phenomenon of humanitarian intervention can at best explain some escalation of internal conflict since the end of the Cold War, Crawford suggests that the moral hazard arising from a broader conception of intervention may explain earlier cases. For example, he cites Thucydides’s explanation of the rebellions that accompanied the bipolar struggle between Athens and Sparta:

The whole Hellenic world was convulsed, struggles being everywhere made by the popular chiefs to bring in the Athenians, and by the oligarchs to introduce the [Spartans]... With an alliance always at the command of either faction for the hurt of their adversaries and their own corresponding advantage, opportunities for bringing in the foreigner were never wanting to the revolutionary parties... Revolution thus ran its course from city to city (1982, pp. 198–199).

He similarly notes that a prominent article of the 1990s observed that “hostile international environments spur internal conflict as outside states back rebel groups in enemy countries” (David, 1997, p. 554). What is fascinating about the putative moral hazard of humanitarian intervention after the Cold War is that it may explain why benign international environments likewise spur internal rebellion, which was not expected.

Crawford offers a typology of the ways in which the expectation of intervention may exacerbate internal conflict, distinguishing four types of moral hazard:

- **Acute**—if a specific threat of intervention triggers a rebellion in that state;
- **Chronic**—when a long-term history of intervention in a state perpetuates its instability;
- **Contagious**—if intervention in support of rebels in one state spurs rebellion in a neighbour;
- **Pervasive**—when an emerging norm of humanitarian intervention inadvertently encourages rebellions more broadly, as Kuperman has hypothesized.

These categories should be kept in mind to avoid unproductive debates that conflate distinct phenomena. Indeed, it is likely that scholars who downplay or dismiss one of these types of moral hazard will accept another. Each of the categories, moreover, suggests lines of inquiry that may contribute to distinct bodies of theory and research in international and comparative politics.

From a policy perspective debate centres on the following questions. Does humanitarian intervention, in individual cases or as an overall policy, exacerbate some ethnic violence? If so, how should this be weighed against the good it can do? And which reforms might reduce the harmful effect without undermining the beneficial one, thereby increasing intervention’s net benefit? All the authors, with the possible exception of Western, acknowledge that expectations of outside intervention can exacerbate internal violence, by emboldening rebels and/or prompting states to attack preventively. Rauchhaus observes that any prospect of humanitarian intervention will increase rebels’ expectations of the benefits of war and thereby promote provocative behaviour. Wagner likewise notes that, at least in theory, the most effective way to reduce internal war might be for the international community to re-embrace the norm of sovereignty that bars outside intervention
in internal conflicts, although he acknowledges that this might be politically impossible. Kuperman analyses the difficulty of reducing the ill-effects of intervention without sacrificing life-saving benefits, and then offers two recommendations to optimize the net impact: stop intervening on behalf of rebels who provoke state retaliation against their own group; and, instead, raise pressure on states to meet the demands of non-violent groups. Although he acknowledges that the prescription may appear heartless and thus may be difficult to implement, he contends that it would save lives in the long run by discouraging rebellions that provoke genocidal retaliation, while still fostering gradual liberalization by oppressive governments.

The authors have not forged a consensus on the problem of moral hazard and intervention—nor on its solution. But, given the complexity and novelty of the theoretical and empirical claims at stake, it would be strange if we had. In lieu of consensus, this volume offers a range of methodologies, perspectives and prescriptions that highlight important questions for further research on the effects of intervention and the causes of civil war. We hope they will help shape debate about the costs, benefits and need for reform of the emerging norm of humanitarian intervention.

References
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In the 1990s a burst of ethnic violence and the end of the Cold War gave rise to an emerging norm of humanitarian military intervention (Wheeler, 2004). US President Bill Clinton (1999) enunciated this doctrine clearly: “If the world community has the power to stop it, we ought to stop genocide and ethnic cleansing”. Two years later the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001; Shue, 2004) went further by declaring a 'Responsibility to Protect', suggesting that failure to intervene by those capable of doing so would actually violate international law. More recently, in December 2004, a high-level UN panel reiterated: “We endorse the emerging norm that there is a collective international responsibility to protect, exercisable by the Security Council authorizing military intervention as a last resort, in the event of genocide and other large-scale killing, ethnic cleansing or serious violations of international humanitarian law” (United Nations, 2004).

The common wisdom underlying this emerging norm is that humanitarian military intervention reduces the amount of genocide and ethnic cleansing (forced migration), which together can be labelled ‘genocidal violence’. However, this causal relationship has not been demonstrated, and there is some contrary empirical evidence and deductive
logic suggesting that the intervention norm may at times actually cause genocidal violence. This is because the norm, intended as a type of insurance policy against genocidal violence, exhibits the pathology of all insurance systems by creating moral hazard that encourages risk-taking (see Figure 1). Specifically it encourages disgruntled sub-state groups to rebel because they expect intervention to protect them from genocidal retaliation by the state. Actual intervention, however, is often too late or feeble to prevent such retaliation. Thus, the norm causes some genocidal violence that otherwise would not occur. This chapter develops a theoretical framework to understand the problem; illustrates it in two cases; discusses analogous problems in economics; analyses potential remedies; and concludes by exploring the putative moral responsibility to intervene.

The Empirical Puzzle: Victim Groups Provoke Retaliation

The starting point for this exploration is a surprising, yet largely unexplored, empirical puzzle in the literature: most cases of genocidal violence arise when ethnic rebellions provoke massive state retaliation. (‘Provoke’ means to cause a reaction, whether intentionally or not.) In other words, unlike in the prototypical case of genocide—the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews—most ethnic groups that fall victim to genocidal violence are responsible for initially militarizing the conflict. The obvious question is why would members of an ethnic group, which is sufficiently vulnerable to fall victim to genocidal violence at the hands of the state, provoke that very outcome by launching a suicidal rebellion against the state’s authority? The puzzle is even more curious because the state typically issues advance warning to the ethnic group that it will respond to any such rebellion with massive retaliation.

Although counter-intuitive and little publicized, the finding that genocidal violence is usually provoked by members of the victim group is robust in the literature, across varying definitions, methodologies and timeframes within the post-World War II era, which is the only period for which reliable data are available. From 1943 to 1987 Harff and Gurr (1988) identify 44 episodes of ‘genocide and politicide’, defined as state-sponsored policies lasting for at least six months that deliberately kill thousands of non-combatants because of their identity or political affiliation, respectively (see Table 1). They further divide the cases into six categories based on the motive of the perpetrator: hegemonic genocides aimed at forcing ethnic groups “to submit to central authority”; xenophobic genocides to promote “national protection or social purification”; repressive politicides in retaliation to “oppositional activity” by political parties; repressive/hegemonic politicides also in retaliation to “oppositional activity” but in cases where
Table 1. Harff and Gurr’s 44 cases of genocide and politicide from 1943 to 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>No. in which killing was provoked by a violent challenge to the state’s authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genocide</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hegemonial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>To force an ethnic group to submit to central authority</td>
<td>3 (by implication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>To promote national protection or social purification</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Politicide</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repressive</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>In retaliation to acts of resistance by a political party</td>
<td>15 (by definition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repressive/hegemonial</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>In retaliation to acts of resistance by an ethnic-based party</td>
<td>9 (by definition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retributive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Former opposition group takes revenge after seizing power</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>By new regime against class or political enemies</td>
<td>3 (cross-listed as Repressive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the opposition party is ethnically based; retributive politicides by former opposition groups after seizing power to take revenge against former ruling groups; and revolutionary politicides by new regimes against “class or political enemies”.

Harff and Gurr categorize 24 of the 44 cases (55%) as repressive or repressive/hegemonial, stating explicitly that the victim group “provokes this kind of mass murder” by “acts of resistance”. Three other cases are categorized as hegemonial, which is closely related because the state’s violence aims to force a communal group “to submit to central authority”, which presupposes that the group is already resisting state authority. In addition, according to Harff and Gurr, three more cases tabulated as revolutionary can be categorized as repressive as well. Thus, based on Harff and Gurr’s coding, at least 30 of the 44 cases (68%) exhibit the phenomenon in which rebels provoke their own group’s demise by violently challenging the state’s authority.

