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Holocaust and genocide memorialisation policies in the Western Balkans and Israel/Palestine

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ABSTRACT

In this article I approach memory construction as one of the crucial categories through which human rights values are invoked to impose moral responsibilities for past atrocities. In the conflict and post-conflict settings, however, memory construction is quite often used to define and reinforce ethnic boundaries. Analysing putative Holocaust-genocide nexuses in different conflict (Israel and Palestine) and post-conflict (Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina) settings, I argue that it is precisely the transition from a supposed 'duty to remember' to an internationally supported policy-oriented and mandatory 'proper way of remembrance' that brings justice for some victims but renders many other victim groups invisible. I suggest that the attempts to enforce memorialisation policies set a stage for competition not only over nominal recognition of past atrocities, but also over who gets to be 'memorialized' as the ultimate victim. Thus, rather than strengthening human rights values in conflict and post-conflict societies, an internationally supported 'proper way of remembrance' often results in strengthening further divisions and ethnic nationalism.

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Introduction

In this article, I wish to untangle an intersection between human rights regimes and memorialisation policies. Memorialisation policies are understood here as part of an institutionalised system of the human rights regime that regulates memorialisation standards. Memorialisation standards are defined by the United Nations (UN) as 'promoting Western memorial models as a template for the representation of past tragedies or mass crimes'.¹ These standards are potent with organisational power as they produce values and constitute interest through the conferral of a certain type of political legitimacy (in this context, the one based on Western liberal standards). This one 'right' way of remembrance imposes a standardised model that forces states to modify their memories to behaviours expected by the human rights standards. This article will question the principal assumption of the human rights agenda – that in conflict and post-conflict settings, a proper memorialisation of past

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¹UN General Assembly (2014) Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, F. Shaheed, 'Memorialisation Processes' A/HRC/25/49.

human rights abuses is necessary and effective for promoting universalist, human rights values. Contrary to this view that has in the past decades shaped peacebuilding processes across the globe, I show that the standardisation of memory may actually produce future conflicts. Addressing the discourse in which human rights provide a language for negotiating morality, I argue that mandating memorialisation standards as the supposedly only proper way to commemorate past atrocities does not bring stabilisation and peacebuilding but rather strengthens animosities along ethnic lines.

To establish this claim, I analyse the impact of Holocaust and genocide memorialisation policies in two in-conflict settings – Israel and Palestine and three post-conflict settings – Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter, Bosnia, or BiH).² Both Holocaust and genocide historiographies are heavily shaped and influenced by human rights infrastructures, resulting in discourses, practices and memorialisation policies through which human rights regimes try to enforce moral responsibilities for past atrocities. To understand how Holocaust and genocide historiographies have been transformed by human rights infrastructures into memorialisation policies, I analyse socio-historical processes through which Holocaust imagery and vocabulary have been appropriated and applied to reinterpret the increasing tendency to claim and frame atrocities as genocide. However, the Holocaust/genocide nexus and the ways in which different (post) conflict settings are being used, abused, appropriated and internalised, are not only defined by the local socio-historical contexts but also by power relations in international arenas. This comparison is based on the assumption that in both conflict and post-conflict settings the framing of national past is a crucial element of the conflict itself. Moreover, the comparison between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority³ and Serbia, Croatia and BiH is not random. For Israel and Palestine, the centrality of the Holocaust legacy serves as a diversion from Palestinian suffering, a fundamental issue in their already seven-decade-long conflict. For Serbia, Croatia and BiH, the Srebrenica genocide resolutions are part of their two-decade-long, uneven and largely externally forced processes of dealing with the contested legacies of the wars in the 90s. In both settings, attempts to mandate the commemoration of past human rights abuses as one-sided and selective actually end up in the perpetuation of conflicts, not in the promotion of human rights.

