

The Role of Indifference in the Rwandan Genocide

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Why it Matters & Contribution

Two words continue to pervade the international dialogue surrounding atrocities committed against humanity: never again. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter said that out of the memory of the Holocaust “we must forge an unshakable oath with all civilized people that never again will the world stand silent, never again will the world... fail to act in time to prevent this terrible crime of genocide.”¹ Yet genocide has persisted all over the world—from Darfur to Cambodia, from Rwanda to the atrocities recently committed by the Islamic State—and despite assertions made by Carter and others that the world would no longer turn a blind eye to these horrific crimes, that is exactly what they did. From this it can be noted that there is a clear discrepancy between the words and actions of the international community in regards to genocide. It also becomes evident that inaction is the unfortunate trend continually followed by the international community when a genocide is taking place. “Never again” actually means “again and again.”² Moreover, indifference plays a key role in genocide. How indifference impacts genocide and the extent of this role, however, is not so obvious. For my research, I will be focusing solely on the Rwandan Genocide that took place from April 6 to July 19, 1994 and solely on the United Nations as a representative organization of the international community.

Establishing the role indifference plays in genocide is important in the real world primarily because it provides insight that serves to encourage nations to intervene in future genocides. At the onset of the twentieth century, a strong potential for effective peacemaking and peacebuilding was eclipsed by genocide and ethnic cleansing. In the

¹ Samantha Power, *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), XXI.

² Samantha Power, "Never Again: The World's Most Unfulfilled Promise," *PBS*, accessed February 11, 2016.

twenty-first century, millennials have adopted a “legacy of progressive thinking and disastrous results” and thus should be interested in analyzing genocides of the last century in order to prevent them from happening in their lifetimes.³ Another way in which indifference plays a role in genocide lies in the fact that genocide is a complex social phenomenon and involves a range of social institutions.⁴ An analysis of indifference to human suffering can expound upon the very social foundations of genocide.

Much of the literature on the Rwandan Genocide looks at it as a matter of either tribal chaos or, on the other hand, as a matter of a systemic, elite-planned campaign. It is known how the genocide took place, so the question then transitions to why it took place and why it was so successful.⁵ In his book, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*, Scott Straus provides three main analyses that contribute to answering these questions: an examination of local dynamics, an evaluation of explanations, and developing a theory of the genocide in Rwanda that takes into account national and local factors.⁶ Straus further establishes the argument that the civil war, the nature of Rwandan state institutions, and ethnicity—more specifically collective ethnic categorization—drove the genocide.⁷ While all of these analyses and factors are viable and accurate, they do not take into account the lack of international reaction to the atrocities occurring. The concept of inaction in the Rwandan Genocide is one that Michael Barnett discusses at

³ Peter Ronayne, *Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), XI.

⁴ Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006) 2.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Straus, *Order of Genocide*, 3.

⁷ Straus, *Order of Genocide*, 7-9.

length in his book *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda*. However, he does not pander to the narrative that “unethical behavior begat indifference” and instead claims that at the time nonintervention seemed to be the moral responsibility for the UN.⁸ Furthermore, not even Barnett goes beyond the cause of indifference to discuss how indifference itself affected the Rwandan Genocide. Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and Nobel Laureate, has done extensive research on the logic of indifference and how it affects genocide, particularly in relation to the Holocaust. One of his most powerful quotes lays the foundation for further examination of how indifference affects genocide: “Indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor—never his victim.”⁹ The research and reasoning employed by Wiesel for the Holocaust can be similarly employed to analyze the Rwandan Genocide. The indifference of bystanders in the international arena may indeed provide substantial insight for answering the question of why the genocide was so successful.

Moreover, the contribution that my research will make is evaluating unquestioned assumptions in the literature. It is known that the international community was largely indifferent to human suffering in the wake of the Rwandan Genocide and that this indifference, to a certain extent, affected the events in some way. However, little has been said about exactly *how* the indifference of the international community affected the genocide and the severity of its implications. Researching this will fill in the gap between the “what” and “how” of indifference during the Rwandan Genocide.