In a separate research project Helen Fein (1990) focuses exclusively on genocide, ostensibly excluding cases of pure politicide in which victims did not share common ethnicity and were targeted solely for political reasons. This confines her database for the period 1945–88 to 19 cases, which she divides into four categories, also based on the motive of the perpetrator. She uses different labels for categories that are quite similar to those of Harff and Gurr: their repressive category translates roughly into Fein’s ‘retributive’; revolutionary becomes ‘ideological’; xenophobic becomes ‘developmental’; and hegemonial becomes ‘despotic’. Despite this semantic difference, Fein likewise finds that genocide is usually provoked by members of a group challenging the state: “one could classify at least 11 cases [58%] as retributive genocide in which the perpetrators retaliated to a real or perceived threat by the victim to the structure of domination”. She also suggests that two of the other cases could be coded properly as retributive, which would raise the proportion in her database to 68% as well.
For the post-cold war period I have compiled a database of large-scale, intrastate genocidal violence that has broken out since 1990, in which at least 50,000 non-combatants from an ethnic or political group were deliberately killed during a period in which at least 5,000 were killed each year. This comprises brief but intense campaigns, as well as sustained but less intense campaigns. It includes extermination campaigns that directly target civilians, war strategies that knowingly inflict collateral damage, and economic blockades or episodes of ethnic cleansing that cause starvation and disease. However, it intentionally excludes cases of protracted low-level civilian killing typically arising from guerrilla or counter-insurgency campaigns, on the grounds that such violence is a qualitatively different phenomenon. It also avoids lumping together as a single case multiple incidents of mid-level violence that are separated by significant periods of relative calm.

Based on available evidence, four cases from 1990–2004 clearly satisfy the definition above, as listed in Table 2. Three of the four cases (75%)—Bosnia, Rwanda and Sudan (Darfur)—fit the pattern in which members of the victim group provoked the group’s demise by violently rebelling. Burundi does not fit, because the ruling Tutsi perpetrated genocidal violence in response to a peaceful challenge to their authority, the election of the state’s first Hutu president in 1993, rather than to a violent rebellion.

The ‘Rationality’ of Genocidal Violence

Building on the literature’s finding that most genocidal violence is provoked, many theorists agree that states act ‘rationally’ when they respond to such challenges with genocidal violence. (‘Rational’ action attempts to maximize one’s interests based on available information and expectations.) Far from the popular caricature of genocidal violence as a psychopathic outburst, these theorists typically view such violence as a calculated action by the state to defend its power against an aggressive challenger. As Barbara Harff (1987) writes, “usually genocide is the conscious choice of policymakers . . . for repressing (eliminating) opposition”. Helen Fein (1979) long ago noted that “to grasp the origins of modern premeditated genocide, we must first recognize . . . how it may be motivated or appear as a rational choice to the perpetrator”. More recently, and more simply, Fein (1994) has concluded that genocide “is usually a rational act”. Likewise, Roger W. Smith (1987) characterizes genocide as “a rational instrument to achieve an end”. Peter du Preez (1994) says that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Perpetrator</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Did victim group members provoke retaliation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>1992–95</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>1993–2000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Arabs</td>
<td>Blacks in Darfur</td>
<td>2003–04</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Nine other putative cases cannot yet be included because available evidence does not permit a determination that a sufficient number of civilians of any group was killed deliberately. These cases are Afghanistan, Algeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq (vs Shiites), Liberia, North Korea, Russia (vs Chechens), Rwanda (vs Hutu) and Sierra Leone. In addition, three cases of genocidal violence during this period are excluded because they started before 1990: Angola, Somalia and Sudan (vs southerners).
genocidal violence is usually "perfectly rational" and even "pragmatic", because the state chooses this policy when "it is thought that mere military victory will not solve the problem and measures of 'population adjustment' are necessary". Matthew Krain (1997) offers a similar rational explanation for state-sponsored mass murder: "elites trying to hold onto power can and must reconsolidate power quickly and efficiently". Going beyond these earlier theorists, who acknowledge but do not focus their scholarship on rational incentives, Benjamin Valentino (2000) emphasizes such perpetrator calculations and motivations as the core of his new “strategic” theory of “mass killing”.

It is important to underscore that when theorists assert that a state pursues genocidal violence as a rational choice, it is not necessarily the optimal choice nor a moral one. When confronting rebellion, state leaders cannot be certain of the consequences of any policy alternative; in the absence of perfect information, rational action may be suboptimal. Several policies may appear capable of achieving the interests of state leaders: offering concessions; pursuing counter-insurgency against armed elements; compelling forced migration; or attempting extermination. Nor is there yet conclusive case-study evidence that states typically do act rationally in this situation. Further research is needed to determine when and why states respond to rebellion with genocidal violence.

No Good Explanation of Suicidal Rebellions

In remarkable contrast to the chorus of rational explanations for perpetrator behaviour, there is no explicit rational theory to explain suicidal rebellions. Instead, theorists of genocidal violence imply that such rebellions are an all but inevitable response by vulnerable societal groups to long-term discrimination or oppression at the hands of the state. The literature thus harbours an implicit, non-rational theory for the phenomenon: vulnerable groups are driven by the frustration of prolonged discrimination to launch violent challenges against state authorities without necessarily calculating their chances of success or the consequences of failure, and thereby unwittingly provoke their own demise. For example, Fein (1990) states that: “Domination by a ruling ethnoclass . . . lead[s] to violent rebellion by the dominated class . . . [provoking] expulsion and genocide”. Likewise, Harff and Gurr (1989) write: “One tell-tale manifestation of conflicts with genocidal potential is discriminatory treatment of ethnic, religious, national, and regional minorities by dominant groups . . . [Minorities] resisting discriminatory treatment are more likely to encounter massive state violence than quiescent groups.” Despite the obvious risks of retaliation, say Harff and Gurr, discriminated groups pursue violent resistance because “leaders have alternatives, victims rarely do”. But, in reality, discriminated groups almost always do have alternatives to violent resistance, which could enhance their welfare by reducing significantly their risk of suffering genocidal violence. The fact that Harff and Gurr view rebellion as all but inevitable, despite the availability of obvious, welfare-improving, alternative strategies, implies that they view subordinate group actions as irrational.

This implicit theory from the literature is depicted graphically by the bold arrows in Figure 2. Although it may account for much genocidal violence, it is under-specified at every juncture. First, the literature does not explain when and why states are dominated by certain groups that discriminate against others. Second, even if suffering discrimination were a necessary condition for a violent challenge against the state, which empirically is not true, such discrimination is clearly insufficient by itself because most groups suffering
discrimination do not launch such challenges.\textsuperscript{12} Third, although genocidal violence may sometimes be a rational response by a state to such challenges, in other cases it may be equally or more rational for the state to concede to the demands of the challenging group, or to combat the challenge with a disciplined counter-insurgency aimed only at militants rather than at civilians. Thus the implicit theory is contingent at every turn on other factors (‘condition variables’) yet to be specified. Moreover, some cases of genocidal violence, such as the Holocaust, stem from an entirely different causal sequence.

This study seeks neither to redress all of these inadequacies in the literature, nor to formulate a new comprehensive theory of genocidal violence. Rather it seeks only to specify more fully the determinants of a key juncture along this most common path to genocidal violence: the decision by members of a vulnerable group to violently challenge the authority of a state, thereby provoking genocidal retaliation. Identifying the determinants of this decision could offer considerable insight into the causes of, and possible means of preventing, genocidal violence.

**Why Men Rebel**

Other scholars have explored the more general question of why people rebel or revolt.\textsuperscript{13} However, their theories generally do not differentiate among rebellions that have greatly varying likelihood of success and cost of failure, so they are under-specified for the narrower phenomenon at issue in this study. In other words, low-cost, successful rebellions are much easier to explain than suicidal ones.

Nevertheless, the existing literature does offer insight into the causes and strategies of challenges to authority. For example, nearly all theorists cite perceived relative (rather than absolute) deprivation as the leading cause of revolution and rebellion, which can explain why such challenges are typically launched by groups that enjoy rising
socioeconomic conditions. However, two underlying questions remain. First, ‘relative’ to whom or to what? Second, which factors mediate the connection to violence—that is, when does perceived relative deprivation actually lead to rebellion?

Aristotle (1971) wrote that people rebel “if they think that they have too little although they are the equals of those who have more”. Marx focused on the relative material inequality between classes, predicting that workers would rebel even in the face of improving living standards if they perceived capitalist living standards to be rising even faster. Tocqueville crucially observed that relative deprivation alone is insufficient without an expectation that rebellion will improve the situation: “Evils which are patiently endured when they seem inevitable become intolerable when once the idea of escape from them is suggested”. This explained his otherwise counter-intuitive empirical observation that revolution was more likely when states were relaxing, not intensifying, oppression.  

