The Politics of Denial and Apology: Why Some States Apologize for Mass Killings while Others Do Not1

Motivating Puzzles and Research Questions

The Politics of Denial and Apology

From the decimation of the Herero population in German Southwest Africa to the Holocaust to more contemporary cases such as the *al Anfal* campaign against Iraqi Kurds in the late 1980s and the mass killing of civilians that is now taking place in the Darfur region of Sudan, the norm against mass killing has been repeatedly violated throughout this century. However, instead of a uniform pattern of admission and apology in the wake of such violations, the actual responses of perpetrator states to their own past violations of the norm against mass killing have varied tremendously. At one extreme, the Turkish government has consistently denied the perpetration of genocide against Armenian citizens in the Ottoman Empire during World War I.2 On the other extreme, Germany has fully admitted responsibility and apologized for the Holocaust. In between these two extremes of apology and denial are states such as Japan, which has only partially admitted culpability in the ‘Rape of Nanjing.’3

In addition to this variation in perpetrator states’ responses to their own violations, a cursory glance at these states’ experiences reveals that a range of different (and sometimes inconsistent) factors has provided the impetus that has led to change in some of these states’ policies. For example, while regime change led to policies that acknowledged the events of the Cambodian genocide and the Rwandan genocide in those two countries, a similar case of regime change in Turkey shortly after the Armenian genocide led to a policy of denial. And while in Germany, academic debate in the Historians’ controversy (*Historikerstreit*) in the mid-1980s, which was “…over the place and significance of National Socialism and the Holocaust in the narrative of modern German history,”4 influenced change in the direction of a deeper understanding of the complexity of German guilt and actions; in Turkey academic “debate” is

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1 Or: “The Politics of Denial and Apology: Achieving policy change in the context of domestic, international and normative pressures,” or: “Confessing Evil: How, when and why states move from denial to apology for mass killings,” or subtitle: “Moving from denial to apology in states that have violated the norm against mass killing,” or title: “Regrets, I’ve Had a Few.”
frequently used by the Turkish government to dress up denial in such a way as to mislead Turks and others about the Armenian genocide. Other factors that might be hypothesized to lead to changes in states’ official positions, such as transnational activism and economic pressure (or even sanctions) by outside states, are similarly up for debate.

Given these puzzles, this dissertation will analyze the politics of denial and apology among states. To delve into this issue, I will focus on states that have committed mass killing in the past, analyzing these states’ official attitudes toward their own past perpetrations. Looking comparatively at a full set of cases, and then in greater depth at several particular cases, I will strive first to identify how states initially formulate official policy positions regarding their own perpetrations of mass killing, and then to identify the factors and mechanisms that lead to changes in these policies. Finally, with regard to the latter goal, this project will concentrate especially on when, how and why states change seemingly intractable policy positions, by analyzing factors that create windows of opportunity, in which it becomes easier to move from denial toward apology, and those that close off such opportunities, making it more difficult for a state to move toward apology.

Upholding the Norm Against Mass Killing

Shifting to the norm against mass killing itself, scholars and especially activists have until recently assumed that when the norm against genocide in particular, and mass killing more generally, is violated, there will be consequences for the violator. Bruno Simma argues that “…in the face of genocide, the right of states, or collectivities of states, to counter breaches of human rights most likely becomes an obligation.” Thus, the naming of a genocide has been seen as a political act with profound implications for outside states. When the Rwandan genocide was unfolding, officials in the United States (U.S.), reluctant to become embroiled in

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6 For a variety of moral, psychological and practical reasons, it matters whether a state that has violated the norm against mass killing denies, admits or apologizes for its past actions. While I will not tackle these issues in my dissertation, I briefly mention some of the major implications of the politics of denial and apology in the conclusion.
another African conflict after the negative domestic ramifications of the U.S.’s failed intervention in Somalia in 1992-3, danced around the word genocide, despite ample evidence to support such a charge.\(^8\) And when in July 2004 the U.S. took the momentous step of naming the mass killings that are taking place in Darfur a genocide, international activists, organizations and other states thought that there would inevitably be consequences for the Sudanese government and the perpetrators of this violence. To the surprise of many, little to nothing happened, and the killing has continued.\(^9\)

The contrast between these assumptions and recent reality raises the questions of whether, when and how the norm against mass killing is upheld by states in the international system, if not through immediate responses to identified violations.\(^10\) While over the past fifty years states have acted to uphold the norm against mass killing, these actions have taken more indirect, and seemingly less costly and dangerous forms than direct intervention, including:

1. Creating temporary international tribunals (Nuremberg; the Tokyo war crimes trials; the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY); the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR); and the tribunal set up in Constantinople by the British after WWI)
2. Establishing permanent international tribunals (e.g. the International Criminal Court (ICC))
3. Holding domestic trials (e.g. trials of génocidaires in Rwanda\(^11\))
4. Establishing truth (and reconciliation) commissions (e.g. South Africa and many Latin American countries)
5. Paying reparations to individual victims and victim groups (e.g. Germany)
6. Imposing other conditions (e.g. writing new constitutions and laws) on defeated perpetrator states (by victors) (e.g. the role of the Allies in rebuilding and monitoring Germany and Japan post-WWII)

In this project, I will explore whether and to what extent these actions to protect and reinforce the norm against mass killing also include exerting pressure on states that do not fully admit having perpetrated mass killing, and thus in a sense continue to violate this norm. Specifically, I will identify when and how the norm against mass killing is used by states and non-state actors to put pressure on perpetrator states to move away from denial and toward apology. In other words, I

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\(^{10}\) Power, “A Problem from Hell.”

\(^{11}\) Philip Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda (New York: Picador, 1998), pp. 343-345.
will explore whether, when, how and by whom *discursive* violations of the norm against mass killing are punished, and what such actions mean for our understanding of norms and norm violations.12

**Contributions of Proposed Research**

In this project I will search for independent variables, causal mechanisms and processes to explain the formulation of and changes in states’ official policy positions regarding mass killing. This project will contribute to three areas of research in political science: genocide studies, the study of norms in international relations, and comparative foreign policy analysis. Before proceeding to the details of this project, I will briefly outline how my work will contribute to each of these areas.

**Genocide Studies – The Politics of Official State Denial and Apology**

Empirically and theoretically, this project will contribute to the interdisciplinary field known as genocide studies, which also comprises analyses of broader, related phenomena such as mass killing, politicide and democide. This research will fill a lacuna in genocide scholarship, which has overlooked the politics of apology and denial that shape states’ official policy positions regarding their own past violations of the norm against mass killing. Instead, genocide scholarship has primarily focused on: defining and naming genocide,13 understanding psychological and sociological motivations for genocidal actors,14 identifying causes of genocide and mass killing,15 analyzing possibilities for and obstacles to third-party intervention to stop or prevent genocide and mass killing,16 and exploring the issue of and options for justice for

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12 By *discursive violations*, I refer to perpetrator states’ denials and/or less than full apologies for their past violations of the norm against mass killing.


victims of genocide and mass killing. Work on genocide denial within this field has focused more on types of denials, motivations behind denials, and methods of denial. To the extent that I am aware, no comparative analysis has been done of factors that influence perpetrator states to change position along the continuum between denial and apology, and denial and apology have not been linked in a single analysis. Rather, a few individual studies have focused on factors that prevent a single perpetrator state from moving toward greater degrees of admission or apology. As a result, this project will make several important contributions to the subfield of genocide studies. In particular, this project will offer: a better conceptualization of mass killing than has been offered in previous studies; a conceptualization of denial and apology, as well as of the continuum between the two extremes of complete denial and full apology; and a comparative analysis of the politics of denial and apology, focusing on factors that shape the creation of and facilitate change in perpetrator states’ official policy positions.