⁸ Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002), 5.

⁹ Elie Wiesel, “The Perils of Indifference,” speech, Millennium Evenings, Washington, DC, April 12, 1999.

Research Question

My research question is: **How and to what extent did the indifference of the United Nations facilitate the rapid extermination of Tutsis in the Rwandan Genocide?** I intend to examine the relationship between the inaction of the United Nations and the success of the genocide. I will do this by gathering data on how the genocide progressed so rapidly within the course of a hundred days and what the UN did at the onset of this progression. This will then allow me to determine whether or not the United Nations was actually indifferent and, if it is determined that it was, how that indifference affected the genocide.

Literature Review

The literature surrounding the indifference of the UN can be organized into three schools of thought: Paper Tiger, Lack of Proper Communication, and No Buffer. All of these schools of thought, however, share one overarching theme: by failing to undertake action, the UN contributed to the genocide.¹⁰ I will now discuss these schools of thought before explaining how my research will contribute to the scholarly conversation.

The first school of thought, Paper Tiger, refers to the idea that the UN's indifference to the genocide was encouraging to the Hutus committing the atrocities. The UN's insistence that UNAMIR, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, avoid provocative security operations influenced the Hutu hardliners' perception of UNAMIR as a "paper tiger." That is, the genocidaires believed that they would not experience backlash from the international community for their horrific actions.¹¹ An

¹⁰ Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002), 167.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

instance that depicts this school of thought was the killing of ten Belgian peacekeepers. The genocidaires carefully planned the killings with the intent of hindering international interference; they knew that doing so would trigger the withdrawal of the peacekeepers. In effect, this turned bystanders into victims. The Hutu hardliners relied on the world's indifference towards other victims, and this then precluded any solidarity between the international community and the Tutsis being brutally massacred.¹² Gerald Caplan echoes this by saying that “the significance of the Security Council’s action should not be underestimated: its refusal to sanction a serious mission made the genocide more likely.”¹³ The UN’s paltry efforts convinced the Hutu hardliners that they did not have to worry about international reactions to their deeds.¹⁴ In *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*, it is explained how the UN’s failure to boost the intervening capacity of UNAMIR virtually guaranteed to the Hutu hardliners—who were actively trying to drive UNAMIR out of the country—that the international community would turn a blind eye and leave Rwanda completely vulnerable.¹⁵ Essentially, the UN was feeding into the genocidaires’ agenda.

The second school of thought, Lack of Proper Communication, refers to the idea that miscommunication, or a complete lack of communication altogether, strengthened the case for withdrawal and delegitimized intervention efforts. This was exemplified through the Secretariat’s failure to turn over important information to DPKO, the

¹² Fred Grünfeld and Anke Huijboom, *Failure to Prevent Genocide in Rwanda: The Role of Bystanders (International and Comparative Criminal Law Series)* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Pub., 2007), 166.

¹³ Allan Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2007), 26.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide* (Addis Ababa: IPEP/OAU, 2000), 114.

Department for Peacekeeping Operations, and to also argue for the case of intervention. This information would have strengthened Ambassadors Colin Keating and Ibrahim Gambari's ability to win the argument for intervention much earlier in the conflict, thereby preventing many deaths. Keating was New Zealand's ambassador to the UN and Gambari was Nigeria's ambassador to the UN during the time of the genocide. This information, which was disregarded, proved to be an integral component of the decision to intervene a few weeks later, so there is a strong indication that this information would have been just as beneficial when it was of immediate relevance.¹⁶ The Secretary-General's report released on May 31, 1994 stated: "The Security Council should be made aware of certain events that, in retrospect, might have had implications regarding the massacres."¹⁷ Moreover, this statement suggests that Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General at the time, had valuable information and evidence of genocidal events in April and could have thus expressed concern to DPKO.¹⁸ But yet UN officials told Ambassador Keating that peacekeeping was not suitable for the environment of Rwanda and that the Security Council was getting what it deserved for deploying peacekeepers with inadequate resources.¹⁹ If Keating and Gambari were given all of the information at the disposal of the Secretariat, they would have been better equipped to promote the authorization of intervention, therefore impeding the work of the genocidaires.

