



Contradictory Behavior During Genocides¹

Bradley Campbell²

In all large-scale genocides, rescuing occurs alongside killing. Some members of the aggressors' ethnic group even risk their own lives to save members of the targeted group. Killing and rescuing occur closely together, and even the same persons may engage in both behaviors—killing on one occasion and rescuing on another. This article examines such cases—where the same individuals kill and rescue—and discusses their relevance to the explanation of genocide. Both collectivistic and individualistic theories of killing and rescuing—which explain these behaviors with the properties of groups or persons—are inadequate in accounting for those who do both. Using Donald Black's (1995, 2000) strategy of pure sociology and my theory of genocide (Campbell, 2009), I offer an explanation of contradictory behavior by individuals during genocide. The behaviors themselves occur in different structures—killing where there is social distance and rescuing where there is social closeness. Individuals who exhibit contradictory behavior thus kill those who are distant and save those who are close. One feature of this analysis is its demonstration of the explanatory power of pure sociology, which is uniquely capable of explaining extreme variations in individual behavior.

KEY WORDS: altruism; genocide; global conflict; pure sociology; social structure; violence.

INTRODUCTION

On April 6, 1994, a plane carrying the president of Rwanda was shot down as it returned from Tanzania. The assassins' identities are unknown (Prunier, 1995:213–229), but the widespread belief among Hutus—the dominant Rwandan ethnic group, to which the president also belonged—was that Tutsi rebels were responsible for the president's death (Straus, 2004:254–256). The response was one of the largest genocides in history. During the three months following the assassination, Hutu political and military elites organized the killing of about three-fourths of the Tutsi population in Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999:16).

Many of the killers were ordinary Hutu civilians who joined the militias after the killing began. Still, a number of Hutus engaged in altruistic acts of

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² Department of Sociology, California State University, Los Angeles, 5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, California 90032; e-mail: bcampbe3@calstatela.edu.

rescue, where they helped save the lives of Tutsis. Striking as it may be that such contradictory behaviors can occur so closely together—in the very same settings—the proximity of killing and rescuing in the Rwandan genocide could be even more extreme: Killers and rescuers were often the very same individuals. For example, several days after the genocide began, the Hutu president of Catholic Workers Youth warned a young Tutsi woman named Mectilde that she was on the list of those to be killed the next day. Mectilde, who lived in Kigali at a youth hostel for Catholic women workers, decided to flee to Gitarama along with two friends, and the president agreed to accompany them and to help the Tutsi woman through the roadblocks (Mamdani, 2001:222). Without his help, Hutus would likely have killed Mectilde. Yet this same man later joined in the killing of Tutsis in Butare. As Mectilde put it, “A Hutu can help you in Kigali, but in Butare he can begin to kill Tutsi” (quoted in Mamdani, 2001:224).

Other Hutus also acted as both killers and rescuers. For instance, a Hutu named Michel assisted in killing a Tutsi man who stopped at his home to ask for directions, but he and his siblings also hid four Tutsi neighbors in their homes (Fujii, 2006:170–172). Another group of Hutus, members of a genocidal militia group, allowed their friend Eugene, a Tutsi, to join their group. These Hutus, then, spared a Tutsi in their midst as they went out killing other Tutsis. Eugene, though a member of the targeted ethnic group, also engaged in both killing and rescuing: While aiding in the killing of some of his fellow Tutsis, he tried to save his Tutsi uncle by providing food for him while he was in hiding. Of course, he also aided himself (Fujii, 2006:166–170). Even leaders of the genocide sometimes acted to save certain Tutsis. For example, in a dramatic act of rescue later depicted in the film *Hotel Rwanda* (George, 2004), hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina, a Hutu, helped more than 1,000 Tutsis take refuge at the *Hôtel des Mille Collines* in Kigali (Gourevitch, 1998). In many cases, men affiliated with the regime not only knew about Rusesabagina’s actions, they even enlisted him to help save particular Tutsis such as their wives and other family members (Gourevitch, 1998:140). For example, Father Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, who was later convicted in absentia by a Rwandan court for his role in the genocide, brought his Tutsi mother to the hotel for protection. According to Rusesabagina, when Father Wenceslas arrived with his mother, he said, “Paul, I bring you my cockroach” (quoted in Gourevitch, 1998:141).

Here, I discuss the occurrence of such contradictory behavior in several genocides as well as the challenge it presents to the sociology of genocide. Killing and rescuing by the same individuals cannot be explained with either collectivistic (macrosociological) or individualistic (microsociological) theories of either killing or rescuing. Explaining such cases requires an alternative theoretical approach. Pure sociology, a strategy of explanation developed by Donald Black, offers one such approach, and I demonstrate how a pure sociological theory of genocide can begin to account for contradictory behavior. Because it is neither collectivistic nor individualistic, the theory can explain such behavior with the same formulations that explain killing and rescuing in

genocide more broadly. This demonstrates not only the power of this theory of genocide, but also the potential of pure sociology to explain a variety of behavior that cannot be accounted for by collectivistic or individualistic theories.