There are, of course, important differences as well. Following the wars of the 1990s, Serbia, Croatia and BiH all formally committed to the Europeanisation process. Each state's entrance to the EU is supposedly conditioned upon, among other things, facing their 'criminal past' of human rights abuses. While in the Balkan cases the international community has played a significant role in pressuring Serbia, Croatia and BiH to shape their national histories in accordance with the mandates of a specific human rights regime, Israel and Palestine offer different dynamics. From a systemic perspective, and considering the numerous wars and conflicts that Israel and Palestine have been entangled in to this day, the formation of the State of Israel (1948) helped define some general patterns of larger power relations. Though the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is changing constantly and both Israelis and Palestinians consider themselves to be victims of the respective other side, Israel is in a position of power

²Bosnia is a unique case: there is no single state actor, and no single official history accepted in Bosnia but rather narratives divided across ethnonational lines – Serbian, Croatian and Bosniak.

³Palestine is certainly not a state in a narrow sense, since it has neither a well-defined territory nor is its sovereignty recognised internationally. However, since Palestine does have a recognised government, it is still useful to work with the assumption that Palestine is a state, especially since the diplomatic practice seems to be the most important argument for viewing Palestine as a state.

with vastly greater financial and military resources than those available to the Palestinians. What's more, while the European Balkan states have faced financial conditionalities in steps of the EU accession processes, Israel and Palestine are much less pressured by the international community to exhibit an even nominal acceptance of a cosmopolitan history, through which global concerns and values become part of local experiences.

This article is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the relationship between human rights, genocide, and demands for the standardisation of memory. I briefly discuss how the 'facing the past' approach became a foundation for the memorialisation policy that defines what the 'proper' remembrance of past atrocities should look like.⁴ The second part discusses the implications of Holocaust memorialisation policies in different conflict and post-conflict settings, showing that the establishment of a normative framework of 'proper remembrance' does not necessarily promote human rights but is also counterproductive and strengthens animosities across ethnic lines. In the third part, I address differences and commonalities in the way genocide discourses are put in motion and propelled by the mandatory memorialisation policies of the human rights regime, based on the notion of a 'duty to remember'. Finally, despite significant differences in all of the cases studies, I argue that internationally inspired social actions of memorialisation not only produced hierarchies of suffering, but further reinforced ethnic divisions and instability.

Human rights, genocide and accountability

Until the late 1980s and early 1990s, the human rights mandate and genocide prohibition had little overlap in practice. The renewed interest in genocide, its expansion beyond the narrow confines of legal discourse and its conjuncture with the human rights language of morality, should be understood in the terms of global historical and political processes. Three different but interconnected processes need to be addressed here: increased real-time reporting on mass killings, aided visually by television; the birth of 'transitional justice' as an offspring of the human rights paradigm; and the adoption of the 'facing the past' framework, within which memorialisation policies are most prominent.

The sudden wide interest in genocide studies, specifically scholarly attempts to conceptualise its prevention, can be explained in part by the onset of the real-time reporting of mass atrocities. The increased media attention that the respective 1970s genocides in both Cambodia and Bangladesh received suggest that the real-time reporting of global conflict played a large role in the influx of scholarly attention toward the subject. In Cambodia, from the time the Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot seized power in April 1975 until their defeat by the Vietnamese in 1979, an estimated one and a half to 3 million people died or were subjects of mass murder. Though the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh may have resulted in a similar number of deaths, there was more time for scholars and activists to debate events in Cambodia as they were happening, and events in Bangladesh did not touch directly on the Cold War geopolitics.⁵ Nevertheless, the killings in Bangladesh have been well reported and together with Cambodia they have become the subject of intense academic and political

⁴For more extensive analysis of the rise of memorialisation standards and policy-oriented attempts to engage transitional societies to develop and adopt specific normative forms of remembrance, see: Lea David, 'Against Standardization of Memory', *Human Rights Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (forthcoming).

⁵Jahan Rounaq, 'Genocide in Bangladesh', in *Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views*, eds. Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons, and Israel W. Charny (New York: Garland, 1997). 295–320.

debate. With the unfolding of the Bosnian war (1992–1995) and the Rwanda mass killings (1994), genocide studies gained momentum.