**International Norms – Norm Violation and Maintenance**

Over the past several decades, a growing group of scholars has turned toward the study of the influence of norms, ideas and identities in international relations. While political scientists have defined norms in a variety of ways, Peter Katzenstein, one of the leaders of this approach in international relations, defines norms as “…collective expectations for the proper behavior of actors within a given identity.” Within this constructivist approach, scholars have explored questions such as how and when norms matter, how identities fundamentally shape interests, and how ideas can change norms and identities. Moreover, recent contributors have theorized that

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the development and spread of a norm, in a process known as the norm cycle, comprises four phases: norm emergence, norm cascade, internalization and shaming.21

While these contributions have advanced our understanding of the nature and function of norms in shaping and changing domestic and international politics, there are still gaps in our understanding of the influence of norms in international relations. Significantly, the question of how international norms are upheld and maintained by states in the international system, especially in the face of violations, remains relatively un-addressed. Some scholars have argued that non-adherents to institutionalized international norms must justify their deviant behavior,22 and that international pressure is often brought to bear on norm-violating states, but the primary focus of this work has been on the role and influence of non-state, often transnational, actors.23

In an early article on the role of norms in international relations, Robert Axelrod argued that to understand the nature and role of norms in international relations, one needs to understand how norms are maintained.24 Regarding the enforcement of norms by states, he noted that “Behaviors will be easier to establish as norms if the optimal response of others is prompt and rewarding. Failing a prompt response, learning can also take place if the delayed punishment is explicitly cited as a response to the earlier defection.”25 Likewise, Herrmann and Shannon note the need to protect norms in order to preserve them, writing that “prescriptive norms give rise to feelings of moral obligation to abide by and defend the norm.”26 However, despite these felt

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22 Price, “Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines.”
obligations, Herrmann and Shannon find that the results of a controlled experiment “…suggest that although moral reasons play a role in elite decision making, there is substantial disagreement regarding what obligations follow from an international norm in any particular situation.”

Thus it is unclear what states actually do, over both the short and long term, if one state violates an international norm, as well as how states’ responses might reconstitute the norm itself. In this project, I will analyze whether, when and how the norm against mass killing has a causal impact on perpetrator states’ official policy positions regarding their past violations of the norm against mass killing, by identifying instances in which this norm is used (and by whom) to put pressure on states to move toward apology. As a result, this project will contribute to our understanding of the existence and power of a discursive dimension of norm maintenance, thereby clarifying aspects of the debate over responses to norm violations and enhancing our understanding of the role of norms in international relations.

Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis – Creation, Change and Inertia

On an abstract level, this project is about policy making and change in the context of domestic politics and international relations, relating to and building on other work in several ways. First, I will look at different levels of analysis – including, sub-national, national, international, supranational and non-state factors – and at different types of actors and forces to ascertain which types of pressure and/or political change have a causal influence on policy change. While I will draw on John Kingdon’s conceptualization of the role of windows of opportunity in making and changing policy, the incorporation of international, supranational and transnational actors and events will add several dimensions beyond the domestic sphere delimited in Kingdon’s analysis. This broader analytical focus will go beyond a single level of analysis, or a univalent understanding of causality (as is suggested by Peter Gourevitch’s ‘second image reversed’), to incorporate domestic and international, normative and material, state and

28 This complex, multi-layered approach follows Legro’s point that, “The challenge that confronts a variety of perspectives on politics is to specify how it is that collective ideas and situations, and agents and structures, interact and influence each other.” Jeffrey W. Legro, “The Transformation of Policy Ideas,” American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 44, No. 3 (July 2000), p. 430.
non-state, structural and agential factors. As with Robert Putnam’s theory of two-level games, this project will consider the interaction between political forces at varied levels of analysis, to understand how complex conjunctures of structures and agents create or obstruct the opening of windows of opportunity for change. However, in contrast to Putnam’s emphasis on strategic action and interaction, this project will explicitly consider ideational and normative considerations, in addition to material concerns. In this manner, this analysis will be akin to recent analyses of change with strong normative foci, such as Audie Klotz’s study of the end of Apartheid in South Africa or recent studies of the dramatic changes in Soviet policy under Gorbachev, which precipitated the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Beyond the multi-layered nature of this analysis of policy change, this project’s focus on states’ policies regarding their own past perpetrations of mass killing is an area of policy that is relatively more intractable to change than trade policies or participation in international organizations, for example. I suspect that change in states’ attitudes toward their own past perpetrations is likely to be more difficult than many other questions of policy change, because official narratives of these events are likely to be tied in with elements of nationalism, national identity, and at times, national myth. For example, German national identity is inextricably connected to the Holocaust and Germany’s Nazi past. According to Jeffrey K. Olick and Daniel Levy, “From the immediate postwar period to the present, powerful images of the Nazi past have shaped West Germany. Virtually every institutional arrangement and substantive policy is a response, in some sense, to Germany’s memory of those fateful years.” Likewise, important foundations of Turkish national identity rest in the events of the Armenian genocide. In this regard, Taner Akçam writes that “…the formation of Turkish national identity played a decisive

32 Klotz, *Norms in International Relations*.
34 Ernst Haas defines nationalism as “…the convergence of territorial and political loyalty irrespective of competing foci of affiliation, such as kinship, profession, religion, economic interest, race, or even language.” (p. 709) He defines national myth as “…a core of ideas and claims about selfhood commonly accepted by all the socially mobilized;[…]those ideas, values, and symbols that most citizens accept despite their being divided into competing ideological groups.” (p. 728) Ernst B. Haas, “What is nationalism and why should we study it?” *International Organization*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Summer 1986), pp. 707-744.
role not only in the decision to commit genocide but also in the current denial and tabooing of it.” And Philip Gourevitch indicates that the 1994 Rwandan genocide has moved to the center of Rwandan national identity and consciousness. He writes that in 1995, “It may have been possible to talk of something else in Rwanda, but I never had a conversation of substance in which the genocide did not figure, at least quietly, as the point of reference from which all other understandings and misunderstandings stemmed.” Interestingly, however, the frequent link between national identity, and national narratives of and therefore official attitudes toward past perpetraions of mass killing, does not prima facie indicate how and why such policies are intractable to change. Rather, the connection between national identity and such national narratives will be explored in this project, to discover how states’ official policy positions are linked to their national identities, and how these linkages constrain change. Moreover, I will explore how change in states’ official policy positions is sometimes made possible, despite the stickiness of national identity. More explicitly, with several in-depth studies, I will explore how, when and why national narratives of atrocities become rooted in national identities, which elements of national identities are implicated in these narratives, and how factors might lead to change in both national identities and national narratives of past atrocities. Therefore, in as much as states’ policies and attitudes toward past perpetraions of mass killing is an area of policy that is relatively more intractable to change, this study will yield insights about the facilitators of and obstacles to policy change more generally. Moreover, this project will offer insights into the making and re-making of national identity in and through history.

Methodology and Case Selection

In this section I will describe the overall research design, the methodology that will be used to conduct this research, the logic of case selection, and some of the research steps that will be taken in the two phases of this project.

37 Philip Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families, p. 7.  
38 Analyzing change in collectively held ideas through the lenses of structure, agent and structuration, Jeffrey Legro asks a related question: “When can extant collective ideas be expected to constrain actors and when can actors reconfigure ideational structure itself?” Legro, “The Transformation of Policy Ideas,” p. 423.  
39 An analogous approach to the study of nationalism is evinced in the following statement by Haas: “My purpose in studying nationalism is to explore its role as a type of ‘rationalization’ which helps or hinders domestic and international harmony.” Haas, “What is nationalism and why should we study it?,” p. 708.
Research Design

This project will be conducted as a primarily qualitative, historical process analysis\(^{40}\) (accompanied by descriptive statistics whenever relevant and possible), seeking to identify complex causal mechanisms\(^{41}\) and processes that influence changes in states’ official policy positions regarding their past perpetrations of mass killing. Accepting that “causal mechanisms operate within a given context or causal field, and their effects often depend on interactions with other contextual variables,”\(^{42}\) I will strive to identify probabilistic conjunctures of causal mechanisms that, in particular contexts, are more likely to lead to particular types of change in official policy positions. The research will be conducted in two distinct phases, combining large- and small-N qualitative analyses.\(^{43}\) In this “nested analysis” research design, “the preliminary LNA [large-N analysis] provides information that should ultimately complement the findings of the SNA [small-N analysis], and that will guide the execution of the SNA.”\(^{44}\)

Phase I

In the first phase of the project, I will qualitatively analyze the universe of cases of mass killing\(^{45}\) to identify possible variables and mechanisms of interest, and to rule out hypotheses and

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\(^{42}\) Bennett, “Causal Inference in Case Studies,” p. 5.