THE PROBLEM OF CONTRADICTORY BEHAVIOR

Contradictory behavior by individuals presents a problem for the study of genocide, and indeed, those who take notice of the phenomenon often express bewilderment. For example, Mahmood Mamdani, in considering such behavior during the Rwandan genocide, asks, “How could the same person risk his or her own life to save another at one time and place, and yet take life another time in another place?” (2001:221). Similarly David P. Gushee, reflecting on an incident of contradictory behavior during the Holocaust, says it “illuminates the limits of any typology” and “reveals the complexity of human behavior” (2003:77–78).

Contradictory behavior is an anomaly that cannot be explained with conventional theories. The reason is that most theories of genocide—like most theories of violence in general—are either collectivistic or individualistic. Collectivistic theories of violence seek to explain why some societies, cities, cultures, or other aggregations are more violent than others (e.g., Beeghly, 2003; Blau and Blau, 1982; Messner and Rosenfeld, 2007; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). But no society, city, or culture is uniformly violent, and collectivistic theories cannot account for variation within these social units. Such theories overcollectivize violence (Black, 2004b:147).

Collectivistic theories of genocide are likewise unable to explain the occurrence of rescuing—even by different individuals. If genocide results from societal features (e.g., Fein, 1979; Goldhagen, 1996; Kuper, 1981), the characteristics of state regimes (e.g., Horowitz, 2002; Rummel, 1995), historical events (e.g., Melson, 1992), broad cultural or historical trends (e.g., Bauman, 1989; Freeman, 1995; Hinton, 2002), or any other macrosociological phenomenon, what accounts for the presence of altruism within genocidal settings? Collectivistic theories cannot address this kind of variation.

Theories of violence may also be individualistic (e.g., Akers and Silverman, 2004; Berkowitz, 1962; Dollard et al., 1939). Such theories explain why some individuals within a society are more likely to be violent. But just as social units are not uniformly violent, neither are individuals. Individualistic theories are thus unable to explain why individuals are violent on one occasion rather than another. Rather than overcollectivize violence, they overindividualize it (Black, 2004b:147).

Individualistic theories of genocide address within-genocide variation by explaining why individuals take on a particular role—why some people but not others act as killers or rescuers. A number of theorists argue, for example, that killers or rescuers differ from others in some fundamental way—such as

in their personalities or moral outlooks (Adorno et al., 1950; Baum, 2008; Block and Druker, 1992; Fogelman, 1994; Midlarsky et al., 2005; Monroe et al., 1990; Oliner and Oliner, 1988; Staub, 1993; Steiner, 1980; Tec, 1986). Others seek to identify factors that transform people into killers or enable them to kill (Alvarez, 2001:115–128; Bauman, 1989:151–168; Browning, 1998; Kelman, 1973; Lifton, 1986; Kressel, 2002; Waller, 2002). But as we have seen, the same individuals may kill and rescue. What this illustrates is that persons as such are neither genocidal nor altruistic. Something other than the properties of individuals must explain participation in genocide.

We are left with a puzzle. Collectivistic and individualistic theories of violence profile violent groups or offenders but do not explain the occurrence of violence itself (Cooney, 2006:57–58; see also Black, 2004b:147). Theories of genocide normally follow one of these strategies and thus leave variation within groups or within individuals unexplained. This is especially evident where the same individuals engage in radically contradictory behavior—where they both kill and rescue almost simultaneously. What is needed is a way of explaining killing and rescuing that would also apply to these extreme cases of intraindividual variation. Pure sociology offers a way of doing so. It disregards both collectivities and individuals and instead explains human behavior with social structures. This structural approach to genocide is to some extent compatible with a strain of thought in the study of genocide that also sees participation in genocide as connected with something other than individual personalities. The idea is that genocidal killers are “ordinary men” (Browning, 1998; see also Bauman, 1989; Charney, 1999; Waller, 2002). Much of the discussion around this idea has an anti-individualistic bent, but the theories themselves still cannot explain contradictory behavior. Let us now more closely examine two of these approaches to see why this is so.

“ORDINARY MEN” AND CONTRADICTIONARY BEHAVIOR

Contradictory behavior is a stark example of the variable behavior of perpetrators of genocide, something other observers also see as undermining certain individualistic explanations. Zygmunt Bauman, for example, notes that killers during the Holocaust, when they took off their uniforms, ceased to act in any way that would distinguish them from others: “They behaved much like all of us. They had wives they loved, children they cosseted, friends they helped and comforted in case of distress” (1989:151). These were ordinary people, according to Bauman, not people with diseased personalities or faulty socialization (Bauman, 1989:152). Likewise, Christopher Browning (1998) describes a group of killers during the Holocaust—the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101—as “ordinary men.” They were not specially selected to kill Jews based on their suitability for the task; rather, they were simply the people who were available at that point in the war (Browning, 1998:164–165). Nor did they exhibit any predisposition toward violence. The men were initially

horrified by the killing, but more than 80% of them participated anyway (Browning 1998:184).

For both Bauman and Browning, the “ordinariness” of the killers means that their participation cannot be explained by individual factors. It is, instead, the situation they find themselves in that leads to killing. As Bauman puts it, “Cruelty is social in its origin much more than it is characterological” (1989:166). Browning says the men of the battalion became killers because of the characteristics of their situation. “If the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 could become killers under such circumstances,” he asks, “what group of men cannot?” (1998:189).