On the other hand, in the late 1980s to mid-1990s, and as a response to concrete political dilemmas, human rights activists have faced new political realities. They wondered how to make officials of previous regimes accountable for systematic human rights abuses, while simultaneously fostering those states' transition to democracy. Countries as varied as Uganda, Argentina, South Korea, Chile, South Africa, Brazil, The Philippines, Uruguay, Guatemala, and Haiti, Poland and Czechoslovakia, have confronted the same sorts of questions as they attempted to move from dictatorial to democratic systems of governance, seeking to understand how to deal with the former torturers persisting in their midst.⁶ This period of accelerated democratisations and political fragmentations generated a new sort of human rights activity coined 'transitional justice', which adopted accountability as the main approach for dealing with the difficult legacies. The establishment of 'transitional justice' came about with the ad hoc international tribunals to judge crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. According to the UN, transitional justice is the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. It includes criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programmes, and various kinds of institutional reforms. However, accountability mechanisms were broadened to include not solely juridical but also political and social mechanisms which directly affected the ways in which the human rights regime understood and applied memorialisation in conflict and post conflict settings.⁷

Accountability through memorialisation standards: drafting policies on 'the proper way to remember'

Since the 1980s, the human rights vision of memorialisation – a process of remembering the wrongs of the past and honouring the victims – has grown, together with the idea that public and official recognition of crimes is essential to prevent further violence in divided or post-conflict societies. The emergence in the 1980s of the controversial concept of a 'duty to remember' concerning mass crimes, such as the destruction of the European Jews by the Nazis, the slave trade and the violence carried out against indigenous peoples, also contributed to the rise of memorialisation. This general assumption, developed mostly by human rights lawyers, activists, and political scientists, was based on an idealised view: that by compelling the act of honouring the memory of those who died, the 'duty to remember' would be an insurance policy against the repetition of such crimes.

The rationale for placing the notion of 'dealing with the past' at the heart of the post-conflict processes and massive human rights abuses was based on three main assumptions: psychological, political, and moral. The psychological assumption emphasises that working through the past is necessary for healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. The second, a political position, argues that accountability fosters democracy, promotes peace and human rights. The moral argument places the processes of dealing with the past as a moral duty

⁶Arthur Paige, 'How "transitions" Reshaped Human Rights: A Conceptual History of Human Rights', *Human Rights Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2009): 321–67.

⁷Ruti Teitel, 'Transitional Justice Genealogies', *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 16 (2003): 69–94.

to remember the victims and acknowledge their trauma.⁸ Regardless of the actual validity of these assumptions, once those goals were set and conceptualised as an inevitable part of the liberal peace agenda, there was a shift from the supposed ‘duty to remember,’ which had mainly been used for raising awareness, to ‘a proper way of remembrance’ that is clearly policy-oriented, and is meant to reshape political and societal structures and hierarchies in the targeted country.

This policy orientation is particularly relevant today, as the idea of the centrality of memorialisation in transitional justice has become a prevailing instrument for dealing with past human rights abuses worldwide. Moreover, it has become a significant part of the transitional justice policy agenda. Just recently, the UN adopted ‘memorialisation standards’⁹ that promoted Western memorial models as a template for the representation of past tragedies or mass crimes, and in so doing requiring states with difficult pasts to adhere to the prescribed standards of memory. The document explains: ‘Western memorial models commemorating the victims of Nazism, while not always the most adequate or appropriate, have become a template or at least a political and aesthetic inspiration for the representation of past tragedies or mass crimes.’¹⁰

Binding memorialisation processes together with a particular sets of policy instruments means that the manner in which official memory in (post) conflict states is constructed is no longer solely an internal matter in those countries. External factors are meant to exert a significant influence on local memory, and through the human rights regime and the normative policy ‘recommendations,’ to impose externally determined values on local actors.¹¹ Quite often, an outsider to a conflict – the UN or powerful Western states – forces a particular approach to memory on the (former) parties to the conflict. Those pressures are always dressed up in universalist human rights garb. As a result, local political elites often struggle to find ways to deal with the human rights demands forced upon them by the international community while simultaneously responding to strong local demands to be acknowledged as the righteous party in the conflict.¹² It is precisely here, in the gap between local and global political agendas, that the externally driven mandate forcing the ‘proper way of remembrance’ poses problems for states with difficult pasts. This imposed memorialisation in countries facing past atrocities, externally-driven mandating of the ‘proper way of remembrance’ produces political effects that are antithetical to the presumptions of human rights theory and strengthen nationalist political actors.