In the early 1960s James C. Davies (1971a) argued that the key relative deprivation is not between groups but rather between the expected and actual satisfaction of one group. Rebellion is caused by “an intolerable gap between what people want and what they get” and so is “most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal”. Like Tocqueville, he identified the key mediating factor between deprivation and rebellion as the expectation of success. “It is when the chains have been loosened somewhat, so that they can be cast off without a high probability of losing life, that people are put in a condition of rebelliousness”.  

But other theorists disagree about the impact of government repression on the likelihood of rebellion. David Schwartz (1971) and William Kornhauser (1964) argued in the early 1960s that rebellions arise when states crack down on peaceful reform movements, thereby leaving disgruntled constituents no alternative to violence. In reality, government repression is a double edged-sword that can either stanch or provoke rebellion, depending on when and how it is used, which makes statistical correlation too blunt a methodology to provide useful insight.

Other theorists in the 1960s—including Lucian Pye, Edward Gude and Thomas Perry Thornton—identified the most decisive state policy as its reaction to initial acts of political violence. Indiscriminate retaliation backfires by mobilizing the population in favour of the rebellion out of sympathy and perceived self-defence. Rebel leaders are aware of this dynamic, Gude (1971) wrote, so that a key goal of their attacks is to “trigger governmental repression that can provide a basis for recruitment into an insurgent movement”. In other words, rebel leaders may initiate violence despite an unfavourable balance of forces in the hope that the government’s over-reaction will aid rebel recruitment and thereby tilt the balance in their favour.

In the 1970s Charles Tilly (1978) and others focused on the general process of mobilization that is a precondition of rebellion. More recently theorists such as Doug McAdam (1982) and Sidney Tarrow (1994), echoing Tocqueville, have emphasized the mediating role of ‘political opportunity structures’ in determining when relative deprivation and mobilization actually lead to actions such as rebellions.

For more than three decades, Ted Robert Gurr has integrated the literature’s findings into a general theory of ethno-cultural rebellion and political action. His primary causal variable remains relative deprivation, defined according to Davies as the difference between perceived entitlement and actual welfare, so that even relatively privileged groups may be motivated to rebel by perceived deprivation. Gurr claims three mediating variables determine whether this perception leads to group action: salience of
ethnocultural identity, group capacity for mobilization (based partly on geography), and political opportunities for success. All four variables have both domestic and international determinants. A final domestic political variable—whether state institutions and resources favour repression or accommodation of group demands—determines whether ethnopolitical action takes the form of peaceful protest or violent rebellion. Gurr concedes problems of endogeneity, noting the mutual causation between relative deprivation, salience of identity, and political mobilization. In addition, Gurr sacrifices parsimony by specifying an additional 20 causal variables that underlie his five main ones. Nevertheless, Gurr’s theory remains useful as the most comprehensive inventory of variables and processes leading to rebellion and political protest.

Unfortunately, none of these theories resolves the puzzle of suicidal rebellions. They explain many things: how relative deprivation may motivate a group to want to change the status quo; how the salience of ethnic identity may intensify such feelings; how these factors and others may enable a group to mobilize; how the unavailability of institutions to redress grievances peacefully may lead to consideration of violent alternatives; how the expectation of success at low cost may induce a mobilized group to launch a rebellion; and what tactics of rebellion it may employ to maximize its chances. However, the literature does not explain why or when a group that is vulnerable to genocidal retaliation would launch a rebellion against a state that has explicitly threatened such punishment.

Rational Deterrence Theory for Intrastate Conflicts

This study adapts rational deterrence theory from international relations to comparative politics in order to explain the suicidal rebellions that provoke genocidal retaliation. In the ideal type the state is dominated by one ethnic group. This dominant group uses its control of the state to funnel itself resources and opportunities in employment, education, legal rights and infrastructure investments that are disproportionate to its share of the population and/or contribution to the economy. The dominant group discriminates against and may have disdain for subordinate groups. However, under ordinary circumstances, the dominant group does not engage in genocidal violence against them—despite having the ability to do so—because that would sacrifice the benefits of exploiting them and/or incur costs of fighting that are not justified by compensating benefits.

Subordinate groups, all things being equal, would prefer to change the status quo—either to be treated equally, to take control of the state themselves, to gain communal or regional autonomy, or to secede and take control of their own mini-state. Commonly, they pursue these goals peacefully, at little cost but small hope of success. They usually avoid launching rebellions against the state’s authority because of a rational expectation of massive retaliation and failure. Thus subordinate groups are deterred from launching violent challenges, which in turn sustains the incentive of the dominant group not to commit genocidal violence against them. In this narrow sense, the status quo situation is mutually beneficial because both sides perceive themselves to be enjoying higher utility than if they were to engage each other in violence. Such convergence of interest is the hallmark of effective coercion, as Thomas Schelling (1966) long ago noted:

Coercion by threat of damage also requires that our interests and our opponent’s not be absolutely opposed. If his pain were our greatest delight and our satisfaction his greatest woe, we would just proceed to hurt and to frustrate each other. It is when his
pain gives us little or no satisfaction compared with what he can do for us, and the action or inaction that satisfies us costs him less than the pain we can cause, that there is room for coercion. Coercion requires finding a bargain, arranging for him to be better off doing what we want—worse off not doing what we want—when he takes the threatened penalty into account.

The key question, under this rational framework, is what changes in the mutually beneficial situation to make deterrence fail, so that a subordinate group launches a rebellion? Traditionally, rational deterrence theory posits that one state will defy a deterrent threat from another only when the expected utility of doing so outweighs that of acquiescing (Schelling, 1966). Translated to the domestic realm, the state can be viewed as attempting to deter groups from launching armed challenges by threatening massive retaliation. This version of the theory offers four possible explanations for the deterrence failure represented by rebellion. First, the state fails to communicate credible threats, so the group does not expect its rebellion to prompt genocidal retaliation. Second, the state fails to communicate credible reassurances, so the group expects to suffer genocidal violence regardless of whether it rebels. Third, the state communicates credible threats and reassurances, but the group expects to prevail—without the assistance of humanitarian intervention—at an acceptable cost in retaliation. Fourth, it is the prospect of humanitarian intervention—moral hazard—that leads the group to expect its rebellion to succeed at tolerable cost. Finally, the null hypothesis of ‘irrational’ action posits that such groups do not behave as unitary rational actors, so rebellion is not an attempt to maximize expected utility. Seemingly irrational action could be explained by many theories—including those of frustration-aggression and bureaucratic politics—but these would tend to be disproved by decisive evidence for any of the four rational hypotheses. (The five hypotheses are summarized in Table 3.)

Evidence from the Balkans

Two cases from the Balkans—Bosnia and Kosovo—illustrate how the moral hazard of humanitarian intervention has fostered suicidal rebellion since the end of the Cold War. Bosnia, as noted in Table 2, is one of four clear-cut cases since 1990 where an armed challenge (here a 1992 secession led by the republic’s Muslims) provoked large-scale genocidal retaliation. Kosovo’s death toll was lower, but the dynamic was similar, as an ethnic Albanian rebellion in 1998–99 provoked retaliatory ethnic cleansing. The two cases provide an interesting variation in the dependent variable (rebellion) both within and between cases because the subordinate groups rebelled neither at first opportunity (in 1991) nor at the same time, while many other variables were held constant between the two cases, including the dominant group.

| Table 3. Explanations for rebellion by groups vulnerable to genocidal retaliation |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Don’t perceive credible threat by state to retaliate |
| 2 Expect victimization anyway, so nothing to lose |
| 3 Expect victory at tolerable cost w/o intervention |
| 4 Expect intervention to enable victory at tolerable cost |
| 5 Don’t behave as unitary rational actors |
To demonstrate the decisive role of moral hazard, I evaluate all five explanations for rebellion in these two cases by process tracing (George, 1979; Van Evera, 1997) the decisions of the groups that eventually launched rebellions, based on interviews with at least a dozen senior officials of each. These officials include the eventual presidents of Bosnia and Kosovo, top rebel officers, clandestine weapons procurers, political party leaders and diplomats in charge of external relations. To mitigate a major concern in retrospective interview research—that officials may misrepresent history to make themselves look better—theyir testimonies were cross-checked against contemporaneous journalistic accounts and interviews with political opponents.