Bauman and Browning point out the inadequacies of hyper-individualistic explanations of genocide. But these orienting statements—which argue for the importance of social rather than individual factors—are not themselves explanations (Homans, 1967:14–18). And though their orienting statements point in the right direction, the explanations they give—which focus on how ordinary people come to commit genocide—employ a theoretical strategy similar to the theories they reject. They are motivational theories, which explain killing with the psychological impact of social forces (Black 2000:357, n. 36). Unlike theories that explain killing (or rescuing) with factors such as personality characteristics developed through primary socialization, they employ variables closer to the behavior in space and time. But ultimately these strategies do not go far enough in rejecting individualism, and they are unable to account for the range of contradictory behavior we see in genocides.

Bauman assumes that killers find it difficult to kill, and his explanation of participation in genocide is that certain social situations make killing easier.³ Reflecting mainly on the findings of Stanley Milgram’s well-known study, which examined conditions under which subjects would agree to administer electric shocks to someone they believed was the subject of a learning experiment, Bauman proposes that it becomes easier to harm others as “physical and psychical” proximity to the victims decreases, as the actions leading to killing are split into specialized tasks, as the action becomes more collective, as the action proceeds through incremental steps, as the action becomes more technically remote from its effects, as responsibility for the actions is given to an authority, and as that authority is more monopolistic (Bauman, 1989:154–165). Each factor is important because of its psychological effect on potential perpetrators. For example, proximity to the victims matters because “it is quite easy to be cruel towards a person we neither see nor hear” (Bauman 1989:155). And when actions proceed through incremental steps, the first steps do not seem morally consequential, so later on people are unable to break

³ Bauman’s work on genocide is mostly macrosociological. The modern bureaucratic state, he says, weakens presocietal moral drives and replaces moral responsibility with technical responsibility. The rationality of modern society can thus be directed toward immoral ends such as genocide rather than toward the moral ends assumed by the modern notion of progress (Bauman, 1989:1–30). Here, I focus on the microsociological element of his work, which seeks to explain how rational processes common to certain locations in modern societies enable individuals to kill.

from the sequence without acknowledging that their past behavior was wrong (Bauman 1989:157–158).

Browning also offers a motivational explanation of how ordinary men become genocidal killers, but he focuses on a particular group of ordinary men. He thus rejects many of the factors proposed by Bauman and others that do not apply to the killing by the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101. For example, these men killed their victims at point-blank range, a task that did not involve segmentation, physical distance, or incremental actions (Browning 1998:162). Browning instead focuses on two factors also discussed by Bauman: authority and conformity. The authority was represented by the commander of the battalion and the more distant authority he invoked. But conformity to the group, according to Browning, was even more important. Though the men were not forced to kill, those who refused would be leaving the work to other members of the battalion—what was “in effect an asocial act vis-à-vis one’s comrades” (Browning, 1998:185). The battalion was a close-knit group stationed abroad, and the men had few social contacts with anyone else. Most of the men were thus unwilling to let down their fellow group members, and even fewer were willing to morally reproach them, even implicitly. Those who declined to participate said they were simply “too weak” to kill (Browning 1998:185).

For both Bauman and Browning, then, the characteristics of social situations may motivate otherwise nonviolent people to kill. Ordinary people are thus able to commit extraordinary evil, while in other situations they would engage in ordinary behaviors (Bauman, 1989:151). But what we see in contradictory behavior is more dramatic. Not only do the killers also engage in ordinary behaviors, they may even engage in rescuing—an *extraordinary* behavior. Extending the logic of Bauman’s and Browning’s approaches, we might say that ordinary men may engage in extraordinary good as well as extraordinary evil. In this view, neither behavior would result from personality characteristics, and the same individuals might find themselves motivated to kill in one situation and motivated to rescue in another.⁴

The main problem, though, is that the individualistic nature of these theories inhibits an explanation of many of the cases. True, killing and rescuing might be expected when the same individuals are in different situations. Different environments would have different psychological effects, one motivating killing and another rescuing. But this could not explain cases where individuals *in the same situation* engage in both behaviors. In many instances of contradictory behavior, killing and rescuing occur simultaneously, such as in the case above where the group of Hutu killers allowed a Tutsi to join them. Likewise, the men studied by Browning sometimes refused to kill particular Jews or even helped them escape to safety (1998:153–154).

⁴ This is not an explanation either Bauman or Browning offers, however, since neither applies this approach to rescuing. Bauman even argues that rescuing results not from the kinds of situational factors he uses to explain killing, but from innate personality characteristics. Those who saved victims of the Holocaust, he says, did so when their dormant moral consciences became aroused (Bauman, 1989:168).

For Bauman and Browning, then, a person's behavior might change from one situation to the next, but neither can account for contradictory behavior, where individual behavior might be even more variable than this. Although Bauman and Browning argue for the importance of social factors in explaining genocidal killing, their explanations are still largely psychological. But pure sociology eliminates the person, not just the personality, from its explanations.