Holocaust remembrance and memorialisation policy

During the past several decades and in particular after the 1989 fall of the Berlin wall, several normative memorialisation policies on Holocaust remembrance were pushed to

⁸Jasna Dragović-Soso, ‘Conflict, Memory, Accountability: What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?’ in *Conflict and Memory: Bridging Past and Future in [South East] Europe*, eds. Petritsch Wolfgang and Džihic Vedran (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010). 29–46.

⁹UN General Assembly (2014) Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, F. Shaheed, ‘Memorialisation Processes’, A/HRC/25/49.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹Jeffrey Blustein, ‘Human Rights and the Internationalization of Memory’, *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43, no. 1 (2012): 19–32.

¹²Jelena Subotić, *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 15–38; David Lea, ‘Fragmentation as a Strategy of Silencing: Serbian War Veterans Against the State of Serbia’, *Contemporary Southeastern Europe* 2, no. 1 (2015): 55–73; and David Lea, ‘Dealing with the Contested Past in Serbia: De-contextualization of the War Veterans Memories’, *Nations and Nationalism* 21, no. 1 (2015): 102–19.

the fore as expressing ‘the consolidation of new ethical norms.’¹³ Holocaust remembrance became a signifier of westernised moral boundaries – ‘a unit of measurement’¹⁴ in relation to the human rights regime. Those efforts are apparent in the 2005 UN General Assembly’ adoption of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, an international memorial day on 27 January commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. In practice, this means that every UN state member is obligated to commemorate the Holocaust at the state level regardless of its own nationally contextualised histories. This rapid growth of the generation of normative memory, expressed through the frameworks of proper Holocaust remembrance, is strikingly obvious in the fact that by 2013, the Association of Holocaust Organisations included over 300 worldwide organisations located in 33 countries that are linked to Holocaust education.¹⁵ In 2015, the EU based prestigious International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA),¹⁶ established in 1998, had 31 member states and an additional 8 observer states in the process of becoming members. As stated on their website, all member-states ‘must be committed to the Stockholm Declaration and to the implementation of national policies and programmes in support of Holocaust education, remembrance, and research.’¹⁷ Indeed, Holocaust memory has transcended borders of the territorial memories of the Holocaust, spreading (though unevenly) across continents and far away from the physical territories where it actually happened, in North¹⁸ and South America,¹⁹ Australia²⁰ and even Africa.²¹

At first glance, Holocaust memorialisation practices also matter across the ex-Yugoslav countries. According to the 2015 report on Holocaust memorialisation across the OSCE region of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights,²² Croatia is involved in Holocaust-related activities on multiple levels. First, Croatia observes 27 January as the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity as the day that marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and genocides of World War II.²³ Second, in Croatia, the Roma and Sinti genocide is officially commemorated on 2 August, the International Day of Remembrance of the Roma Victims of the Holocaust.²⁴ Third, in April, commemorations are held at the Jasenovac Memorial site to mark the anniversary of the breakout by prisoners

¹³Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, ‘The Institutionalization of Cosmopolitan Morality: The Holocaust and Human Rights’, *Journal of Human Rights* 3, no. 2 (2004): 143–57.

¹⁴Daniel Levy Daniel and Natan Sznajder, ‘Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory’, *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 (2002): 87–106.

¹⁵Amos Goldberg and Haim Hazan, eds., *Marking Evil: Holocaust Memory in the Global Age* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015).

¹⁶Previously known as the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research (ITF).

¹⁷<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/about-us>.

¹⁸Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, ‘Sovereignty Transformed: A Sociology of Human Rights’, *British Journal of Sociology* 57, no. 4 (2006): 657–76.