\(^{43}\) This project will be primarily qualitative for two main reasons. First, although there are a few extant datasets of late 20\(^{th}\) century mass killings, these datasets do not capture the dependent and independent variables that will be the focus of this study, i.e. perpetrator states’ official policy positions over time, and the international and domestic factors that influence changes in these positions. To create a dataset with this information would be a massive effort in coding and compilation, which would probably suffice for a dissertation project in and of itself. Second, I believe that changes in states’ official policy positions likely arise from complex conjunctions of factors, which will be much more easily and accurately analyzed using the process tracing method as opposed to a statistical approach.

\(^{44}\) Evan S. Lieberman, “Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (August 2005), pp. 435-452. Lieberman conceives of the large-N portion as quantitative, while both phases of my project will be qualitative. Nevertheless, my research design is inspired by and in the spirit of his description of nested analysis. (Quote from p. 438.)

\(^{45}\) I will define mass killing in a later section, titled *Defining Mass Killing*. According to the definition that I start with, there are forty-nine (49) cases of mass killing in the twentieth century. A list of these cases (and 14 additional possible cases) is included in Appendices A and B. However, the universe of cases listed in Appendices A and B is larger than the set that I will analyze in Phase I of my project. Initially, I will narrow down Valentino’s definition to
variables that do not seem to be supported by the evidence. I will first analyze these cases on a superficial level (relying primarily on media accounts and secondary sources to ascertain and categorize official policy positions), to identify whether each case fits the parameters of my definition of mass killing. If so, I will roughly plot each state’s official policy position over time, and locate the point(s) at which each perpetrator state’s official policy position changes, if at all. Once I have done this, I will compare across cases, to identify potentially relevant independent variables, to rule out irrelevant variables and factors, and to get a sense for possible causal mechanisms and processes.

Case Selection for Phase II

Following this qualitative analysis of the universe of possible cases, I will select three cases for in-depth case analysis. I will not choose the cases for in-depth analysis until after I have progressed further with my initial analysis of the full universe of cases, because then I will be able to make a more informed decision. At that point, I will consciously select my in-depth cases on the dependent variable, rather than randomly or based on the independent variable. My case selection will primarily be motivated by a desire for variation across the in-depth cases. Several sources of variation that might be considered in my case selection are:

1. When the state violated the norm against mass killing. I might choose cases from 1) pre-WWII, 2) WWII, and 3) post-WWII (either Cold War or post-Cold War.)
2. The state’s initial official policy position
3. Where a perpetrator state’s official policy position is currently situated along the continuum between complete denial and full apology
4. The degree of change in the state’s official policy position over the period of time from perpetration to today
5. The direction(s) of change in the state’s official policy position

those mass killings perpetrated by states or their agents, which will eliminate some of these cases. Once I am more familiar with twentieth century cases of mass killing, I will come up with my own definition of mass killing that will not be derived from Valentino’s. At this point, however, I have not edited Valentino’s list of cases at all, because I am not familiar enough with many of them to do so.

46 I am not yet sure how I am going to do this in a systematic, justifiable way. I will read more about methods over the next few months, talk to David Collier again, and attend the Institute on Qualitative Research Methods (IQRM) in early January. The combination of these efforts should give me insight into how to do this comparison.
47 For an explanation of this two-step approach to case study research, which involves an initially broad sweep of a set of cases, followed by an in-depth analysis of a few cases, see Bennett, “Causal Inference in Case Studies,” p. 18.
48 Why three? Basically, two sounds like too few, and four would require too much fieldwork.
Obviously it will be impossible (and ill-advised) to select three cases that vary on all of these dimensions. I will decide on which of these dimensions I would like to have variation, based on the findings from Phase I of my research. At this point, my inclination would be to select cases that vary on the first and/or the fourth point.

While I do not yet know which these three in-depth cases will be, I have a few early preferences. Since my interest in this question derives from the Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide, and I am also familiar with the Turkish case and able to speak Turkish, I will almost definitely choose Turkey as one of these three cases. Aside from this un-scientific premonition, other cases that seem interesting are: Germany and/or Austria regarding the Holocaust, and Japan regarding its war crimes and atrocities committed in China during WWII.

Phase II

Lieberman writes that “The SNA should be used to answer those questions left open by the LNA—either because there were insufficient data to assess…relationships or because the nature of causal order could not be confidently inferred.” In this small-N phase, I will delve into the three cases that I will have chosen, with the goals of: comparatively studying the causal influence of the various factors that I have identified in the first phase of my research, understanding when and how combinations of factors lead to change, tracing the causal mechanisms by and paths through which change occurs, and identifying factors that prevent or block change. In addition, I will gauge whether the norm against mass killing has had an impact on changes in these states’ official policy positions, and if so, I will identify the mechanism(s) through which the norm’s impact has been felt. In this phase of my research, I will use the process tracing method, by which the researcher “…seeks to establish a continuous chain of events along a hypothesized causal path in a historical case.” A few of the advantages of process tracing are that it “…can identify different causal paths to an outcome, point out variables that otherwise might be left out, check for spuriousness, and allow causal inferences on the basis of a few cases or even a single case.”

The in-depth portion of my research, as I conceive of it now, will comprise several broad, interrelated tasks. First, for each of the three in-depth cases, I will analyze how the state’s

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51 Bennett, “Causal Inference in Case Studies,” p. 15.
official policy position was initially formulated, focusing on the domestic actors that created this initial narrative of the events of mass killing, the reasons behind their decisions, and the mechanisms by which the chosen narrative was disseminated domestically and internationally.\textsuperscript{53} While I will not analyze the initial formulation of official policy positions for the universe of cases in Phase I, this will be an important part of my research in Phase II, because I want to explore the ways in which and extent to which national narratives of events of mass killing are created and become elements of or linked to myths of national identity. This will be crucial to my research, because one of my preliminary hypotheses is that states’ official policy positions are relatively more intractable to change, because they are tied in with aspects of national identity, which is a relatively sticky social institution. As such, if I can identify how, when and why national narratives of events of mass killing become embedded in national identity, then I will be much better able to identify and explain the roots of change and inertia in these states’ official policy positions. For this I will rely on secondary sources and media accounts of these states’ national identities and politics during and after the events of mass killing.

Second, for each in-depth case, I will construct a detailed timeline of the state’s official policy position over time, locating the position along the continuum between complete denial and full apology, and identifying changes in the official policy position along the continuum.

Third, I will compare the timing of changes with the temporal map of the norm against mass killing, to determine whether changes in these states’ official policy positions occurred irrelevantly of, concurrently with, or following a change in the norm against mass killing. This will also be an important step, since another preliminary hypothesis is that the international norm against mass killing assumes greater international salience during or immediately after points at which changes in the norm occur (examples of which would be when a case of genocide or mass killing occurs, or when an international tribunal is set up to punish individual perpetrators of a case of genocide or mass killing.) Moreover, I suspect that at these moments of greater salience of the norm against mass killing, perpetrator states that have not fully apologized for a past

\textsuperscript{52} Bennett, “Causal Inference in Case Studies,” p. 18.