THE PURE SOCIOLOGY OF CONTRADICTIONARY BEHAVIOR

Pure sociology—a paradigm developed by Donald Black—was initially applied to the explanation of law (Black, 1976), but it is a general theoretical approach always intended by Black to be applicable to any form of social life. Mostly it has been used to explain various forms of social control, or reactions to conflict. In addition to law, for example, pure sociologists have applied the strategy to the explanation of gossip (Black, 1995:855, n. 129), therapy (Horwitz, 1982:121–185, 1990:79–95; Tucker, 1999), negotiation (Black, 1998:83–85), and various forms of violence (Baumgartner, 1992; Black, 2004a,b; Campbell, 2009; Cooney, 1997, 1998; Phillips, 2003; Phillips and Cooney, 2005; Senechal de la Roche, 1996, 1997, 2001; Tucker and Ross, 2005). They have examined the social control of specific offenses, such as mental illness (Horwitz, 1982), medical malpractice (Mullis, 1995), and homicide (Cooney, 2009). They have analyzed social control in a variety of settings, such as suburbs (Baumgartner, 1988), corporations (Morrill, 1995; Tucker, 1999), Alcoholics Anonymous meetings (Hoffman, 2006), reality television shows (Godard, 2003), and the modern world-system (Borg, 1992). Beyond social control, pure sociologists have offered explanations of ideas (Black, 2000), art (Black, 1998:168–169), religion (Black, 1995:856–857), research (Jacques and Wright, 2008), welfare (Michalski, 2003), and predation (Cooney, 2006:58–60).

Pure sociology explains human behavior with its social structure (or “social geometry”). Sociologists use the term *social structure* in various ways, but here it refers to the social characteristics of everyone involved in an instance of human behavior. For example, an idea—a statement about reality—has a source, a subject, and an audience, and these may be high or low in status, or intimate or distant from one another (Black, 2000:348). Such characteristics are part of the social structure of an idea, and they predict its content. One kind of idea is an explanation, and an explanation may be voluntaristic—explaining behavior with free will—or deterministic—explaining behavior with factors beyond someone's control. Explanations are more likely to be voluntaristic when the source and subject are very intimate or very distant from one another and when the subject is high in status (Black, 2000:356–357). People commonly attribute free will, then, to intimates such as spouses and pets and to elites such as kings and generals (Black, 2000:356–357; Fuchs, 2001:32–33).

Likewise, the structural features of conflicts—such as the amount of intimacy or inequality between the disputants, between disputants and third parties (others who have knowledge of the conflict), and between the third parties—predict how they will be handled. For example, one way of handling a conflict is with therapy—a form of intervention in which the therapist assists people with problems rather than punishing them. In its pure form, therapy is initiated by people who define themselves as deviant and want help in becoming normal. Therapy thrives in social structures characterized by intimacy, homogeneity, and equality—where people are close to one another, similar, and relatively equal in status (Black, 1976:4–5; Horwitz, 1982:121–142; Tucker, 1999:10–15). In modern societies, for example, psychotherapy is most common among the middle and upper classes—those who are similar in culture and status to the therapists (Horwitz, 1990:84–86; Tucker, 1999:13).

Pure sociology offers a way of explaining violence and other behaviors without overcollectivizing them or overindividualizing them. The content of an explanation is explained not with the characteristics of the society in which it occurs, and not with the characteristics of the explainer, but with its social structure. And the handling of a conflict is explained with the structure of the conflict itself. Every general form of social control—such as therapy or violence—has its own social structure. So do specific forms, such as particular types of violence. We can observe lynching structures (Senechal de la Roche, 1997), for instance, as well as feuding structures (Black, 2004b:153), terrorism structures (Black, 2004a), and corporal punishment structures (Tucker and Ross, 2005).

Structures may also be genocidal. My theory of genocide states that genocide varies directly with immobility, social distance, and inequality (Campbell, 2009:160–167). It is more likely when members of an ethnic group have grievances against an immobile, distant, and inferior ethnic group. Because this is a structural theory—rather than a collectivistic or individualistic theory—it can explain participation in genocide. It can account for both genocide and rescue, and notably, it can do so in a manner that addresses the contradictory behavior by individuals that other theories of genocide cannot explain.

As noted we can explain participation in genocide in part with the social distance between the people involved. Social distance includes three variables: cultural distance, relational distance, and functional independence. Cultural distance refers to differences in culture, relational distance to a lack of interaction, and functional independence to a lack of interdependent relationships such as political and economic ties (Black, 1976:41, 73–74; Senechal de la Roche, 1996:111). Where people are socially distant from one another, then, they are unconnected and dissimilar.⁵

Social distance explains variation within genocides. For example, consider variation within the Rwandan genocide, at several different levels. First, Rwanda was divided into 11 prefectures, and the genocide began later in some

⁵ This differs from other uses of the term social distance (e.g., Karakayali, 2009).

of these prefectures than others. In two of these, it was delayed for weeks in most areas, and outsiders had to be brought in to begin the massacres (Jefremovas, 1995:29; Straus, 2004:80–88). In these prefectures, Hutus and Tutsis were less socially distant than elsewhere—more likely, for example, to be intermarried (Fletcher, 2007:44, n. 22; Jefremovas, 1995:29). One of these late-onset prefectures was Butare, and Nyakizu was a commune in this prefecture. Nyakizu was the only commune in Butare where genocide began earlier, and significantly, the social distance between Hutus and Tutsis was greater than in the other communes. Many of the Hutus living in Nyakizu were recent refugees from Burundi. Altogether, they made up one-quarter of the commune's population (Des Forges, 1999:363). The Burundian refugees were also disproportionately involved in the killing—especially in the early stages. At one point, they even refused to continue killing until officials could recruit more Rwandan Hutus to help (Des Forges, 1999:387). So where social distance was greater, so was genocide, and more distant Hutus were more involved in the killing. More distant Tutsis were also more likely to be killed. For example, among the last targets of the genocide in Nyakizu were Tutsi women married to Hutu men and also those who at the beginning of the violence had agreed to cohabitate with Hutu men to avoid being killed (Des Forges, 1999:410–413).