In each case subordinate group officials came to favour rebellion because they expected that by provoking state retaliation they could attract humanitarian military intervention sufficient to achieve their goal of independence. Contending hypotheses fail: the groups were not blind to the dangers of rebellion; they believed they could avoid genocidal violence so long as they eschewed rebellion; they did not expect to prevail without outside intervention; and yet they did act rationally. They rebelled only when they believed that doing so would attract humanitarian military intervention sufficient to attain their political goals, and they decided in advance that genocidal retaliation was an acceptable cost of victory.

In Bosnia, before the outbreak of violence, Muslim leaders negotiated but then rejected two compromises that they acknowledge might have averted war and genocidal violence—either keeping the republic in a rump Yugoslavia or dividing it into ethnic cantons before secession. Instead, the Muslims organized and armed a 100,000-strong militia and (with the republic’s Croats) declared Bosnia’s independence in March 1992, against the will of Belgrade and the republic’s Serbs, knowing this would trigger war and genocidal violence. As Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic later admitted, “war could have been avoided if I accepted that Bosnia enters greater Serbia”—i.e. stayed within rump Yugoslavia. He also revealed why the Muslims pursued secession, despite knowing they could not defend against expected Serb retaliation: “Our tactics were to buy time . . . [pursuicing] a zig-zag line for independence . . . so the international community would defend this country” (personal communication, 19 July 2000). His eventual foreign minister, Haris Silajdzic, confirms: “My main priority in the whole strategy was to get Western governments and especially the United States to get involved, because [Serbs] had the whole Army” (personal communication, 19 July 2000). Omer Behmen, perhaps the most influential Muslim official, also says the goal was to “put up a fight for long enough to bring in the international community” (personal communication, 12 October 1999).

The Muslims expected such intervention because, immediately after the Cold War, the international community started establishing a norm of humanitarian intervention by rescuing groups from aggression regardless of whether members of the group had provoked the violence. For example, when Kuwait defied Baghdad’s demand to halt alleged theft of Iraqi oil, Saddam Hussein invaded in August 1990, but a UN coalition expelled Iraqi troops and restored Kuwait’s sovereignty, as US President George H. W. Bush declared a ‘new world order’. When Iraq’s Kurds rebelled soon after, the USA intervened in April 1991, protecting them from genocidal retaliation and facilitating their long-sought goal of political autonomy. When Croatia seceded from Yugoslavia in June 1991, triggering retaliation from local Serb and Yugoslav forces, the UN deployed a peacekeeping force (based in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, no less) that maintained a ceasefire, facilitated aid and protected Croatia’s sovereignty. This emerging norm encouraged Bosnia’s Muslims to believe that they too could benefit from international intervention to gain
independence for a unitary Bosnian state by arming and seceding from Yugoslavia, despite the massive military superiority of the Serbs. This expectation was strongly reinforced in March 1992, shortly before the secession, when the USA and the European Community indicated that they would recognize a Bosnian declaration of independence despite vociferous Serb opposition.

Even after the Serbs' initial genocidal retaliation to the secession failed to prompt decisive intervention on behalf of the Muslims, the latter continued to fight a losing war in the hope of eventually garnering sufficient international military assistance to prevail (Burg & Shoup, 1999). The commander of UN peacekeepers, General Michael Rose (1998), reports that the weaker, Muslim side repeatedly rejected ceasefires, based on an expectation that if they "attacked and lost, the resulting images of war and suffering guaranteed support in the West for the 'victim State'". Even James Gow (1997), overtly sympathetic to the Muslims, concedes that their army broke ceasefires "in the hope of provoking a US intervention".

Ultimately this Muslim strategy did attract intervention: the USA facilitated the provision of weapons to the Muslims and their Croat allies and then led a NATO bombing campaign against Serb military assets. The intervention was too weak, however, to deliver the Muslims' goal of a unitary Bosnia immediately, and in 1995 at Dayton they had to settle for an ethnic division of the republic similar to that they had rejected in favour of war. The cost of three years of war was roughly two million displaced and 150 000 dead, mostly Muslim. Had it not been for the expectation of international intervention, the Muslims might not have seceded at all, or at least not without first agreeing to a cantonization plan, so the bloody Bosnian war might have been averted. At the very least, without the moral hazard created by the prospect of intervention, the Muslims would have militarily prepared themselves better before declaring independence, and thereby mitigated any potential genocidal retaliation.

In Kosovo, similarly, there was no genocidal violence until the province's ethnic Albanians launched a rebellion in 1998. Although Serbia had revoked Kosovo's autonomy in 1989, citing Albanian nationalism and discrimination against Serbs, and the Albanians responded by boycotting government institutions, there was virtually no deadly violence—and certainly no ethnic cleansing or genocide—for eight years while the Albanians embraced passive resistance. Indeed, by establishing parallel institutions for education, health care and taxes, the Albanians succeeded at restoring a degree of de facto autonomy. The peace was broken only when Albanians of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) launched a full-blown rebellion in 1998, aiming to provoke state retaliation that would attract humanitarian military intervention sufficient to achieve independence. The rebels rejected pacifism on grounds that only a militant strategy could attract the intervention necessary for independence, based on the precedents of Bosnia and Croatia.

Belgrade initially responded with a brutal counter-insurgency that defeated the rebels but displaced tens of thousands of Albanian civilians. In autumn 1998, however, the USA threatened to intervene militarily on humanitarian grounds, which compelled Serbian forces to retreat and enabled the rebels to regroup, thereby renewing the war. In March 1999 Belgrade rejected a US-dictated peace plan at Rambouillet and NATO announced that it would bomb Serbia. Belgrade countered by forcibly expelling about 850 000 Albanians—half their total in Kosovo—in less than a month, while killing another 10 000. After 11 weeks of bombing, Belgrade capitulated, whereupon the Albanian refugees returned and forcibly expelled about 100 000 Serbs—likewise half their total in the province—in just a few weeks, while killing hundreds more.
The KLA rebellion was facilitated by the sudden availability of small arms arising from a civil war in neighbouring Albania in 1997, but the rebels never expected these light weapons to enable them to defeat the better equipped and larger Serbian army. As admitted by a top KLA commander, Emrush Xhemajli, “We knew our attacks would not have any military value. Our goal was not to destroy the Serb military force [but to make it] become more vicious ... We thought it was essential to get international support to win the war” (personal communication, 9 August 2000). Likewise, an Albanian negotiator at Rambouillet, Dugi Gorani, admits that “The more civilians were killed, the chances of international intervention became bigger, and the KLA of course realized that”. The rebels anticipated and accepted the human cost of their strategy. Hashim Thaci, a founder of the KLA and head of its political directorate during the war, concedes: “We knew full well that any armed action we undertook would trigger a ruthless retaliation by Serbs against our people ... We knew we were endangering civilian lives, too, a great number of lives” (Little, 2000a; 2000b).

The rebels expected to benefit from humanitarian intervention even if they provoked the violence because of precedents and signals from the international community. They revealed in a May 1998 press report their intention to “attract heavy Yugoslav barrages and thus win strong international sympathy, as the Croats did in Vukovar” (Loza, 1998). A leading Kosovo Albanian journalist similarly noted: “There is a message that is being sent to the Kosovars—if you want to draw international attention you have to fight for it. That is exactly it. You need to use violence to achieve your goals.” Gorani subsequently revealed that “there was this foreign diplomat who once told me, ‘Look unless you pass the quota of five thousand deaths you’ll never have anybody permanently present in Kosovo from the foreign diplomacy’” (Little, 2000b).

Because the KLA strategy was based entirely on attracting humanitarian intervention and the rebels harboured no hope of prevailing themselves, violence could well have been averted if not for the moral hazard of humanitarian intervention. As Diana Johnstone (1998) noted: “without the prospect of decisive outside intervention on their behalf, the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo might have tried to make use of the existing legal framework” in Yugoslavia to restore autonomy, rather than violently seeking independence. Even after the outbreak of violence, if the international community had eschewed intervention, Belgrade could have snuffed out the rebellion at the cost of a few hundred lives, mostly rebels, as it appeared to have done by mid-1998. Instead, Western threats and bombing caused the violence to mushroom, leading to 10 000 deaths and the ethnic cleansing of nearly a million Albanians and Serbs—a perverse consequence indeed for an emerging norm of ‘humanitarian’ intervention.

Obviously, the moral hazard of humanitarian intervention cannot explain all rebellion that triggers genocidal retaliation, because the emerging norm is largely a post-cold war phenomenon, while such violence is timeless. Nevertheless, these cases demonstrate that moral hazard has helped to cause genocidal violence in at least two recent instances. It is thus worthwhile to explore whether and how such moral hazard can be mitigated.