\textsuperscript{53} It might be assumed that the two factors that primarily shape the initial formulation of a state’s official policy position would be: 1) how the mass killing ended, and 2) whether there is a change of regime following the end of the mass killing. However, two prominent cases of states that perpetrated mass killings during WWII – Japan and Germany – indicate that these factors cannot explain the different official policy positions that each adopted initially. While both events of mass killing ended with the defeat of the perpetrator state in the war, and both states experienced regime change imposed by the Allied victors, Germany’s initial official policy position was much closer along the continuum toward full apology than was Japan’s.
violation of this norm are likely to experience greater pressure to change their official policy positions away from denial than at times when the norm has less salience.

And fourth, to identify domestic and international factors that influenced changes in each state’s official policy position, I will find and read analyses of these changes in domestic and international media sources, academic publications, civil society publications and statements, and NGO and IO reports. In this manner, I will strive to identify possible factors influencing a given change, and then trace the steps through which and mechanisms by which these factors actually led to change.

Additional research that might be conducted if the above-mentioned steps prove insufficient or inconclusive include the following: searching in domestic archives for official and unofficial documents that might shed light on the decision-making that led to instances of change; analyzing government statements for indications of the rationale behind cases of change; and interviewing academics, current and past policymakers and government officials in the perpetrator state, and journalists. In these interviews, I would hope to gain insight into which factors might have been the most salient and had the greatest impact on policymakers at points of change in a state’s official policy position.

**Conceptualization of the Dependent Variable**

In this section, I will define the dependent variable. In addition, I will explain how individual perpetrator states’ official policy positions (e.g., cases of the dependent variable) will be categorized along a graded continuum from denial to apology, and I will outline how these categorizations will be used in my analysis of possible independent variables. I will define mass killing and thus the set of states whose official policy positions will be studied, in a later section.

The dependent variable (DV) in my project will be a perpetrator state’s *official policy position* regarding its own historic violation of the norm against mass killing, which I will situate along a graded continuum from denial to apology. The term ‘perpetrator state’ is intended to refer to the set of institutions that represent the territorial area and nation (or nations) that committed the violation, regardless of whether this current institutional entity is continuous with the regime or officials that committed the actual violation. Barry O’Neill highlights the rationale behind this logic, arguing that “Transgressions that were committed long ago adhere to the
nation rather than its current administration…” 54 Thus, despite the fact that individuals currently in office might not personally bear any responsibility for past violations, as representatives of the nation(s), they bear responsibility for the state’s official policy position regarding the past violation. Again, O’Neill emphasizes that “Continuity is the key—just as people do not disappear and reappear, the ‘national person’ is thought of as continuous.” 55 For instance, the Republic of Turkey, which was established by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) in 1923, following the collapse and defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, represents a break with the previous regime. Nevertheless, as the representative of the Turkish nation, the Republic of Turkey is today pressured to admit the perpetration of the Armenian Genocide. Similarly, the Federal Republic of Germany, which was established formally in West Germany in 1949, has accepted responsibility for and apologized for the Holocaust on behalf of the German people and the German state. This is despite the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany is a different regime from the Third Reich of Nazi Germany, which actually planned and executed the Holocaust during World War II. These regime discontinuities are also evidenced in the cases of Japan and Cambodia, both of which established different institutional arrangements and power structures closely following significant cases of mass killing (the Rape of Nanjing and other atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers in China prior to and during World War II, and the Cambodian genocide committed by the Khmer Rouge under the control of Pol Pot in the late 1970s, respectively.) Nevertheless, for the purposes of apology, all of these states will be viewed as ‘responsible for’ the mass killings committed in the name of their respective nations by official governmental representatives and citizens of their nations.

Official Policy Position

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), a policy is “a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, party, ruler, statesman, etc…,” 56 while a position is “a proposition or thesis laid down or stated….,” 57 Combining elements of these two definitions, I

will define official policy position as ‘a proposition or thesis laid down or stated,’ and/or ‘a course of action adopted and pursued by a government,’ in this case, regarding the past perpetration of mass killing by the state represented by a government.

I will look at several domestic indicators to assess states’ official policy positions regarding their own past perpetrations of mass killing, including:

1. Official statements (written and oral) by government officials, both elected and non-elected
2. Symbolic action that is interpreted as conveying information about the state’s position on this issue
3. Rhetorical and active responses to criticism about or discussion on this issue outside the domestic sphere, i.e. in other states, in or by international organizations, and in or by transnational, non-state organizations
4. Laws that prevent or limit debate on this issue, or on government policy in general
5. Official accounts in history books
6. The treatment of individuals who and groups that dissent from the official policy position

For Phase I of my research, I will only look at the first three indicators to map states’ official policy positions. For the in-depth case studies in Phase II, however, I will look at all of these indicators to trace the evolution of each state’s official policy position over time. From these various data points, I will categorize perpetrator states’ official policy positions as falling somewhere along the graded\(^5^8\) continuum between denial and apology. Figure 1 (below) shows the full continuum from complete denial to full apology, with the five intervening graded points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete denial</th>
<th>Partial denial</th>
<th>Acknowledgement of act</th>
<th>Acknowledgement of harm to victims</th>
<th>Expression of regret for outcome</th>
<th>Expression of regret for act</th>
<th>Full apology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 1. Continuum from complete denial to full apology.

I have constructed a continuum with seven steps to capture incremental changes in states’ official policy positions. Capturing incremental change between discrete points along the continuum is important, because I think this type of change, as opposed to a total shift in official policy position from complete denial to full apology, is much more prevalent, and will therefore generate for analysis a much larger set of cases of change.
For the in-depth cases, I will track the official policy positions of the perpetrator states over time, starting in the immediate aftermath of the mass killing, and ending with the present. Each state’s official policy position will be categorized along the continuum between denial and apology. Any time a state’s official policy position contains a new claim or reflects a new symbolic action, the official policy position will be evaluated to determine whether it should be categorized at a different point along the continuum. Change will be measured discontinuously, as discrete movement from one graded point along the continuum between denial and apology, to another graded point along the same continuum, and can be in either of two directions, away from or toward denial. If statements and/or actions within a single case are conflicting, I assume that a (more or less) coherent official policy position will eventually emerge from initially conflicting messages. In cases such as these, I will consider a state’s official policy position to have changed when it seems that conflicting messages have been somewhat resolved domestically.

**Denial**

Denial will represent one end of the continuum along which perpetrator states’ official policy positions will be placed. Following Stanley Cohen, I will define denial as “...[an] assertion...that something did not happen, does not exist, is not true or is not known about.”\(^{59}\) This definition closely reflects the OED definition of denial, which is “the asserting (of anything) to be untrue or untenable; [the] contradiction of a statement or allegation as untrue or invalid; also, the denying of the existence or reality of a thing.”\(^{60}\) Moreover, Cohen’s definition also captures the understandings of denial implied in work by scholars on genocide denial.\(^{61}\)

Cohen outlines three types of denial, of which two are relevant to states’ official policy positions regarding past perpetrations of mass killing: literal denial and interpretive denial.\(^{58}\)

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Literal denial “…is the type of denial that fits the dictionary definition: the assertion that something did not happen or is not true. In literal…denial, the fact or knowledge of the fact is denied.” An example of literal denial “…is that until 1988 the Soviet Union denied responsibility for the 1941 Katyn Massacre of Polish officers in World War II,” attempting instead to falsely blame the crime on Nazi soldiers. There are several modes of literal denial. The first and simplest is to remain silent on the issue of the violation. This might also be accompanied by suppression of discussion of the issue within the domestic sphere through laws that ban or limit discussion of the issue, and through the accompanying punishment of dissenters (again, domestically.) A second mode of literal denial is to flat-out state that the charge of mass killing is not true, while a third mode is to refuse to acknowledge the charge, which might be done by claiming that the government did not have a role in or knowledge of the event. A final mode of literal denial is for a state to “…argue that there is not continuity in fact, law, or moral responsibility between the…” current regime and the perpetrating regime/administration/state. In this mode, a state denies responsibility for the event, and therefore presumes to divest itself of the need to apologize for the event. I would consider this a denial, however, since my assumption is that responsibility inheres in the institution of the state, even if the norm was violated by a prior regime or administration.