Just as a pure sociological theory can explain the occurrence of genocide—including who does the killing and who is killed—it can also explain rescuing. Aid toward the targets of genocide occurs in an opposite structure to that of genocide itself.⁶ Intimacy, functional interdependence, and cultural closeness are each predictors of rescue. Consider aid to Jews during the Holocaust. As Gushee points out, nearly everyone who has studied rescuers has noticed that ties between particular Jews and Gentiles were important (2003:134). This is true even of those researchers who have focused on other factors. Moshe Bejski (1977:635), for example, sees personal acquaintance and friendship as an important—but not dominant—motive in many rescues. Likewise, Mordecai Paldiel (1986:92) and Samuel P. Oliner (1982:12) see friendships as the cause of a particular cluster of rescues. Many rescuers also had other intimate ties—such as through marriage—or functional ties—such as through work or political party affiliation—with those they saved (Block and Drucker, 1992:8; Fogelman, 1984:181–202; Friedman, 1980:411; Henry, 1984:102, 105; Moore, 2003:299). Often, those who ended up aiding strangers started by rescuing intimates and then extended their rescuing activities (Oliner and Oliner, 1988:89; Paldiel, 1986:92; Staub, 1993:334; Tec, 1986:135–136). Additionally, rescuers had more ties with Jews in general than did nonrescuers. Oliner and Oliner (1988:114–115), for example, found that more rescuers lived among Jews, worked with them, and had Jewish friends prior to the war. Nechama Tec (1986:130) found that more than half of the altruistic Polish

⁶ This is the case not only because rescue occurs in a structure opposite to that of genocide, but also because helping behavior in general varies inversely with relational distance (Black, 1998:142).

rescuers she studied—but none of those who aided Jews in exchange for payment—had close ties to Jews before the war. Cultural closeness was also a factor in rescue. For instance, much of the aid was to fellow Christians—Jews who had converted but were still classified as Jews by the Nazis (Milton, 1983:284; see also Gushee, 2003:136).

Few studies exist of rescues in other genocides, but the evidence suggests similar patterns. For example, in interviews with survivors of the Armenian genocide, Richard G. Hovannisian found that in about a quarter of the reported cases, rescuers had a prior acquaintance with those they helped (1992:288). And in almost half (43.8%) of the cases, he says an economic motive was dominant (Hovannisian, 1992:292). Some of these involved direct payment, but the most common type of rescue in this category involved Turks taking in Armenians who could help with herding, field labor, and other tasks (Hovannisian, 1992:294). Many Armenians were also rescued as a result of their willingness to convert to Islam (Hovannisian, 1992:290, 295–297). In many of the other cases, Armenians likewise provided labor for their rescuers and accepted their religion, even if this was not considered the dominant motive for the rescue (Hovannisian, 1992:290). As in the Holocaust, intimacy, functional interdependence, and cultural closeness were associated with rescue.

Social distance, then, accounts for much of the variation in participation in both genocide and rescue.⁷ Killing is more likely where the parties are dissimilar and unconnected; rescuing where they are similar and connected. My theory of genocide predicts this, and the explanation is structural rather than individualistic. It is not the individual characteristics of killers or rescuers that account for their behavior—not their socialization, and not their motivations—but the relationships of those involved. The theory thus applies to cases where the same individuals engage in both behaviors. It predicts that in cases of contradictory behavior, people will be more distant from those they kill and closer to those they help.

CASES OF CONTRADICTIONARY BEHAVIOR

Studies of behavior during genocides, whether they focus on killing or rescuing, seldom discuss those who engage in both behaviors. The scant attention given to the issue has come almost exclusively from scholars of the Rwandan genocide (e.g., Fujii, 2006:152; Gourevitch, 1998:130–131; Jefremovas, 1995:28;

⁷ Nongenocidal mass killings may also provide opportunities for rescuing, and rescuing in these situations can also be explained with social distance. For example, beginning in 1976, Argentina's military government kidnapped, tortured, and killed tens of thousands of suspected political opponents, and many Argentines aided the targets in various ways. According to Jessica Casiro (2006), the rescuers' social networks were much more important than their personal characteristics in explaining their actions. One-time rescuers aided either family members, friends, and acquaintances or else those referred to them by their friends. Repeat rescuers did help strangers, but these were mainly people who shared their political ideology (Casiro, 2006:443). Nearly all rescuers in this case, then, were socially close to those they aided.