¹⁶ Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide*, 167.

¹⁷ United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Rwanda* (New York: UN, 1994), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/1994/640 (accessed March 3, 2016).

¹⁸ Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide*, 159.

¹⁹ Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2009), 182-183.

The third and final school of thought, No Buffer, refers to the idea that no force stood between the Hutu hardliners and the Tutsis they were killing at rapid rates. Since the Security Council refused to authorize an intervention in April, nothing stood between the genocidaires and their goals. There was not a single mechanism in Rwanda through which stability could have been restored and citizens could have been protected.²⁰ International intervention, had the Security Council authorized it, would have bolstered the strength of moderates who wanted to prevent mass violence in Rwanda. The struggle for dominance, however, was won by the Hutu hardliners. If the moderates had international backing, they would have been able to change that dynamic and act as a buffer between the radical Hutus and the victimized Tutsis. Furthermore, international intervention would have altered the dynamic propelling the violence. In addition, hardliners claimed they were killing Tutsis for security purposes, which was only pertinent during the time of a civil war. International intervention would have calmed the situation, reducing the perceived threat of insecurity and undermining the hardliners' claims of the "necessity of using extreme violence as a means of self-protection."²¹ Kofi Annan, in a report on an independent inquiry into the UN's actions during the Rwandan Genocide, furthers this school of thought when he says that the decision-makers within the UN should have realized as the genocide began that the neutrality of its role was no longer sufficient and that a more assertive response should have been implemented.²² In

²⁰ Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide*, 169-170.

²¹ Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006), 241.

²² United Nations, *Report of the Independent Inquiry into the actions of the United Nations during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda* (New York: UN, 1999), <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/POC%20S19991257.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2016).

saying this, Annan suggests that the UN's neutral role should have become intermediary when the genocidaires started massacring Tutsis.

The preceding literature has informed my research by providing a foundation upon which I can further evaluate how the indifference of the UN facilitated the rapid extermination of Tutsis during the Rwandan Genocide. I am going to expound upon the Paper Tiger and No Buffer schools of thought and specify the variables through operationalization. I will hone in on exactly what indifference is, how the UN practiced it, and precisely how that indifference influenced the mindsets of Hutu hardliners. Additionally, I will take into account the length of the genocide and how it was altered by the indifference of the UN. My research will contribute to the scholarly conversation surrounding the indifference of the international community during the Rwandan Genocide by laying out a clear link between UN indifference and the success of the genocide. Little has been said about exactly how the indifference of the international community altered the attitudes of the genocidaires and the severity of its implications. Researching this will fill the gap of the extent to which indifference can negatively affect the course of a genocide in legitimate ways. In essence, my research aims to take a rather obscure but very real concept and make it more discernible.

Research Design

My epistemological approach will be an interpretivist one based on a relativist ontology. As Kristin Luker says, "traditional research methodologies are based on an epistemology ... and that epistemology in turn presumes a certain linear view of how the

world is experienced and should be studied.”²³ That is, traditional research methodologies are based on an objective ontology. Since my research is focused on a specific case study under very specific circumstances and I intend to use qualitative methods to gather my data, I will thus be using the interpretivist approach. My research will uphold the idea that reality is “based on meanings and understanding on social and experiential levels.”²⁴ The data I intend to collect is entrenched in the Rwandan case study, and this conflict’s intricacies will not be used to cross-examine with other cases in order to generate an hypothesis. My focus is only on the Rwandan Genocide and seeing the world as the Hutu hardliners did while committing the atrocities.