In contrast to this straightforward type of denial, in interpretive denial, “…the raw facts (something happened) are not being denied. Rather, they are given a different meaning from what seems apparent to others…. Officials do not claim that ‘nothing happened’, but what happened is not what you think it is, not what it looks like, not what you call it. By changing words, by euphemism, by technical jargon, the observer disputes the cognitive meaning given to an event and re-allocates it to another class of event.” An example of interpretive denial is the claim that although many Armenians perished during the ‘relocations’ ordered by the Ottoman authorities during World War I, these events should not be called genocide, because “…the majority of Armenians living in Istanbul were not killed,” indicating that the intention to

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64 Smith, “Denial of the Armenian Genocide,” p. 70.
67 Cohen, States of Denial, pp. 7-8.
completely eliminate the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire did not exist. The modes of interpretive denial by which a perpetrator state can attempt to obfuscate and skirt charges of mass killing include the following strategies:

1. Claim that the events in question were not mass killing, but were instead some other, more innocent thing, such as an act of war, random violence, etc.
2. Question the number of people killed, and thus claim that the event does not qualify as genocide or mass killing
3. “Insist for as long as possible that the full data are not available, or that [the alleged] facts…are forgeries and hoaxes, and that further research is needed and/or that new research disproves the claims…”
4. Accuse the victim group of initiating the violence, and/or claim that the victims were actually the perpetrators
5. Relativize and therefore discount the events by emphasizing other victim groups’ existence as well

When categorizing states’ official policy positions along the continuum from denial to apology, statements that fit the modes of literal denial outlined above will be placed at the end of the continuum at complete denial. Official policy positions that reflect any of the modes of interpretive denial enumerated above will be categorized as partial denial.

Apology

At the other end of the continuum from denial will be apology. In defining apology, I will borrow Barry O’Neill’s definition from his book *Honor, Symbols, and War*. His formal definition of an apology (by X to Y for action A) is “…a communicative act from X to Y meaning that X did A, that A caused Y harm or risk and on that account that it was wrong, and that X feels remorse for it.” In more mundane terms, O’Neill explains that “a full apology…needs an acknowledgement of the harm done to Y, the moral wrong involved in the action, and X’s responsibility for it.” I will categorize a state as having fully apologized if it conveys all three of these elements. The definition given above emphasizes an important distinction between expressions of regret and remorse, which I will follow in categorizing

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68 This example, which is a paraphrase of an argument made in Justin McCarthy and Carolyn McCarthy, *Turks and Armenians: A Manual on the Armenian Question* (Washington, D.C.: Assembly of Turkish Armenian Association, 1989), is from Charny, “A classification of denials of the Holocaust and other genocides,” p. 22, while this mode of denial is also discussed in Charny, “The Psychology of Denial of Known Genocides,” p. 10.
70 These five modes of denial are mentioned in the list that appears under the heading ‘Templates for Denial of a Known Genocide’ in Charny, “The Psychology of Denial of Known Genocides,” pp. 13-5.
official policy positions. O’Neill claims that only the latter qualify as elements of a full apology, since expressions of regret imply less guilt, responsibility and sorrow.\(^7\)

While O’Neill considers only apologies in which “…actors themselves…make an explicit reference to apologizing or…use some related term,” I will also include in my assessment of apology other types of communication, especially symbolic actions.\(^7\) A prominent example of a symbolic action that relates to apology is Japanese government officials’ visits to a shrine in which Japanese WWII war criminals are interred. “On the same day [in 1995] that [then Japanese Prime Minister] Murayama offered an official ‘regret’ for Japan's aggression, eight members of his cabinet paid homage at the Yasukuni Shrine, which contained the name list of executed Class A war criminals.” Furthermore, the current Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, has since 2001 annually visited this shrine, despite outcries from China and South Korea that this action undermines Japanese apologies or expressions of regret for the mass killing committed by Japan in World War II.\(^7\) Beyond symbolic action, Lewis Glinert’s analysis of President Clinton’s public apology for the Monica Lewinsky affair offers support for a broader understanding of the modes of apology. Glinert notes that “…apologies are liable to be reinforced or weakened by the textual context and the cues it supplies of the speaker’s beliefs and attitudes.”\(^7\)

**Between Denial and Apology**

Between the extremes of complete denial and full apology, which I have described above, fall five other discrete points, one of which – partial denial – I have already discussed. Between partial denial and full apology, then, are several types of partial apology. O’Neill notes that “To deliver a full apology, one must satisfy all the elements of the definition. However, many


\(^{73}\) O’Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War*, pp. 185-6. This distinction is not reflected in some other definitions, such as the OED, which defines “apology” as “an explanation offered to a person affected by one’s action that no offence was intended, coupled with the expression of regret for any that may have been given; or, a frank acknowledgement of the offence with expression of regret for it, by way of reparation.” OED, “Apology,” accessed on 7 June 2006, available at: http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50010389?query_type=word&queryword=apology&first=1&max_to_show=10
\&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=YabG-2IRefG-9019&hilit=50010389.


international apologies are partial…” Based on a database he compiled of international apology incidents, O’Neill provides a Guttman partial order “on the elements of an apology,” which is shown in Figure 2 (below.)

![Figure 2. A partial order on the elements of apology](image)

I have drawn from his partial ordering to create four additional points along the continuum between partial denial and full apology. These points (in order from partial denial to full apology) are: acknowledgement of act, acknowledgement of harm to victims, expression of regret for outcome, and expression of regret for act. Again following O’Neill, I will assume that these steps roughly follow a Guttman scale, such that if a state acknowledges harm to victims,

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78 “A hypothetical, perfect Guttman scale consists of a unidimensional set of items that are ranked in order of difficulty from least extreme to most extreme position….An important property of Guttman’s model is that a person’s entire set of responses to all items can be predicted from their cumulative score because the model is deterministic.” Wikipedia, “Guttman scale,” accessed on 19 June 2006, available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guttman_scale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guttman_scale). O’Neill writes that “A Guttman partial order is a weaker assertion about one’s data than a complete Guttman scale since it rules out fewer varieties of apology.” (p. 187) However, it captures the fact that “…partial apologies can be partially ordered, in that performing one element is in effect performing certain others, or implying willingness to do so.” O’Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War*, p. 186.
79 Copied from O’Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War*, p. 187, Figure 25.
then I can assume that the state has done or would agree to the prior points on the continuum, such as acknowledgement of the act.

**Independent Variables**

In this project, I will identify and analyze the influence of two categories of independent variable – domestic and international factors. In this section, I will outline factors that fall into each of these categories, along with the direction of influence I think each factor might have on change in a state’s official policy position and preliminary hypotheses related to the most important of these factors. Before proceeding to my discussion of possible and probable independent variables that might account for change in states’ official policy positions along a continuum between denial and apology, it is useful to ask whether there is conventional wisdom that would strongly predict one or more variables. Since there is no conventional wisdom to explain or account for what I am calling the politics of denial and apology among states, I have compiled lists of domestic and international factors that might reasonably have a causal impact on such change. While I list all of the factors that might be relevant, I only discuss the logic behind those that I believe are most likely to influence change in a state’s official policy position.