Mamdani, 2001:221). As the examples given above illustrate, this phenomenon certainly occurred in the Rwandan genocide—possibly more often than in other genocides—but contradictory behavior is not unknown in other settings.⁸

Consider the Holocaust. Numerous writings about rescue during the Holocaust do not even mention cases where rescuers also engaged in genocide (e.g., Bauminger, 1983; Bejski, 1977; Block and Drucker, 1992; Fogelman, 1994; Midlarsky et al., 2005; Monroe et al., 1990; Milton, 1983; Oliner, 1982; Oliner and Oliner, 1988; Paldiel, 1986; but see Gushee, 2003:77–78). The researchers focus on rescuers as a category of people separate from perpetrators and bystanders. They also tend to focus on the most heroic examples of altruism—where people act over a period of time to save numerous Jews by hiding them, forging documents, and so forth. Their aim is often to study those who display exemplary moral behavior. As Block and Drucker note, “One of the reasons we study rescuers is that they represent the highest form of moral achievement” (1992:10). They focus on persons rather than behaviors, then, and so they exclude those who also display other kinds of behaviors. However, if we look more carefully, we see that just as in the Rwandan genocide, some of those who aided the victims on other occasions aided the killers or even participated in the killing. For example, Tec describes how a young Jewish woman in the Lublin ghetto was helped by a German guard—a man who was a “known murderer, who killed with ease” (quoted in Tec, 1986:28). After the liquidation of the ghetto, while the Nazis were trying to round up the remaining Jews, the guard discovered her in hiding.

Suddenly when he noticed me he became furious and screamed: “What are you doing here?” ... He began to act like a maniac, repeating again and again: “What will I do? What will I do with you?” I told him: “Do what you want.” I was already fed up. I had had enough. He said: “No, I want you to leave the ghetto.” But how could I get out? ... I shook my head. He said: “Come early to meet me near the gate. I will take you out.” I told him that I would go only with my husband ... My husband was reluctant to come with me, but in the morning he came. The German was already waiting ... He told me, “I want to save you.” I told him that I did not believe him. He kept

⁸ The cases discussed here are drawn from a variety of sources—such as studies of rescuers, interviews of killers, autobiographical accounts, and government documents. Most of the cases come from a larger theoretical study of genocide that analyzes genocide in five diverse local settings: the Round Valley of northern California during the years 1856 to 1859; Kovno, Lithuania from 1941 to 1944; Nyakizu, Rwanda during the months of April to July 1994; Prijedor, Bosnia-Herzegovina from April to October 1992; and Ahmedabad, India from March to April 2002 (Campbell, 2008). Here, along with the known incidents of contradictory behavior in those locations, I also discuss cases occurring in other settings. We thus have examples of this phenomenon from each of the three major cases of genocide—the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, and the Rwandan genocide—as well as two smaller-scale cases—the Bosnian genocide and the genocide of Indians in California. These cases vary in severity, occur across times and places, and involve various cultural groups. Their contexts also vary in other ways. The individuals who kill and rescue do so in various circumstances—as guards, soldiers, militia members, or ordinary citizens. They kill in various ways—such as by turning people over to authorities, arranging for an attack on a caravan, or shooting indiscriminately at the targets. They also rescue in various ways—such as by helping people through roadblocks, hiding people in their homes, providing people with food, or persuading the killers to stop. The cases, then, while small in number, are extremely diverse.

saying, "I do not want to kill you, you are too beautiful to die." He then took us to the gate. The Ukrainian guards did not want to let us out. When, in anger, the German took out his gun and pointed at the Ukrainians, they opened the gate. He came with us through the gate and said: "I am leaving you here." I was afraid to turn. But I did. He stood there and said, "God be with you." (quoted in Tec, 1986:28–29)

Similarly, in the Kovno ghetto in Lithuania, Germans who were complicit in the killings of Jews sometimes acted to save the lives of particular individuals. Helmut Rauca, the local Jewish Affairs Specialist for the Gestapo, aided in the killing of thousands of Jews—including the nearly 10,000 he selected for death in the so-called Great Action. However, he also for some time allowed a Jewish woman—the girlfriend of a German composer he had come to know—to live outside the ghetto (Littman, 1983:94–97). Another Jewish woman in the ghetto—Leah Elstein—received aid from an SS officer. The SS had taken control of the ghetto at this time, and Elstein was a secretary for the Jewish Council. In the course of her work she became acquainted with an SS officer, and he occasionally would ask her to work for him. Shortly before one of the "actions"—where the Germans and their Lithuanian supporters would select Jews for deportation or death—this officer ordered Elstein to report to him at once to perform a few seemingly unimportant tasks. He also ordered her to come to his office the next day, the second day of the action. This kept her from being harmed, and thereafter she continued to work for him until the ghetto was finally liquidated (Littman, 1983:106–108).

Also, just as we saw in the Rwandan case, rescuers during the Holocaust—even those hiding Jews in their homes—might help to kill others. For example, a Polish farmer helped hide eight-year-old Dana Szapira and her mother, but while these two Jews were living in his cowshed, he aided in the killing of two others. A Jewish man had come to his door asking him to find a doctor for his teenage son. They had been hiding in the woods and the boy had gangrene. But instead of finding a doctor, the farmer reported them to the Gestapo. The two Jews were shot and the farmer received two kilograms of sugar as a reward for his information (Gilbert, 1985:492; see also Gushee, 2003:77–78).