Lessons about Moral Hazard from Economics

The concept of moral hazard is examined most thoroughly in the literature of economics. A typical example is when a government provides deposit insurance to ensure depositors
of the safety of their savings accounts in the event of a bank failure. The goal is to promote the stability of the banking system and the larger economy by promoting savings and thereby investment. However, one consequence of insuring depositors against bank losses is that they are less careful about which bank they choose, so long as it is insured. As depositors become less careful about scrutinizing banks, the banks themselves become less careful about the loans they make, especially given that the government will bail them out in the event of losses. This leads to more bad loans and bank failures, both of which are bad for the economy. Thus a policy intended to improve the economy by insuring against risk can have the unintended consequence of hurting the economy.

This domestic example of economic moral hazard has been replicated on an international scale in recent years by the advent of bail-outs from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Such bail-outs provide an infusion of hard currency to states in emerging markets that otherwise would default on their foreign debt because of severe balance of payments deficits. The goal is to preserve the economic stability of such states and the international system by reassuring lenders and investors that they can continue to do business in emerging markets without fear of huge losses. However, by reducing the penalty to states for risky economic policies and to lenders for risky loans, the policy of bail-outs has the unintended consequence of encouraging these inefficient behaviours that undermine economic stability.

To reduce moral hazard, a common prescription is to restrict insurance only to those who abide by regulations. In the domestic context the government provides deposit insurance only to those banks that pay a small premium and follow strict rules about the type and amount of loans they make relative to their deposits. In the international context the IMF provides bail-outs only to those states that agree to undergo structural adjustment—modifying their economic policies in ways that reduce the likelihood of future balance of payments deficits.

Although such regulatory schemes can mitigate moral hazard, it is important to recognize that there is generally an inverse relationship between moral hazard and risk, such that regulators cannot eliminate both. If regulators reduce moral hazard by setting stringent qualification requirements for insurance or bail-outs, most banks or states will fail to qualify and the system will have almost as much risk for depositors and lenders as if there were no insurance or bail-outs. If regulators reduce this risk by setting lower qualification requirements, moral hazard grows, as states and banks feel free to engage in irresponsible practices. Put another way, regulators cannot simultaneously reduce both the expected cost of taking risks and the propensity to take such risks.

Regulation of moral hazard in domestic banking also poses two further dangers. If regulatory requirements are set too low, there may be so much risky behaviour and so many bail-outs that the insurance system is bankrupted. Alternatively, if regulatory requirements are set too high, banks will not be permitted to make sufficient loans, and overall economic growth may be strangled.

The optimum solution is the regulatory sweet spot, which balances reasonable levels of moral hazard against risk, and which promotes liquidity while avoiding insolvency of the insurance system. Even if these challenges can be surmounted, however, there is a final obstacle to limiting moral hazard, which stems from the fact that the regulator and regulated are involved in a game of chicken. The regulator threatens to deny insurance unless the regulated abides by strict regulations. But the regulated knows that the regulator wants to provide insurance for its own reasons, so the threat lacks credibility and the regulated may feel free to ignore the regulations.
For example, in the domestic context, the government does not want any depositor to lose money when a bank fails, because that could hurt the confidence of other depositors and thereby damage the economy. Accordingly, the government may provide protection to depositors even at uninsured banks and/or provide protection above the statutory limit at insured banks. In the USA, even though deposit insurance is limited to $100,000 per depositor at each bank, when a failure occurs the government routinely bails out all accounts (according to the 'too big to fail' doctrine). This policy seeks to reduce the risk to depositors so as to prevent a run on banks, but unintentionally also increases moral hazard. Banks and depositors, expecting they will be bailed out fully in any circumstance, are more prone to engage in risky behaviour. Analogously, a state in fiscal crisis knows that the IMF does not want it to default because of the danger of international contagion, which reduces the credibility of the IMF’s threat to withhold a bail-out in the absence of economic reform. Because such states expect to be bailed out in any case, they often violate pledges of structural adjustment by continuing inefficient economic policies to obtain short-term domestic political gains.

**Applying the Lessons from Economics**

All these problems of moral hazard apply to humanitarian intervention as well (see Table 4). The international community has sought to insure vulnerable groups against the risk of genocidal violence by establishing an emerging norm of humanitarian military intervention. In so doing, however, it has inadvertently encouraged such groups to engage in the risky behaviour of launching rebellions that may provoke genocidal retaliation. (A distinction can be drawn between a group that intentionally provokes genocidal retaliation and one that knowingly runs a high risk of provoking such retaliation. The distinction is not theoretically significant, however, so long as both groups expect to fail without intervention, expect to succeed if their rebellion provokes retaliation because that will attract humanitarian intervention, and accept in advance that genocidal retaliation is a tolerable cost to achieve their political goal.) The emerging norm creates moral hazard even though it does not absolutely guarantee intervention, just as the prospect of IMF bailouts creates moral hazard despite likewise being only probabilistic.

In theory the international community could attempt to reduce moral hazard by setting strict regulatory requirements for its ‘insurance’—for example, pledging not to intervene on behalf of groups that provoke retaliation by rebelling. This could deter groups from rebelling, and thereby prevent much genocidal violence. On the other hand, this policy might increase the suffering of some groups by denying them intervention if they rebelled anyway. Another deleterious effect could be to prolong the oppression of some groups by inhibiting their liberation via rebellion, thereby hindering the liberal international goal of democratization. (This is analogous to a banking regulator establishing overly strict loan requirements that choke off economic growth.) But this problem could be offset at least partially if the international community also provided greater support to pacifist liberation movements by pressuring and enticing states to appease them.

An alternative strategy to reduce genocidal violence would be to lower regulatory requirements, pledging to intervene on behalf of any group that faced genocide or ethnic cleansing, which is the logical endpoint of the emerging norm. However, this would increase moral hazard and thus tend to raise the incidence of rebellions that provoke genocidal retaliation. Unless such a policy deterred retaliation more than it
### Table 4. Comparing moral hazard in economics and ethnic conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Banking</th>
<th>IMF</th>
<th>Ethnic conflict</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Prevent lost deposits and bolster economy</td>
<td>Prevent suffering and promote global growth</td>
<td>Stop and deter genocidal violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety net</strong></td>
<td>Deposit insurance</td>
<td>Bail-outs</td>
<td>Humanitarian military intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary risky behaviour promoted</strong></td>
<td>Risky loans by banks</td>
<td>BOP and fiscal deficits in emerging market states</td>
<td>Rebellions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary risky behaviour promoted</strong></td>
<td>Deposits in weak banks</td>
<td>International loans to profligate states</td>
<td>International support for demands by militants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative consequence</strong></td>
<td>More bank failures</td>
<td>More defaults</td>
<td>More genocidal violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regulation to mitigate moral hazard</strong></td>
<td>Reserve requirements</td>
<td>Structural adjustment conditionality</td>
<td>No intervention if rebels provoke retaliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two dangers from strict regulation...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If standard not met</td>
<td>Most deposits are at risk</td>
<td>Few bail-outs, so states default</td>
<td>Some genocidal retaliation permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If standard met</td>
<td>Few loans, so economy contracts</td>
<td>Austerity hurts the poor and inhibits growth</td>
<td>Some discrimination and oppression continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danger from lax regulation</td>
<td>FDIC bankrupted</td>
<td>IMF bankrupted</td>
<td>Intervention resources exhausted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Chicken’ undermines regulators’ credibility</td>
<td>Too big to fail</td>
<td>Avoiding contagion</td>
<td>CNN effect</td>
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promoted rebellions, it could increase genocidal violence sufficiently to exhaust the intervention resources of the international community. This would be analogous to the bankruptcy of a deposit insurance system, but with even starker human consequences.

As in economics, regulators of humanitarian intervention also have problems convincing the regulated that their threats are credible. In Kosovo Western officials repeatedly attempted to deter the Albanians from escalating their rebellion by declaring that NATO would not be the "air force of the KLA" (Matthews, 1998; Samyn, 1998; Brown, 1998; Cornwell, 1999; Wintour, 1999; Matthews & Bowman, 1999). However, the rebels calculated that, if they could provoke Serb retaliation against Albanian civilians, the West would be compelled by media coverage of the humanitarian tragedy (the ‘CNN effect’) to intervene despite its declarations. Western threats to withhold intervention were not credible and thus could not deter the KLA from engaging in risky behaviour (Crawford, 2003).