**Domestic Factors**

The following list enumerates domestic factors that might have an independent causal impact on change in a perpetrator state’s official policy position:

1. Nationalism
2. Regime change (e.g. collapse of USSR and declaration of Russian state)
3. Domestic academic debate/discussion/controversy
4. Violent conflict, i.e. civil war or rebellion (e.g. civil war with Kurds in Turkey)
5. Fear of having to pay reparations to individual victims and/or victim groups
6. Electoral change (e.g. new individuals or parties in power)
7. Legal change (e.g. passage of new law or change in law regulating free speech)
8. New political parties (e.g. creation of new party along political spectrum)
9. New civil society groups (e.g. establishment of new organization or interest group)
10. Domestic political crises (e.g. domestic terrorism)
11. Domestic economic crises (e.g. rampant inflation or high unemployment)
12. Domestic social crises (e.g. social changes caused by rapid urbanization)

While this represents a thorough list of potential factors that might have a causal impact on change in a state’s official policy position, I consider the first five factors to be the domestic factors most likely to have a causal impact on such change.
As indicated above, a central **preliminary hypothesis** in this project relates to the first item – nationalism. I hypothesize that if elements of a perpetrator state’s national myth include a narrative about the events of mass killing, then that state’s official policy position is less likely to change toward apology. I would expect this to be the case, because as a social institution that is reproduced domestically through socialization in schools and in families, as well as through myriad symbols within the domestic sphere, myths of national identity are “sticky,” meaning that they are fairly resistant to change. To investigate the linkages between national myth and narratives of mass killings within a domestic context, for the cases in Phase II, I will analyze the actors, events and politics surrounding the initial creation of each perpetrator state’s official policy position, to understand how and why a state’s official policy position became implicated in national myth. In addition, I will identify the mechanisms through which the relevant aspect of national myth is reproduced within the domestic sphere, to identify what would need to change in order for the state’s official policy position to be more likely to change in the direction away from denial.

Following nationalism, the next four factors seem likely sources of change for relatively straightforward reasons, which I will briefly mention in turn. First, regime change has a strong potential to influence change in a state’s official policy position, because it entails an upheaval in domestic politics, institutions and actors, which could lead to a reevaluation of many policies, among which could be a state’s official policy position on a past event of mass killing. Moreover, in as much as regime change might include changes in individuals and groups in power, this might also lead to change in a state’s official policy position, because individuals and groups with interests at stake with regard to the official policy position might no longer be in power to defend those interests. Academic debate over the events of mass killing might lead to change in a state’s official policy position, because aspects of the prevailing narrative of the events of mass killing might be criticized, called into question, and/or discredited; and additional information might be brought into the public sphere, and therefore to the attention of citizens and public figures. Violent conflict might lead to change in a state’s official policy position, because it has the potential to destabilize domestic politics and society, which could lead to questioning of previously accepted narratives, and could shift the balance of power domestically such that new individuals or groups gain power and authority. Finally, the fear of having to pay reparations to victims and victim groups could prevent a state from shifting its official policy
position about a past event of mass killing away from denial. This factor is one of the issues at play in the Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide. Factors 6-12 listed above seem less likely to be sources of change in a state’s official policy position, but I will keep them in my mind as I analyze the large set of cases in Phase I and the in-depth cases in Phase II.

International Factors

The following list outlines international factors that could have a causal impact on change in a perpetrator state’s official policy position:

1. The international norm against mass killing
2. International and/or transnational, non-state activism
3. Lobbying among other states or by other states in international organizations (IOs)
4. Economic pressure or sanctions (by IOs and/or other states)
5. Financial and/or political support from other states
6. Membership/non-membership in IOs (e.g., NATO, EU)
7. International academic debate/discussion/controversy
8. Domestic political or economic events/crises in other state(s)
9. Official meetings between representatives of perpetrator state and other states and/or IOs
10. Relevant legal change in IOs and/or other states
11. International terrorism
12. International war

As with the domestic factors listed above, this is a comprehensive list of all of the international factors that I think might have an impact on change in a state’s official policy position. Of these twelve factors, I think that the first six are the most likely to have a causal impact on change. In the next few paragraphs, I will first outline my preliminary hypothesis regarding the norm against mass killing, and then briefly discuss why the five subsequent factors might lead to change in a state’s official policy position regarding a past event of mass killing. Factors 7-12 on this list seem less likely to lead to change in a state’s official policy position regarding a past event of mass killing, but I will keep them in my mind as I conduct my research.

In addition to the hypothesis about possibility of change when there is a relationship between a state’s national myth and its official policy position, the other preliminary hypothesis with which I am beginning this project relates to the international norm against mass killing. If changes in the international norm against mass killing occur (examples of which would be when a case of genocide or mass killing occurs, or when an international tribunal is set up to punish individual perpetrators of a case of genocide or mass killing), then the international norm against mass killing will have greater international salience during or immediately after these points of
norm change. Furthermore, when the international norm against mass killing has greater salience among states, then perpetrator states that have not fully apologized for a past violation of this norm are more likely to experience pressure to change their official policy positions away from denial.

To test this hypothesis, I will investigate whether and how changes in the level of institutionalization and awareness of this norm have influenced changes in perpetrator states’ official policy positions. To analyze the impact of the norm against mass killing on the politics of denial and apology, first I will construct a temporal map of the norm against mass killing over the course of the twentieth century, which will include the institutionalization of the norm against mass killing within the society of states, points of further institutionalization (e.g., the creation of temporary and permanent tribunals such as the International Criminal Court), legal changes, new entrants into the society of states, violations of the norm, and punishments of the norm. Then, I will compare moments of change and periods of stasis in perpetrator states’ official policy positions against this temporal ‘map’ of the norm against mass killing. In this manner, I will identify points at which changes in the institutionalization or awareness of the norm against mass killing had an impact on change in one or more perpetrator state’s official policy position.

While I will investigate whether and when the level of institutionalization and international awareness of the norm against mass killing relates to changes in perpetrator states’ official policy positions, I will also identify the mechanisms through which this occurs. Factors 2-6 on the list of international factors might provide insight into the mechanisms and agents through which states that have violated the norm against mass killing experience pressure to change their official policy positions away from denial. However, in looking for the influence of the following factors – international and transnational, non-state activism; lobbying among other states or by other states in IOs, economic pressure or sanctions (by IOs and by other states); financial and political support from other states; and membership and non-membership in IOs – I will also assess whether the motivations behind these factors are strategically based, as opposed

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80 A prescriptive norm entails both a normative prescription against doing or saying a particular thing and an obligation to uphold the norm by punishing violations. Given this definition, I assume that violations of the norm against mass killing, perpetrator states’ admissions or denials of culpability, and other states’ responses to violations together comprise the scope of the norm’s impact. Although these parts can be analytically separated, they should ultimately be understood as parts of the whole of the norm against mass killing.

81 I explain why my project is limited to 20th century cases in the section titled Defining Mass Killing, below.
to, or in addition to, being normatively based. Finally, it is not clear how a state will react to such pressure to change. Analogous cases of states that dramatically changed aspects of domestic and foreign policies following continued pressure from domestic and international factors, such as the end of Apartheid in South Africa and Gorbachev’s policies of glasnost and perestroika in the USSR, indicate that states under pressure change in the direction preferred by the majority of those actors and institutions exerting pressure. However, depending on factors such as national identity (which, as discussed above, I will also investigate), a state might react against such pressure. This possibility will also be investigated in this project.

**Defining Mass Killing**

In this section I will briefly explain why I have chosen to focus on mass killing, rather than on genocide. Then, I will define the concept of mass killing and differentiate it from closely related terms such as genocide, politicide and democide.

I am focusing conceptually on mass killing, rather than on the narrower category of genocide, for several reasons. First, I would like to avoid the conceptual contestation that often accompanies the term genocide, especially in the context of and in conjunction with denials. Second, I suspect that my analysis of the politics of denial and apology will apply to a broader set of cases than the term genocide would capture. And while I might find that only genocide-perpetrator states are pressured to apologize for their perpetrations, I would need to start with a broader conceptual focus to arrive at this conclusion. Finally, different sub-types of mass killing (i.e. genocide or politicide) might imply different politics of denial and apology, with different domestic political dynamics, different ways in which the events of mass killing are incorporated (or not) into elements of national identity, and different degrees and types of pressure to

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84 This suspicion is based on the ongoing rancor between Japan, China and South Korea over Japan’s attitude and official policy position regarding the Rape of Nanjing and other World War II atrocities. This case falls under the rubric of mass killing, but not genocide.
apologize. I do not expect to find such consistent differences, but if I were to, they might be interpreted to imply a kind of ‘norm hierarchy,’ which would be an interesting finding.