Such incidents also occurred in the 1915 Armenian genocide. Here, the killing was carried out in large part under the direction of Turkish soldiers who escorted caravans of deported Armenians. The deportations themselves were genocidal, as those leading the caravans commonly denied the Armenians food and even water. Other killings, such as the shootings of Armenian men prior to the deportations, were quicker and more direct. Also, the soldiers allowed Kurds and others along the way to attack the remaining women and children. As an example, consider the experience of Vahram, an Armenian child living in a village in eastern Turkey. First, Vahram's father was arrested and killed along with other Armenian men of the village. Next, Turkish soldiers announced that all the Armenians in the village would be deported. Several days into the journey, Ibosh, the gendarme in charge of the caravan, told the Armenians to leave all their possessions behind in order to avoid being attacked by Kurds. Once

they did this, the Kurds attacked anyway, and Vahram's grandfather and uncle were among the Armenians killed (Miller and Miller, 1993:9–12).

This attack was in fact orchestrated by the same Turkish gendarme who told them to leave behind their belongings, the man who was ostensibly in charge of protecting the caravan. And yet this man, Ibosh, later on acted to save the lives of Vahram and his sister. Because Ibosh wanted to marry Vahram's older sister, Siroun, he began giving preferential treatment to her family. Such treatment may itself have enabled their survival, as many of the other deportees were dying due to their lack of food, water, and medical care. Later on, though, Ibosh's altruism toward the family intensified. After turning over control of the caravan, he took Vahram and Siroun with him to his father's home. After he arrived in his hometown, a local official told him they should deal with Vahram as they had dealt with other Armenian boys coming through the area. But Ibosh appealed to a higher official, who gave him permission to take Vahram as a servant. Vahram and Siroun then joined Ibosh's father's household, where they lived for the next two years (Miller and Miller, 1993:12–15).

The Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, and the Rwandan genocide were extreme cases, examples of what Robert Melson calls "total genocide" (1992:26), but contradictory behavior also occurs in cases of less extensive ethnic killing. In the early 1990s, for example, following the breakup of Yugoslavia, Serbs in Bosnia imprisoned Muslims and Croats, expelled them from Serb-controlled territory, and destroyed mosques and other cultural artifacts. Genocide occurred along with this "ethnic cleansing," and it resulted in the deaths of 200,000–250,000 Bosnian Muslims—more than 10% of their population (Gutman, 1993:xxx). Yet some Serbs, even those involved in the killing, aided the targets. In the prison camps in Prijedor, for example, guards regularly aided in lethal beatings and other abuses of Muslims, but sometimes they aided the prisoners. At Omarska, one prisoner had previously attended a work retraining program with one of the guards, and this guard would periodically supply him with extra food. Another guard secretly passed food to a former friend and brought him messages from home (Hukanovic, 1996:78).

Finally, consider an example from a small-scale genocide—the killings of the Yuki Indians who lived in or near the Round Valley of northern California. During the late 1850s, genocide resulted in their near extermination. Most of the killing occurred when white settlers would organize groups to respond to some offense by the Indians—usually the theft of a rancher's cattle. These groups would then go out and kill perhaps 50 or 60 nearby Indians (Laycock, 1860:49). One settler, Isaac Shanon, participated in at least three of these killing expeditions, but on another occasion, when a group of white ranchers arrived at Shanon's home looking for Indians to kill, he intervened to protect them: "I told them I wanted my Indians to work for me, and they must not hurt them" (Shanon, 1860:73).

Each of these incidents conforms to the predicted pattern—at least where the relevant information is known. First consider the cases of contradictory behavior in the Rwandan genocide discussed in the introduction to this article.

In the first case, Mectilde had a functionally interdependent relationship with the man who aided her—the president of Catholic Workers Youth, who went on to kill more distant Tutsis in Butare (Mamdani, 2001:222–224). Likewise, Michel hid his Tutsi neighbors but aided in the killing of a Tutsi stranger (Fujii, 2006:170–172). In the third case, a Tutsi joined a militia group consisting of his Hutu friends, who targeted those who were less close to them. The behavior of Eugene, the Tutsi in this case, can also be explained. He helped his friends kill other Tutsis, but he sought to save those who were socially closer—himself and his uncle (Fujii, 2006:166–170). The same was true of the Hutu perpetrators who brought Tutsi family members to the *Hôtel des Mille Collines*. Those they aided were intimates, such as wives, or in Father Wenceslas's case, a parent (Gourevitch, 1998:140–141). The German guard and the woman he helped in the Lublin ghetto also had a tie—albeit a weak one. The woman notes that in the past he “had paid a lot of attention to me” (quoted in Tec, 1986:28). In the Kovno ghetto, Helmut Rauca aided a woman based on a friendship with her boyfriend (Littman, 1983:94–97), and Leah Elstein was helped by an SS officer she worked for (Littman, 1983:106–108). In the case of the Polish farmer who hid two Jews but turned over two others to be killed, the relationships are not clear (Gilbert, 1985:492; see also Gushee, 2003:77–78). Those he turned in were certainly strangers, however, and it is possible he had some tie to the women he helped. In the Armenian case, as the caravan traveled, the Turkish gendarme developed a relationship with the two Armenians he later saved. And the guards who aided prisoners in the Bosnian prison camp had prior acquaintances with those they helped (Hukanovic, 1996:78).⁹ Finally, the California settler who intervened to stop a massacre of Indians did so on behalf of those who worked for him—though he was quite willing to kill more distant Indians on other occasions (Shanon, 1860:73).