However, moral hazard in humanitarian intervention is different from that in some economic models in at least two respects. First, the value of a bail-out may be greater
than the value of responsible behaviour. Thus we observe the bizarre dynamic in which the insured group sometimes engages in risky behaviour to intentionally provoke its own suffering, in order to garner a bail-out. One cannot imagine a depositor searching for the worst bank possible so as to lose his money in order to get a government bail-out, because the bail-out has a value no greater than that of a responsible investment, which can be found fairly easily. By contrast, in domestic power struggles, vulnerable groups may expect that if they provoke state retaliation, humanitarian intervention will not only protect them but will also enable them to achieve otherwise unattainable political goals such as independence. Thus, while both humanitarian intervention policies and well designed insurance policies reduce the costs to actors of risky behaviour, only the former actually rewards actors for such behaviour, encouraging even greater risks. This is because, unlike insurance systems, the emerging norm of humanitarian intervention is unregulated against fraudulent claims.

Some insurance systems exhibit a similar problem if fraud can be committed with impunity. For example, if a building depreciates below the value of its fire insurance policy, the policy holder has a perverse incentive to commit arson, so long as he expects this criminal fraud not to be detected and punished. Another example is in unemployment insurance. If a worker in the official economy knows he can take a job at a slightly lower wage in the unofficial economy, he may have an incentive to provoke his boss to fire him, so he can collect both unemployment compensation and the income from the black-market job, which together exceed his regular wage. Again, this perverse incentive exists only if the worker expects that such fraudulent behaviour can be committed without detection, which would curtail the unemployment compensation and thus reduce net income. The difference in humanitarian intervention is that such fraudulent abuse of the insurance system—provoking genocidal retaliation against one's own group to attract intervention—is not necessarily punished by loss of insurance even when detected, because the international community may still intervene to help the provocateur group.

Another difference in the realm of ethnic conflict is that the potential punishment (genocidal retaliation) for risky behaviour (rebellion) is more clearly the result of human agency than the 'invisible hand' of economic forces. Thus it is theoretically possible for a humanitarian intervention norm to deter states from engaging in genocidal retaliation against rebellious groups. This deterrent effect requires intervention threats to be clear, credible, sizeable and accompanied by credible reassurances of non-intervention if states eschew genocidal violence. In practice, however, humanitarian intervention has been inconsistent, and often belated and inadequate as well, thereby reducing its deterrent effect. Nonetheless, even such a sub-optimal intervention norm may deter some retaliation, thereby mitigating the violence arising from moral hazard. Only empirical study can determine whether the net effect of the emerging norm of humanitarian intervention is to increase or decrease genocidal violence.

Prescriptions for the Real World

The cases and analysis suggest a number of prescriptions to mitigate genocidal violence, but they all face practical hurdles to implementation. A common suggestion by humanitarian advocates is to intervene quickly in all cases of genocidal violence so as to physically curtail its extent in the short run and deter its incidence in the long run. But this
is impossible given the current global capacity for intervention. The 1990s alone witnessed major civil violence in at least 16 areas, some on multiple occasions: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Cambodia, Congo Republic, Croatia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan and Zaire. Intervening in all of them would have required simultaneous deployment of hundreds of thousands of troops—well beyond the world’s capacity to project force. Moreover, by the logic of moral hazard, each intervention raises expectations of future ones, thereby encouraging additional rebellions that may provoke genocidal retaliation and further overwhelm intervention resources.

The opposite strategy is to inhibit the rebellions that provoke genocidal retaliation. One option is to block militants’ access to weapons because, as Kosovo demonstrated for nearly a decade, an unarmed challenge to authority is far less likely to provoke such retaliation. Unfortunately, global proliferation of light arms and the porous nature of international borders makes this option generally impractical.

Another way to inhibit rebellion is to reduce moral hazard by explicitly denying intervention to groups that provoke genocidal retaliation. Such a strategy is not without shortcomings. As noted, if it worked by deterring rebellion, it could prolong the oppression faced by some groups. But the international community could employ other means to entice states to reduce oppression. Moreover, Bosnia demonstrates that some armed challenges are launched by groups who face no discrimination—and there is little downside to deterring that.

The bigger problem arises from the risk that groups would doubt the policy’s credibility and launch rebellions anyway, expecting media images of suffering to compel intervention. Only if the international community could muster the discipline to resist intervening in the first few cases might it build sufficient credibility to deter further rebellions. But, given the pluralism of the international system, the democratic nature of most states, the multiple grounds for and means of intervention and the expansion of world-wide media coverage, it is unclear if the global community could refuse repeatedly to intervene in such cases. Thus, one possible outcome of such a declared policy would be intermittent intervention that would create some moral hazard and fail to protect some victims of genocidal retaliation—not entirely different from the current reality.

Another option to reduce moral hazard—in cases where a group has legitimate grievances and is led by a pacifist leader, such as the Kosovo Albanians under Ibrahim Rugova from 1989–98—is for the international community to bolster this leader and hinder the emergence of militant rivals by enticing or coercing the state to appease the group. Unfortunately, the international community has demonstrated a lack of will to devote large resources until cases turn violent. This stubborn pattern has the effect of rewarding militants at the expense of pacifists, thereby promoting rebellion that spurs genocidal retaliation.

A final prescription is to better coordinate military intervention with coercive diplomacy (Kuperman, 1996; 1999; 2004c). Since the Cold War the international community has repeatedly attempted to coerce authoritarian governments to hand over power to opponents by applying economic or military sanctions. In Kosovo NATO threatened to and did bomb Yugoslavia to force it to accept agreements designed to achieve the province’s independence. In Bosnia the USA and European Community backed the republic’s secession and pressured Belgrade to accept it. In both cases the attempted coercion backfired when the state opted to kill or ethnically cleanse its opponents rather than hand power to them. This pattern also played out in Rwanda and East Timor.
Gambling on Humanitarian Intervention

To protect against such backlash, the international community would have to deploy robust intervention forces preventively, before exercising coercive diplomacy. So far, however, preventive deployments have been feeble. When violence breaks out, as in Rwanda or Srebrenica, peacekeepers provide little protection and then are withdrawn, leaving the targeted groups to suffer their fate. Such half-hearted deployments create their own moral hazard, lending a false sense of security that leads vulnerable groups to lower their guard so that they ultimately die in greater numbers—which makes this type of intervention worse than nothing.

If the international community is unwilling to deploy robust forces preventively, it should temper its use of coercive diplomacy aimed at compelling rulers to surrender power, because of the risk of inadvertently triggering genocidal violence against domestic opponents. Diplomats should focus on carrots rather than sticks—offering oppressive governments incentives, including economic assistance, in exchange for gradual power sharing. The international community also should be prepared to offer ‘golden parachutes’—monetary rewards, asylum and immunity from subsequent prosecution—to entrenched dictators willing to hand over power peacefully. While human rights groups abjure the prospect of cutting deals with leaders who have blood on their hands, in some cases forgiving past crimes may be the price of preventing future ones.

In the wake of the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 the international community, especially the USA, has switched its military focus from altruistic humanitarian intervention to a self-interested war against terrorism and proliferation. One unintended benefit may be that disgruntled groups are now less likely to provoke genocidal retaliation in the expectation of attracting humanitarian intervention. They know that in today’s environment the USA is more likely to view such rebels as terrorists and therefore to support state retaliation against them. This may help explain why nascent rebellions by Albanian rebels in Macedonia and southern Serbia have fizzled out, at least for now, rather than replicating the dynamics of Bosnia and Kosovo. However, the Sudanese case of Darfur, where black Muslim groups in 2003 launched a rebellion that had no hope of military success but did provoke genocidal retaliation leading to calls for intervention, suggests that the dynamic persists (Dealey, 2004; Kuperman, 2004b).

A ‘Moral Responsibility’ to Intervene?

Since the end of the Cold War the emerging norm has asserted not merely an international right but also a responsibility to intervene militarily to prevent genocidal violence. However, regardless of whether one believes in a general cosmopolitan responsibility to groups outside one’s own border, most observers would agree that the primary responsibility for protecting a group rests with the group itself and, by delegation, with its leaders. Accordingly, if a group’s leaders wilfully choose to sacrifice their own civilians by rebelling, as a means to an end, it is not obvious that the international community automatically has a responsibility to protect those civilians by intervening.