As a start, I will adapt Benjamin Valentino’s conceptualization of mass killing, which he defines as “the intentional killing of a massive number of noncombatants.” He further writes, Three aspects of the definition of mass killing warrant further elaboration….First, the mass killing must be intentional, which distinguishes it from deaths caused by natural disasters, outbreaks of disease, or the unintentional killing of civilians during war. …[Second,] for the purposes of this definition, a massive number is defined simply as at least fifty thousand intentional deaths over the course of five or fewer years. These specific numerical criteria are to some extent arbitrary, but selecting these relatively high thresholds helps establish with a greater degree of confidence that massive violence did, in fact, occur and that the killing was intentional…. [Third,] a noncombatant is defined as any unarmed person who is not a member of an organized military group and who does not actively participate in hostilities by intending to cause physical harm to enemy personnel or property.

In addition, since this project is concerned with states’ official policy positions, the set of cases that I will analyze will be limited to those in which a government and/or agents of a government are responsible for having planned, organized, mobilized and/or perpetrated the mass killing. Thus, my qualified definition of mass killing is the intentional killing of a massive number of noncombatants by a government or by government agents.

I am starting my project with this definition, because I would like to start with a pre-defined set of cases, since I am not sure how I would otherwise compile my own set of cases without missing important ones. However, I am dissatisfied with this conceptualization of mass killing, both because Valentino’s original definition is vaguely worded and because the universe of cases that it invokes is too broad for my purposes, particularly in that it includes some cases of

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86 Valentino, Final Solutions, pp. 10-13.
terrorism. Therefore, I am intending to come up with my own, more precise definition once I have become more familiar with the range of cases of mass killing in the twentieth century.

There are several key elements that will be included in my future conceptualization of mass killing. First, the perpetrator must be a government or an agent of the government. Second, the killing must have been intentional, meaning that it was planned and organized in advance. Third, the victims must have been members of some type of group (or groups), but I will not delimit the definition by specifying types of groups that qualify and do not qualify. Rather, I will include this as an element of my definition, because I want to exclude individual instances of killing. Fourth, I will indicate that a large number of people were killed, but I am not yet sure whether to measure this in relative or absolute terms. Fifth, the victims must have been noncombatants, as Valentino emphasizes. Finally, I will limit my universe of cases to mass killings that occurred in the twentieth century, for the following reasons. Although this norm was written into international law after World War II, the Turkish case indicates that pre-WWII perpetrator states are being retroactively pressured to apologize. As such, it is important to include cases from the first and second halves of the twentieth century, to capture and analyze the changing (and potentially differential) influence of the norm against mass killing over this full time period. I am cutting off my set of cases at the beginning of the twentieth century for two reasons. First, I need to delimit the temporal scope of my project, and this seems like a natural break point. Second, it seems to me that the concept of the society of states, and the prevalence and role of international norms within this realm, differ palpably in the 19th century. As such, I do not think my hypotheses would hold for cases much earlier than the turn of the twentieth century.

A Note Before Concluding

Before I conclude, I would like to address a question that might arise when considering this project, which is why the politics of states’ denials and apologies matter. There are several prominent reasons why this is important, both morally and pragmatically. First, telling the truth about the past is arguably a precursor to and element of the myriad attempts to achieve justice, mete out punishment and/or reach some degree of national understanding, most of which have
arisen in the second half of the twentieth century. From the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals following the end of World War II to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in South Africa following the end of Apartheid, the second half of the twentieth century has seen a range of policies that all attempt to “deal with the past” in ways that honor truth, justice, or possibly both. However, in order to ‘deal’ with the past, a necessary element is a state’s commitment to strive to find and/or tell the truth about cases of mass killing. If a state denies the basic reality of an event of mass killing in which it was involved, denies the characterization of an event as wrong, or denies its own culpability in such an event, then other institutional solutions to achieve truth or justice will be more difficult to achieve, at least within the domestic context. Second, if a perpetrator state denies, minimizes or relativizes its own role in a past event of mass killing, then the rule of law is undermined by the very agents responsible for creating, implementing and upholding it.

Third, to deny such violations is to distort history, to prevent the processing of traumatic events for victims and perpetrators, and to complicate the resumption of ‘normalcy’ for all those involved in the events. In this regard Aryeh Neier writes that “…as a civilized society we must recognize the worth and dignity of those victimized by abuses of the past. If we fail to confront what happened to them, in a sense we argue that those people do not matter…We also perpetuate, even compound, their victimization.”

Fourth, if perpetrator states deny responsibility for past events of mass killing, this undermines attempts to deter future perpetrators of genocide or mass killing by giving the impression that a state can ‘get away’ with such crimes. A sad example of this potential is captured in Hitler’s famous question, “Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?” which he posed to an

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89 I acknowledge the ambiguity inherent in the idea of “the truth,” which is captured in E. H. Dance’s eloquent admonition that “Historical ‘truth’ is as elusive as any other – not merely because man rarely knows the truth when he sees it, but because he is still more rarely capable of communicating it to others.” E. H. Dance, *History the Betrayer: A Study in Bias* (London: Hutchinson of London, 1960), p. 29. However, I would temper this concern with the warning that “…any account of the past is essentially incomplete”….because a complete account of even a single event ‘would have to include every true historical description of that event.” Arash Abizadeh, “Historical Truth, National Myths and Liberal Democracy: On the Coherence of Liberal Nationalism,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2004), p. 305; citing Arthur Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, rev. and exp. edn of *Analytical Philosophy of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 113.

90 Boraine, Levy, and Scheffer, eds., *Dealing with the Past*, p. 3.

91 Boraine, Levy, and Scheffer, eds., *Dealing with the Past*, p. 3.

assembly of Nazi generals in 1939. And finally, despite a largely cynical interpretation of today’s international culture of apology, Marina Warner adds that “The need to insist on the experience of wrongdoing, and the restorative capacity of honest justice…is surely essential if we are to keep the humanity in human rights.”

Conclusion

Stanley Cohen writes that “To come to terms with the past is to know exactly what happened, to tell the truth, to face the facts. There are many old and well-known obstacles to this enterprise, as well as a rather new one in the slippage of the ‘past,’ ‘truth,’ and ‘facts’ down the postmodernist black hole.” This project will explore one aspect of this ‘enterprise’ of coming to terms with the past, which I call the politics of denial and apology. The main analytical focus of this project will be on the factors that influence a state that has perpetrated mass killing to change its official policy position from one point to another along a continuum from denial to apology. In answering the central question – what domestic and international factors are more likely to result in change in a state’s official policy position along the continuum from denial to apology? – this project will contribute to the subfields of genocide studies, international relations and comparative foreign policy analysis.

The most important contributions that will result from this research are the following: In the area of genocide studies, this comparative analysis of the politics of denial and apology among states will represent two important contributions: the linking of the concepts of denial and apology within a single analysis, and a comparative study of this issue from the perspective of perpetrator states, rather than individuals, academics or non-perpetrator states. For international relations scholars, this study of the existence and strength of a discursive dimension of norm maintenance will contribute to our understandings of whether and how states respond to norm violations and of the role of norms in international relations more generally. In the study of comparative foreign policy analysis, this project will contribute to our understanding of policymaking and change through the multi-layered, multi-causal analysis of an area of policy that is relatively intractable to change. In addition, through the analysis of the relationship between national myth and national narratives of past events of mass killing, this project will

offer insights into the making and re-making of national identity in and through history. And finally, there is a clear policy application for the findings of this project. For individuals, groups and states that wish to pressure perpetrator states that have not yet fully apologized to do so, this research will indicate which factors are most likely to influence a state to change its official policy position away from denial, which are less likely to have such an influence, and which are likely to have a contrary influence (i.e., are more likely to lead to change toward denial.)