It is important to clarify and provide background on the Rwandan Genocide. In 1994, Rwanda’s population was 85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, and 1% Twa. The two largest ethnic groups, the Hutus and Tutsis, were divided because Hutu extremists blamed the Tutsi minorities for the country’s increasing social, economic, and political problems. Juvénal Habyarimana, the president of Rwanda at the time, was a Hutu who increased tensions between the conflicting groups.²⁵ Also exacerbating the tensions between Hutus and Tutsis was the civil war that began in 1990 between the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)—a group of Tutsi exiles in Uganda—and Habyarimana’s Hutu government.²⁶ After Habyarimana’s assassination on April 6, 1994, violence immediately erupted as Hutu hardliners began systematically killing the Tutsi population and any Hutus who

²³ Kristin Luker, *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008), 10.

²⁴ “Interpretivism (Interpretivist),” *Research Methodology*, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://research-methodology.net/research-philosophy/interpretivism/>.

²⁵ “Genocide in Rwanda,” *United Human Rights Council*, accessed March 26, 2016, http://www.unitedhumanrights.org/genocide/genocide_in_rwanda.htm.

²⁶ “The Rwandan Genocide” *United to End Genocide*, accessed March 16, 2016, <http://endgenocide.org/learn/past-genocides/the-rwandan-genocide/>.

opposed the killing campaign. The Hutus thought that the genocide would reinforce their power and help them win the war. Nonetheless, the RPF won the war in July 1994 and defeated the Hutu perpetrators, making Paul Kagame the new president of Rwanda. Some 200,000 people participated in the carnage, and about 800,000 people were brutally murdered.²⁷

As mentioned in my problem statement, my data will focus on how the genocide progressed so rapidly within the course of a hundred days and what the UN did at the onset of this progression. More specifically, my data will consist of how the genocide began, what information the UN had about the possibility and beginning of a genocide, what the UN did with this information, and how the UN's lack of action with the knowledge it had affected the mindset of the Hutu perpetrators. My data will thus expound upon the first and third schools of thought, Paper Tiger and No Buffer, since these two schools of thought deal with how the inaction of the UN affected the Hutus and their motivations. The second school of thought, Lack of Proper Communication, deals more with bureaucratic issues than a correlation between indifference and the progress of the genocide. I will collect my data through primary documents, secondary sources, historical methods, and through a potential interview with Michael Barnett, the author of one of my main sources and a professor at the George Washington University.

After collecting my data I will then analyze it in the following ways. With the data about how the genocide began, what information the UN had about the possibility and beginning of a genocide, and what the UN did with this information, I can determine if and to what extent the UN was actually indifferent. Then, provided that the preceding

²⁷ "Genocide in Rwanda."

data shows the UN was indifferent given an abundance of knowledge, I will use the data about how the UN's lack of action affected the mindset of the Hutu perpetrators. If this data shows that there was little influence of the UN's indifference over the decisions of the Hutus committing the atrocities, it will answer my question in such a way that the UN's indifference facilitated the rapid extermination of Tutsis in the Rwandan Genocide to a very limited, even unsubstantial extent. If, however, this data shows that the UN's indifference did influence the Hutus in some ways, it will answer my question in such a way that the UN's indifference facilitated the rapid extermination of Tutsis in the Rwandan Genocide to a large, consequential extent; it will answer my question by showing that the UN's indifference forces them to be held somewhat accountable for the genocide.

Since I am not dealing directly with human subjects and only with non-human sources, I do not have to take into consideration ethics that much. If I am able to schedule an interview with Michael Barnett, I will have to write an informed consent form for him to sign prior to conducting the interview. Moreover, there will be very few limitations for my research since most of the data already exists. My research is not controversial and will not be limited by ethical considerations for human subjects.