In light of the controversial and counter-intuitive nature of this concept—the absence of a naturally occurring moral responsibility to intervene in cases of genocidal violence—it is useful to illustrate the point with a thought experiment. As is well known, most states around the world exhibit some form of domestic discrimination, whether against women, ethnic groups, castes or some other subordinate group—in most cases without any significant level of overt violence. Few observers would argue that there is a
generalized right or responsibility of the international community to intervene with military force in the internal affairs of states to rectify such domestic inequality. Accordingly, the status quo in much of the world is structural inequality, accompanied by a widespread consensus that the international community has no right or responsibility to use military force to improve the lot of subordinate groups. The question is, what happens when members of a subordinate group start shooting government authorities and civilians of the dominant group, thereby provoking retaliation? Does such violence by a subordinate group suddenly create a new right or responsibility of the international community to intervene with military force on its behalf? In other words, if the subordinate group was not entitled to such intervention previously, can it possibly ‘earn’ such an entitlement through the act of killing people? If the group cannot earn a new right by committing violence, the international community continues to have no inherent responsibility to intervene. This is especially true if, as in most cases, the group can end the retaliation itself without intervention by simply halting its rebellion.

Nevertheless, four circumstances can be envisioned in which the international community might have a responsibility to intervene to protect subordinate groups. One possibility is if the state attacks a subordinate group in the absence of any violent provocation. In such a case, the group cannot protect itself through passivity, so the international community might have a responsibility to protect it. As noted above, however, this scenario is atypical because most genocidal violence is provoked by rebellion.

A second possibility is if rebels act without the support of most members of their group. Here again most of the group cannot protect itself by halting the rebellion, so the international community might have a responsibility to intervene. This argument applies to cases such as Kosovo, where the rebellion was launched by KLA militants without the support of most of the province’s Albanians. But it would not apply in Bosnia, where an overwhelming majority of the Muslim populace voted both to elect their secessionist leaders and to approve the referendum on independence, despite vocal Serb opposition and threats of retaliation.

A third possibility is if leaders of a group withhold information from the group in order to obtain its support for rebellion. In such a case group members may lack sufficient information to evaluate the consequences of various policies and thereby to protect themselves, so the international community might have a responsibility. This conceivably was the case in Bosnia, where the Muslim populace may have been less aware than its leadership that a unilateral declaration of independence was likely to provoke genocidal retaliation. However, the lack of perfect information is a pervasive situation in life, not usually held to erase responsibility for one’s actions. Thus it is not clear that a subordinate group’s lack of perfect information relieves it of the primary responsibility to protect itself.

A final possibility is if a group rebels based on promises made, or expectations raised, by the international community. Only in such a case would the international community have a clear and unambiguous responsibility to protect the group. For example, if a group rebelled because of expectations created by the emerging norm of humanitarian intervention, the international community would have a responsibility to protect the group from retaliation. This underscores, however, that the responsibility is not inherent but stems from the international community’s choices in establishing norms. In other words, the international community does not have a clear responsibility to intervene unless it adopts a policy of intervening.
Accordingly, intervention policy cannot and should not be dictated by any purported, inherent responsibility to intervene in all cases of genocidal violence. Intervention policy is precisely that: a question of policy, not merely of morality. Although it is not obvious what the goal of that policy should be, one obvious choice is to try to reduce the overall incidence of genocidal violence. If such a goal were chosen, the optimum policy would be determined not by good intentions or the automatic embrace of imagined responsibilities but by the real-world consequences, intended and otherwise, of that policy.

Conclusion: Balancing Competing Values

The stated goal of the emerging norm of humanitarian intervention is to reduce genocidal violence. However, reducing violence is not the sole human value, nor always the predominant one. One can envision arguments that intervention policy should promote other values, such as freedom or democracy, even at the expense of increased violence.

Similar debates pervade the literature on moral hazard. Economists generally advocate designing insurance to be 'market neutral', so the insured will act as they would in the absence of insurance. But others claim this ignores positive externalities of the risk-prone behaviour that is encouraged by moral hazard. For example, although health insurance indisputably encourages excessive use of medical services, some health-care advocates consider this preferable to what they consider the under-utilization of such services in the absence of insurance (Nyman, 2001). Likewise, although unemployment insurance and welfare benefits encourage some laziness and fraud, advocates view this cost as outweighed by the social benefit of helping the truly needy (Baker, 1996).

To design insurance that optimally promotes society's values, it is essential that these values be debated openly. Unfortunately, this has not yet occurred in either the popular or the academic literature on humanitarian intervention. Some supporters of intervention appear to favour humanitarian intervention even if it encourages rebellion that provokes genocidal retaliation, because they place higher value on what they perceive to be the liberation agenda of the rebels. However, intervention proponents rarely make this case publicly. Instead, they rely on the empirically false but widely accepted assumption that intervention can do only good. They commonly also claim that any rebellion that provokes genocidal retaliation must *ipso facto* be a liberation movement, based on the horrific response of the state—but this does not follow logically.

Such supporters of military intervention for purposes of liberation should make their case explicitly, rather than cloaking their advocacy in the garb of humanitarian intervention, which confuses both debates. If such liberal hawks, or hawkish liberals, prize freedom over human life, they should have the courage to say so openly and see whether society at large supports them or not.

The alternative to a policy of intervening militarily on the side of rebels who claim to be pursuing liberation is not necessarily to doom their peoples to perpetual oppression. Some of these groups, such as Bosnia's Muslims, faced no oppression or violence until they acquired weapons and challenged state authority. In such cases it is rebellion that causes oppression, not vice versa. More generally, an alternative to aiding rebels is to utilize international leverage to compel states to address the legitimate grievances of non-violent groups. While such a policy might not produce the quick results or visceral satisfaction of helping rebels militarily defeat a perceived oppressor, it could avoid provoking genocidal retaliation against innocent civilians. Ultimately, that is the choice the
international community may face: whether to foster revolutionary change at the cost of genocidal violence or to settle for more gradual progress at a substantially lower human toll. It is a debate worth having—on these terms explicitly.

Notes

The original version of this study was presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Chicago, IL, 21-24 February 2001. Revised versions have been presented at more than a dozen international conferences and university seminars. The author would like to thank all those who offered comments, particularly Barry Posen for his early guidance and Timothy Crawford for his close reading of the penultimate version.

1. In both the Webster’s and American Heritage dictionaries, only one of four definitions includes intentionality.
2. Subsequently Harff (1994) broadened these definitions to include policies sponsored by non-state actors in the case of civil war. For a critique of their methods, see Fein (1990). In addition to disputing their broad definition, she notes that, by counting each case by perpetrator rather than victim, they lump together several cases in the USSR and Iran.
3. Some of the other cases in Harff and Gurr’s database would also satisfy this definition if re-coded properly. For example, the authors erroneously categorize the killing of Tutsi in Rwanda in 1963–64 as retributive on the grounds that it was perpetrated by new Hutu leaders in retaliation for years of Tutsi oppression. In fact, such retributive violence ended in Rwanda soon after the Hutu seized power in 1959. The subsequent killing of 1963–64 was rather a response by the Hutu nationalist state to fresh challenges to its authority from invading Tutsi refugee rebels and their domestic Tutsi allies—a fairly typical case of repressive politicide. Accordingly, 68% may represent a conservative (i.e. low-end) estimate of the proportion of cases from 1943–87 in which the ultimate victim group provoked its own demise, based on Harff and Gurr’s database.
4. Fein operationalizes this distinction not on the basis of any objective definition, but rather by selecting cases identified as genocide by at least two of three prominent expert studies. The experts she relies on are Ezezll, Kuper, and Harff and Gurr. In a subsequent study, Fein (1993) identifies only 16 cases during the same period without acknowledging or explaining the discrepancy with her earlier study. In the latter study she also distinguishes genocide from “genocidal massacres” or “pogroms”, which are briefer or more episodic, and from “mass political killings”, a term she does not define clearly but which appears to refer to killings of civilians during civil wars. It is not clear if she operationalizes these distinctions by rigorous standards.
5. She is not absolutely precise about which cases are retributive. However, she does identify seven cases precisely as ideological, developmental or despotic, which leaves 12 rather than 11 cases as retributive. In addition, she says that one of the cases identified as despotic, Uganda, included periods of retributive genocide, which potentially raises the number of retributive cases to 13.
6. I include the targeting of political groups, even though this category of victim was excluded from the UN convention’s definition of genocide under pressure from member states including the USSR. Other authors have chosen to coin new terms to indicate such a broader definition—for example, “mass killing” in Valentino (2004) and “democide” in Rummel (1992).
7. The quantitative thresholds of 50000 total and 5000 annually are arbitrary. As with any such arbitrary definition, cases that fall marginally short of the standard could probably be included in the universe without significantly affecting its characteristics. Furthermore, an argument could be made for utilizing an alternative threshold based on the percentage, rather than absolute toll, of people killed within the victim group. However, this alternative would have two drawbacks. First, it could include some cases with relatively low death tolls (in cases where the target group was small), while excluding others with significantly higher death tolls (among big target groups). Second, determining the size of the target population in many cases would be subjective, because it could depend on whether an entire ethnic group were counted or only that portion within a state or region. While my definition is arbitrary, it does have the merit of being relatively objective, at least to the extent that existing death-count estimates are. It is possible that my high threshold may exclude some less violent examples of the very phenomenon I seek to examine, but that is the unavoidable price of seeking to exclude different phenomena such as terrorism or counter-insurgency campaigns that generally have lower death tolls. I accept this trade-off consciously, preferring to ensure that all cases in my universe represent the same phenomenon, rather than that the universe contain all examples of the phenomenon.
8. Darfur in the Sudan is too recent to be listed in published databases. The other three cases are the only ones that satisfy my definition in a prominent database of genocides and politicides perpetrated prior to 2002, in Harff (2003).
9. Despite the peaceful nature of the challenge, hardline Tutsi feared that peaceful Hutu consolidation of political power would lead to violence against them or threats to their way of life, and so they assassinated the new Hutu president and reclaimed power in 1993, triggering mutual ethnic violence and a Hutu rebel insurgency. The new Tutsi government then responded to the Hutu insurgency with a seven-year brutal counter-insurgency that included mass killing of Hutu civilians. Although this second, protracted wave of killing fits the typical pattern of a suicidal rebellion, the case as a whole cannot be coded as the victim group provoking its own demise. (This coding could change if evidence were found that the assassination itself was provoked by impending Hutu plans for violence.)