Estimated Project Timeline

I anticipate that this research will take approximately two years, which will be followed by a third year spent writing the dissertation. In the coming academic year I will work on Phase I of the project. Following that, in academic year 2007-08 I will spend nine months conducting field research in the three countries chosen for in-depth case analysis, with approximately three months in each country. Finally, I will write up the results of my research in academic year 2008-09. Below is a rough timeline of the next three years:

Academic Year 2006-07 – in Berkeley
July – August 2006: Begin work on Phase I, large-N analysis
Research available dissertation research and writing fellowships
September – December 2006: Prepare and submit applications for dissertation fellowships
Apply to participate in IQRM (Institute on Qualitative Research Methods)
Work on rough outlines of changes in official policy positions of all cases
2-12 January 2007: Attend IQRM at ASU
January – May 2007: Adjust and refine research design per feedback received at IQRM
Continue Phase I work begun in Fall 2006
Select cases for Phase II, in-depth analysis
June 2007: Create detailed timelines of official policy positions for 3 in-depth cases

Academic Year 2007-08 – Fieldwork in 3 countries
July – August 2007: Intensive Turkish language course in Turkey
September – December 2007: Field research in Turkey (in-depth country case #1)
January – March 2008: Field research in in-depth country case #2
April – June 2008: Field research in in-depth country case #3

Academic Year 2008-09 – in Berkeley

**Appendix A: Benjamin Valentino’s Cases of 20th Century Mass Killings (49)**

*Note:* The universe of cases listed below (in Appendices A and B) is larger than the set that I will analyze in Phase I of my project. Initially, I will narrow down Valentino’s definition to those mass killings perpetrated by states or their agents, which will eliminate some of these cases. Once I am more familiar with twentieth century cases of mass killing, I will come up with my own definition of mass killing that will not be derived from Valentino’s. At this point, however, I have not edited Valentino’s list of cases at all, because I am not familiar enough with many of them to do so.

<table>
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<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899-1902</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>100-200,000</td>
<td>US occupation of the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904-7</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>60-65,000</td>
<td>Genocide of Herero and Nama</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914-18</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>250-425,000</td>
<td>Allied naval blockade of Germany in WWI</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915-18</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>500,000-1.5 million</td>
<td>Genocide of Armenians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917-23</td>
<td>Soviet Union (USSR)</td>
<td>250,000-2.5 million</td>
<td>Russian Civil War &amp; Red Terror</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927-45</td>
<td>Soviet Union &amp; E. Eur.</td>
<td>10-20 million</td>
<td>Collectivization, Great Terror &amp; Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927-49</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>6-10 million</td>
<td>Nationalist repression in Chinese civil war</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>1.8-3.5 million</td>
<td>Communist terror in Chinese civil war</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936-39</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>20-55,000</td>
<td>Republican terrorism in Spanish civil war</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936-43?</td>
<td></td>
<td>185-410,000</td>
<td>Nationalist violence in Spanish civil war</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937-45</td>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>3-10.6 million</td>
<td>Japanese occupation of East Asian (esp. China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-45</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5.4-6.8 million</td>
<td>Genocide of Jews and other Nazi race enemies (Holocaust)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939-45</td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>10-15 million</td>
<td>Nazi territorial expansion</td>
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<td>1940-45</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>425-625,000</td>
<td>German occupation of Western Europe</td>
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<td>1940-45</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>60-62,000</td>
<td>German bombardment of UK in WWII</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940-45</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>300-600,000</td>
<td>Allied bombardment of Germany in WWII</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941-45</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>125-530,000</td>
<td>Ustasha violence against Serbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941-53</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>300-600,000</td>
<td>Deportation of nationalities</td>
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<td>1942-45</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>268-900,000</td>
<td>American bombardment of Japan in WWII</td>
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<td>1945-47</td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>2-2.3 million</td>
<td>Post-WWII expulsion of ethnic Germans</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>500,000-1 million</td>
<td>Partition of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949-72</td>
<td>China (incl. Tibet)</td>
<td>10-46 million</td>
<td>Land reform, Great Leap Fwd &amp; Cultural Rev.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-63</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>70-570,000</td>
<td>Algerian war of independence from France</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>70-235,000</td>
<td>FLN terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-75</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>45-180,000</td>
<td>NLF (Viet-Cong) terrorism in Vietnam war</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956-71</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>250-500,000</td>
<td>Suppression of southern Sudanese</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>Tibet</td>
<td>65-90,000</td>
<td>Suppression of Tibetan rebellion</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963-91</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>85-265,000</td>
<td>Suppression of Kurdish rebellions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>250,000-1 million</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966-85</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>100-200,000</td>
<td>Guatemalan civil war</td>
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<td>1967-70</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>450,000-2 million</td>
<td>Suppression of secession of Biafra (land blockade)</td>
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<td>1971</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>500,000-3 million</td>
<td>Partition of East Pakistan</td>
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<td>100-500,000</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>100-200,000</td>
<td>Genocide of Hutu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-91</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>500,000-1 million</td>
<td>Ethiopian civil war</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975-79</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>1-2 million</td>
<td>Collectivization and political repression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-99</td>
<td>Indonesia (East Timor)</td>
<td>100-200,000</td>
<td>Suppression of East Timorese secession</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975-1992</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>100-700,000</td>
<td>RENAMO terrorism in Mozambican civil war</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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95 This table has been compiled from cases listed in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, in Valentino, *Final Solutions*, pp. 70, 75, 77, 81, 83, 88, 90. For the most part, I have exactly copied the wording in the ‘Description’ column.
### Appendix A (continued): Benjamin Valentino’s Cases of 20th Century Mass Killings (49)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975-2002</td>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>60-375,000</td>
<td>Angolan civil war</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978-89</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>950,000-1,280,000</td>
<td>Soviet invasion and occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-92</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>1-1.5 million</td>
<td>Salvadoran civil war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-2002</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>50-60,000</td>
<td>Suppression of southern Sudanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-91</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>25-155,000</td>
<td>Ethnic cleansing of Muslims from Bosnia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-95</td>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>75-150,000</td>
<td>Civil war/antigovernment terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-98</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>100-200,000</td>
<td>Suppression of Hutu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>500-800,000</td>
<td>Genocide of Tutsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-2002</td>
<td>Russia (Chechnya)</td>
<td>55-60,000</td>
<td>Suppression of Chechen secession movement</td>
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### Appendix B: Benjamin Valentino’s Possible Cases of 20th Century Mass Killings (14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905-07</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>200-300,000</td>
<td>Suppression of Maji-Maji uprising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-?</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>50-100,000</td>
<td>Collectivization &amp; political repression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-?</td>
<td>East Germany</td>
<td>80-100,000</td>
<td>Political repression by USSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-?</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>60-300,000</td>
<td>Collectivization &amp; political repression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-?</td>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>400,000-1,500,000</td>
<td>Collectivization &amp; political repression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-54</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>60-250,000</td>
<td>French suppression of Vietminh guerillas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-58</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>50-150,000</td>
<td>‘Conservative’ violence against ‘Liberals’ in C. civil war</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50-150,000</td>
<td>Liberal violence against conservatives in C. civil war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-54</td>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>500,000-1.5 million</td>
<td>U.S./R.O.K. bombing + in Korean War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-?</td>
<td>N. &amp; S. Vietnam</td>
<td>80-200,000</td>
<td>Collectivization &amp; political repression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-75</td>
<td>Vietnam (South)</td>
<td>110-310,000</td>
<td>U.S. &amp; South Vietnamese suppression of NLF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-73</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>30-150,000</td>
<td>U.S. invasion-bombardment of Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979-87</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>100-300,000</td>
<td>Suppression of suspected NRA supporters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-97</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>80-170,000</td>
<td>Economic embargo of Iraq by UN/U.S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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96 This table has been compiled from cases listed in Tables 2, 5, and 6, in Valentino, *Final Solutions*, pp. 75, 83-4, 88. For the most part, I have exactly copied the wording in the ‘Description’ column.
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