Findings

The indifference of the UN greatly facilitated the rapid extermination of Tutsis in the Rwandan Genocide because it affected the mindsets of the Hutu hardliners committing the atrocities. This reason is based on vast collection of evidence. First, it can be seen that the UN was, in fact, indifferent in the wake of human suffering in Rwanda. One of the primary documents proving this was the cable sent from General Romeo

Dallaire, the Force Commander for UNAMIR in Rwanda, to the UN Headquarters on January 11, 1994. In the cable, Dallaire relayed information he had received from the Chief Trainer of the Interahamwe about the militia's plot to slaughter Tutsis at a rate of 1,000 Tutsis every 20 minutes.²⁸ Iqbal Riza, the Chief of Staff to the UN Secretary-General, and Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, suppressed the cable and failed to pursue adequate follow-up actions that could have either prevented or mitigated the forthcoming genocide.²⁹ Furthermore, the UN had access to information explicitly stating the Hutu intent to mass murder Tutsis, but it did nothing with this availability of intelligence that could have prevented the genocide altogether.

On that same day, General Dallaire also requested the authorization of a seizure of weapons. UN Headquarters, however, rejected the request and said that the mandate for UNAMIR was too limited to allow for such a seizure. Following a demonstration on January 22, Dallaire once again requested the authorization to seize weapons, and once again he was rejected. In the first week of February, another request was sent. This time, it was very strongly worded and stressed the fact that the security situation in Rwanda was deteriorating more and more as each day passed with developments like "increasingly violent demonstrations, nightly grenade attacks, assassination attempts, political and ethnic killings," and confirmation that armed militias were stockpiling in

²⁸ "The Triumph of Evil," PBS, accessed April 14, 2016,

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/warning/cable.html>.

²⁹ Dinah L. Shelton, ed, "January 11, 1994, Cable of General Dallaire to UN Headquarters," *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, 2005, accessed April 14, 2016,

<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&u=wash11212&id=GALE|CX3434600383&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon&userGroup=wash11212&authCount=1#>.

preparation to distribute weapons to supporters.³⁰ The request was closed with the statement that any deterrent operations would both fulfill the requirements of the mandate and ensure the security of UN facilities and personnel in Rwanda. In response to this request the UN Headquarters broadened the mandate only slightly. Dallaire could assist Rwandan authorities in recovering weapons, it said, but he could not conduct such operations alone.³¹ Later in February Dallaire requested again the authorization to seize weapons, but still UN Headquarters gave him little support by saying that he should focus more on installing a transitional government. On March 15, Dallaire sought permission one last time, but still his request was rejected.³²

This back and forth between the UN Headquarters and General Dallaire can be further elucidated upon by the studies of scholar Michael Barnett. In his search for moral responsibility in the Rwandan Genocide, he relies upon the idea that the genocidaires thought of UNAMIR as a “paper tiger.” That is, because UN Headquarters insisted that UNAMIR avoid provocative security operations, the genocidaires concluded that their actions would go unpunished. If instead the UN had allowed Dallaire to implement his plan of intervention, the Hutu hardliners may have decided that the cost of killing was too high to continue.³³ This sentiment is echoed by Gerald Caplan in his analysis that the UN simply did not care enough to intervene in an effective manner. He says that in no way was the genocide inevitable, and that “the significance of the Security Council’s action

³⁰ Fred Grünfeld and Anke Huijboom, *Failure to Prevent Genocide in Rwanda: The Role of Bystanders (International and Comparative Criminal Law Series)* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Pub., 2007), 127-128.

³¹ Grünfeld and Huijboom, *Failure to Prevent Genocide in Rwanda*, 128-129.

³² *Failure to Prevent Genocide in Rwanda*, 130.

³³ Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002), 167.

should not be underestimated: its refusal to sanction a serious mission made the genocide more likely.”³⁴ Moreover, the lack of UN efforts in Rwanda helped persuade the Hutu hardliners that they did not have to worry about the international community, regardless of their deeds.³⁵ In *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*, it is explained how the UN’s failure to boost the intervening capacity of UNAMIR virtually guaranteed to the Hutu hardliners—who were actively trying to drive UNAMIR out of the country—that the international community would turn a blind eye and leave Rwanda completely vulnerable.³⁶ Essentially, the UN was feeding into the genocidaires’ agenda.