10. Despite its title, the book devotes considerable attention to the strategic nature of genocide.

11. Valentino (2000) makes a similar point about the potential misperceptions of state leaders: “A strategic approach to mass killing does not imply that leaders accurately assess the threats they face. Nor does it suggest that mass killing will always help leaders achieve their goals or solve their problems ... Nevertheless, leaders ultimately act on the basis of their perceptions and beliefs.”

12. For example, in 1995 the Minorities at Risk database identified 268 “ethnic or communal groups” worldwide that were “disadvantaged by comparison with other groups in their society”, of which only 22 (8%) were engaged in violent rebellion at or above the level of intermediate-scale guerrilla activity. See Gurr (2000). Valentino (2000) notes that “Recent quantitative research on ethnic conflict and genocide has found little correlation between the severity of ethnic, social, economic, and cultural differences and the likelihood of large-scale violence between groups”. See also Fearon and Laitin (2003); Hoeffler and Collier (2004).


14. Both quoted in Davies (1971a), which notes that the original theory of Marx and Engels posited revolution as the response of industrial workers to their progressive absolute deprivation under capitalism. However, Marx later wrote that revolution was still inevitable in the face of rising living standards of the proletariat, because “although the enjoyments of the workers have risen, the social satisfaction that they give has fallen in comparison with the increased enjoyments of the capitalist”. Thus, according to Marx, relative deprivation of material goods leads to absolute deprivation of social satisfaction, and thence to revolution.

15. His work draws on “frustration-aggression” theory.

16. A recent version of this theory is found in Goodwin (2001). See also the more general argument in Hirschman (1970).

17. Similarly, Thornton (1964) writes that “terroristic acts often are committed with the express purpose of provoking reprisals”. Pye (1964) writes that “The initial decisions of a government confronted with the threat of internal war are usually the most fateful and long-lasting”.

18. As early as 1968 a study for the US military found that rebellions tend to occur in rural societies with rough terrain favourable to guerrilla warfare. D.M. Condit, cited in Orlansky (1970). A similar finding was recently made by Fearon and Laitin (1999). Other researchers have discovered that areas of ethnic geographic concentration—that is, when a group is a majority in a local region but a minority in the state as a whole—also favour rebellion, presumably by facilitating mobilization but also possibly by exacerbating the security dilemma with other groups in the state. On this point, Gurr (2000) cites the work of Erik Melander, Monica Duffy Toft, Barry Posen and Stephen Van Evera.

19. See Gurr (2000) on “feedback effects” and the “dynamics of protracted conflict”. Unfortunately, a linear causal diagram (p. 70) masks the endogeneity of his theory. A diagram in his previous book (Gurr, 1993, p. 125), containing feedback loops, was more confusing but more explicit about this endogeneity.

20. The main variables, and their underlying variables, are also summarized in the diagram in Gurr (2000, p. 70). Salience of identity is a function of: 1) the extent of cultural differentials; 2) relative deprivation; and 3) intensity of past and present conflicts with the state and other groups. Incentives for collective action (based on various types of relative deprivation) include: 4) overcoming collective disadvantage; 5) regaining political autonomy; and 6) resisting repression. Group capacity for action (i.e. mobilization) is a function of all the preceding variables and 7) territorial concentration (including terrain features); 8) pre-existing group cohesion; 9) intra-group coalition building; and 10) legitimacy of group leaders. Political opportunities for action are opened by: 11) state creation or destruction; 12) regime transition including democratization; and 13) leadership transition. International factors that can affect all of the above variables include: 14) global norms of group rights; 15) diasporas; 16) diffusion and contagion of ideas and resources between similarly situated but ethnically distinct groups in different states; and 17) other external political and material support. Domestic political factors that determine whether ethnopoltical action will be peaceful or militant include: 18) institutions of democracy or authoritarianism; 19) extent of state
resources to accommodate group demands; and 2) state traditions of accommodating or repressing group demands.

21. This theory, from the field of psychology, posits that the frustration from unfulfilled aspirations or expectations is the root cause of aggression. The theory originates with Freud and was formalized and tested originally by Dollar et al. (1939). Subsequent studies include Feierabend and Feierabend (1966) and Tanter and Midlarsky (1967). In addition, Gurr (1971) explicitly roots itself in this theory.

22. Some versions of this theory assume rational action but by multiple actors in a non-unitary state to maximize their own utility rather than that of the state. Allison and Halperin (1972).

23. These case studies are drawn from, and fully documented in, Kuperman (2002).

24. As noted by Lebow and Stein (1989), “the reconstructions of participants after the fact . . . are subject to well-known biases”. Accordingly, Lebow and Stein “look for convergent evidence from several participants from each side, and for historical documentation as well”.

25. The journalist quoted is Veton Surroi.

26. A similar phenomenon may explain a few earlier suicidal rebellions, for example those in the 19th century by Christian groups in the Balkans against Ottoman authorities, aimed at provoking retaliation that would attract intervention from Christian Europe.

27. A recent report on this phenomenon is discussed in Blustein (2004).


29. For suggestions on how to expand global capacity for timely and effective humanitarian military intervention, see Kuperman (2001; 2004a); White House (2004); O’Hanlon (2003).

30. Advocates of this norm do not appear to draw a meaningful distinction between provoked and unprovoked state violence. Interestingly, the ‘responsibility to protect’ was based on the two cases in my study—Bosnia and Kosovo—plus Rwanda and Somalia. See also Chopra and Weiss (1992); Deng (1995); and Deng et al. (1996).

31. In his contribution to this volume Crawford (2006) apportions responsibility for genocidal retaliation between the rebels who provoke it and the international intervenors who create moral hazard that encourages rebellion. He argues that more responsibility adheres to the rebels if moral hazard has been created by a long-standing international norm of intervention rather than an ad hoc proximal threat of intervention, because the rebels can anticipate the domestic and international reactions to their rebellion.

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Appendix I

To solve the model, allow the ICC and IRC to hold with equality, and then combine the two equations to yield the following: 

\[ \pi = \pi \left[ U(P) \right] + \pi \left[ 1 - \pi \right] \left[ U(W) \right] \]

\[ \pi = \pi \left[ U(P) \right] + \pi \left[ 1 - \pi \right] \left[ U(W) \right] \]

\[ \pi = \pi \left[ U(P) \right] + \pi \left[ 1 - \pi \right] \left[ U(W) \right] \]

\[ \pi = \pi \left[ U(P) \right] + \pi \left[ 1 - \pi \right] \left[ U(W) \right] \]

For a discussion of less restricted models (e.g. multi-effort, multi-outcome), see Mas-Colell et al., (1995).
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