Social distance is a powerful predictor of contradictory behavior. While a complete explanation of the phenomenon would certainly require other explanatory variables, consider what this analysis demonstrates. In each case—except one, where the information was unavailable—social distance varies directly with killing and inversely with rescuing. In some cases, the differences are slight—such as where killers aid those with whom they have only recently become acquainted—yet the pattern is the same in multiple contexts. Where a person kills and rescues, it is social distance that varies from one incident to the next. The person is the same and so, often, is the social situation.¹⁰

⁹ In some cases, they were also functionally similar, such as where the Serb guard had participated in a work training program with the man he aided (Hukanovic, 1996:78). Functional distance is a type of social distance that refers to differences in activity, such as differences in occupation (Black, 2000:348, n. 13). Thus, rescue is also more likely where people have similar occupations.

¹⁰ For example, in only two of the cases discussed did the killing and rescuing occur in different contexts. In the Rwandan case where a Hutu helped a Tutsi woman escape from Kigali but later on killed Hutus in Butare, the behaviors occurred at different times and in different locations. And Isaac Shanon, the California settler who interceded on behalf of Indians who worked for him, had killed earlier as part of temporary groups that had since disbanded. But in the other cases, the behaviors occurred closely together in the same social situations.

But killing and rescue—the behaviors themselves—have different social structures.¹¹

THE DEATH OF THE KILLER

Contradictory behavior by individuals during genocides may seem shocking and incomprehensible. It may be epistemologically shocking (cf. Black 1995:864), since it defies conventional explanation. It may even be morally shocking, since it challenges common notions of good and evil. Those who study genocide and rescue often see these behaviors as representing opposite moral extremes. James Waller, for example, views genocide as “extraordinary human evil” (2002:9–22). Likewise, observers often see altruism toward the targets of genocide as representing an extreme—and perhaps mysterious or even supernatural—level of goodness (e.g., Bauman, 1989:168; Block and Drucker, 1992:5, 10; Flescher, 2003:127–148; Paldiel, 1986). If morality is thought to reside with individuals, it may seem inconceivable that the same people engage in acts deemed evil as well as those deemed praiseworthy. Yet they do, in case after case. While some may find this almost unbelievable, another common view would see it as unsurprising that individuals are capable of both kinds of behavior. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, for instance, said “the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being” (1985:75). In this view, individuals may engage in both good and evil as their morality fluctuates: “During the life of any heart this line keeps changing place” (Solzhenitsyn, 1985:75).

The view offered here is different, however, even from the view expressed by Solzhenitsyn. Pure sociology transcends individualism by focusing on the distinctively social or relational aspects of the human condition (Michalski, 2008:533–534). The individual plays no part in its explanations. No longer the center of social life, the person is dead (Black, 1995:870). So, too, the pure sociology of genocide implies the death of the killer. It explains the killing itself, and the killer’s motivations and subjectivity are ignored. From the perspective of pure sociology, then, contradictory behavior during genocide—even by the same individuals—is neither surprising nor inexplicable. Nor do

¹¹ Rational choice theory—which explains behavior as the least costly means to a goal—is also logically capable of explaining such behaviors. Applied to genocidal killings, this would involve identifying the benefits derived from the killing. For example, Browning attributes variation in participation among the members of Reserve Police Battalion 101 in part to self-interest. Those who had well-established careers, who did not need to worry about a future career in the police, were less likely to participate (Browning, 1998:169). Rescue may also provide obvious benefits, such as where people save the lives of employees. Since the interests of the actor in killing or rescuing might vary from one potential victim to the next, rational choice theory could thus explain contradictory behavior with these variable interests. But such an explanation would likely not be very powerful. Most killers and rescuers seem to derive little benefit from their actions, and rescuing often entails great costs. We might say they derive less tangible benefits—perhaps psychic benefits—from killing strangers and rescuing intimates, for instance. But this would be difficult if not impossible to test (cf. Monroe et al., 1990:110–112). Moreover, it would add no explanatory power to the theory presented here.

hearts need to change for individuals to engage in different behaviors. Persons move about the social world, from encounter to encounter, and along with their hearts they inhabit different social structures. Some of these structures are violent—even genocidal. Others are nonviolent—even altruistic. So some individuals are both genocidal and altruistic—killing some people and rescuing others. This contradictory behavior results not from the division of their hearts, but from their dual locations in social space.

BEYOND KILLING AND RESCUING

Killing and rescuing by individuals during genocides boldly illustrates a much broader phenomenon—the variability of individual behavior. In handling their conflicts, the same individuals may be disputative and tolerant, gossipy and tightlipped, violent and peaceful. Beyond social control, the same individuals may be worldly and religious, stingy and generous, deceitful and honest. They may even express contradictory ideas.¹² Radically nonindividualistic, pure sociology is uniquely capable of explaining contradictory behavior of all kinds. Individuals may behave in contradictory ways, but social life behaves consistently with its social structure.

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¹² Kara Bonneau (2002), for example, points to "intraindividual contradictions" in beliefs about social stratification. One such contradiction is the simultaneous recognition of disadvantage and denial of advantage. For example, people may acknowledge that lower-class children have barriers to success but deny that upper-class children are privileged (Bonneau, 2002). This can be explained with Black's theory of voluntarism and determinism, since ideas about socially elevated subjects—such as members of upper classes—are more likely to invoke free will rather than forces beyond one's control (Black, 2000:356).

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