More evidence that supports the previously mentioned claim and reason are the actual accounts of the genocide from the perspective of the Hutus doing the killing. When talking about the potential condemnation of their actions by the international community, one Hutu named Élie said, “The blue helmets, the Belgians, the white directors, the black presidents, the humanitarian people and the international cameramen, the priests and the bishops, and finally even God... We were abandoned by all words of rebuke.”³⁷ Another Hutu, Pancrace, furthers this idea and adds that since they were “abandoned by all words of rebuke,” they felt more at ease while killing:

Killing is very discouraging if you yourself must decide to do it, even to an animal. But if you must obey the orders of the authorities, if you have been properly prepared, if you feel yourself pushed and pulled, if you see that the killing will be total and without disastrous consequences for yourself, you feel soothed and reassured. You go off to it with no more worry.³⁸

³⁴ Allan Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2007), 26.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide* (Addis Ababa: IPEP/OAU, 2000), 114.

³⁷ Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Garoux, 2005), 145.

³⁸ Hatzfeld, *Machete Season*, 49.

Through this passage, it can be seen that the indifference of the international community, which was largely the result of the UN, served to facilitate the genocide to a considerable extent. The Hutu hardliners who were committing the atrocities have admitted themselves that they found it easier to kill knowing that they would not be punished for doing so. From these excerpts one can begin to see the relationship between the indifference of the UN and the rapid extermination of Tutsis in the Rwandan Genocide.

As seen through this evidence, the UN received an abundance of information in the months leading up to the genocide that there were going to be mass killings of Tutsis committed by an armed militia that was increasing its stockpiles for distribution to Hutu hardliners. The UN continually rejected requests by General Dallaire for authorization to seize weapons, and it refused to allow any sort of intervention or deterrent operation. As a result of this inaction, the Hutu hardliners saw that the killings would go unpunished, and a horrific genocide ensued. Furthermore, the indifference of the UN was encouraging to Hutus, which thus was conducive to the rapid extermination of Tutsis in the genocide. This chain of causality between the UN's indifference, the altered mindset of the genocidaires, and the success of the genocide solidifies the claim that the indifference of the UN greatly facilitated the rapid extermination of Tutsis in the Rwandan Genocide.

Reflection on Challenges and Limitations

In the past when I have had to do academic research, the most challenging part was maintaining interest in my topic. This time around, however, this was not a challenge. Given the interpretivist epistemology and qualitative design of the research, I was able to focus on the relationship between indifference and genocide within the context of the Rwandan Genocide. The most challenging aspect of the research process

this time around was incorporating enough sources. Especially during my literature review, I found it difficult to find enough sources to verify the legitimacy of the information and to truly survey all of the information. I was able to find a substantial amount of data from a select few books and documents, but in order to make my research more credible I will need to add more perspectives to my argument.

My data was lacking primarily in regards to how the indifference of specifically the UN affected the mindsets of the Hutus. I was able to find adequate data about how the lack of international response in general was encouraging to the hardliners, but I was unable to establish a direct relationship between the indifference of the UN only and a change in the psychology of the Hutus doing the killing. I would have been able to better clarify this connection if there were more time and resources dedicated to this project. For example, if I could have travelled to Rwanda and interviewed the hardliners and high-up Hutu officials, then I would have been able to ask questions about the impact of the UN's inaction explicitly.

One final challenge I faced was getting familiarized with all of the background information surrounding the Rwandan Genocide. In the era of an "info-glut" that Luker refers to in her book, it is increasingly difficult not to get overwhelmed with the abundance of information available on any given subject. Moreover, I often found myself reading data that was irrelevant to my question. Also, I got tripped up on acronyms and other information that is often assumed to be common knowledge by scholars. But for undergraduate students like me, this assumed common knowledge leaves us with questions and confusion. Furthermore, some sources took longer to dissect because I had to do additional research in order to fully understand them.

My research project was limited, like mentioned before, primarily by the amount of time and resources available. If I had more time, I would be able to delve even deeper into the sources. If I had more resources, I would be able to perform interviews with those involved in the Rwandan Genocide and thus be able to generate my own data that I could then code and analyze.

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