¹⁹Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

²⁰Neil Levi, ‘No Sensible Comparison? The Place of the Holocaust in Australia’s History Wars’, *History and Memory* 19, no. 1 (2007): 124–56.

²¹Shirli Gilbert, ‘Jews and the Racial State: Legacies of the Holocaust in Apartheid South Africa 1945–60’, *Jewish Social Studies* 16, no. 3 (2010): 32–64.

²²OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2015) ‘Holocaust Memorial Days: An overview of remembrance and education in the OSCE region.’ January 27.

²³The date was established by a decision of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, adopted on 30 October 2003.

²⁴For a complete overview of Croatia’s initiatives related to Roma and Sinti genocide remembrance and education, please see the CPRSI report: <http://www.osce.org/romasintigenocide>.

of the Jasenovac camp in 1945. And finally, 22 June is a national holiday in Croatia and marks Anti-Fascist Struggle Day, celebrating the beginning of the country's uprising against the fascist occupying forces during the Second World War. Those four commemorative dates are followed by numerous educational activities, regional and national seminars, and thematic museum exhibitions.²⁵ In 2005, Croatia became a permanent member of the IHRA,²⁶ which further obliged it to enforce Holocaust memorialisation and education at all levels.

In Serbia, the revival of the Holocaust follows the similar pattern. Serbia has observed Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January since 2007. Additionally, on 17 August, Serbia commemorates the residents of Belgrade who were killed on this day in 1941. On 5 October, an official event takes place to commemorate the suffering of the Serbs, Jews, and anti-Fascists at the Jajinci execution site. Moreover, Serbia marks World War II Victims Remembrance Day on 21 October and the International Day against Fascism and Anti-Semitism is marked in Serbia on 9 November, which commemorates the anti-Semitic pogrom that took place in Nazi Germany on that day in 1938. However, the most important day, 22 April 2014, the Day of Remembrance of all the victims of the Holocaust, genocide and other victims of fascism in World War II has been annually commemorated in the Jasenovac memorial site in Croatia. With Serbia's acceptance in the IHRA in 2011, just as in the case of Croatia, various Holocaust-related activities, such as educational seminars and museum exhibitions are started being actively promoted through numerous school textbook lessons across disciplines.²⁷

Even policy enforcement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although far behind in Holocaust memorialisation and education, has shown significant efforts recently to promote Holocaust remembrance.²⁸ In 2013 a large-scale project was launched, aiming to promote Holocaust education 'into the educational system of Bosnia and Herzegovina,' as well as 'the maintenance of active public remembrance of the Jewish Holocaust victims from Bosnia and Herzegovina.'²⁹ Also, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina marks 27 January as the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust 'by addressing the public through a press release as part of its programme of marking important human rights dates.'³⁰ However, due to the absence of state-level legislation on official holidays, Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been able to establish an official Holocaust Memorial Day. Moreover, even though BiH had committed itself to incorporate Holocaust education by 2005 at the 2000 Stockholm Conference, and is a participant state in the IHRA,³¹ 'the

²⁵For the detailed report see for example Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (2005) Croatia – Holocaust Education Report. <http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/education/holocaust-education-reports/croatia-holocaust-education-report.html>.

²⁶Previously known as the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF).
²⁷Lea David, 'The Holocaust Discourse as a Screen Memory: The Serbian Case', in *(Mis)Uses of History: History as a Political Tool in the Western Balkans*, eds. Srdjan Janković and Veran Stančetić (Belgrade: CSDU, 2013), Vol. 1, 63–87.

²⁸See for example: In October 2006, the Goethe Institute and the Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina organised an international conference entitled 'The State of Holocaust Studies in South Eastern Europe: Problems, Obstacles and Perspectives'.

²⁹See Project: 'After the Traces of Our Neighbors: Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Holocaust', <http://www.jewsin-bosnia.eu/>.

³⁰OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 'Holocaust Memorial Days: An Overview of Remembrance and Education in the OSCE Region', January 27, 2015.

³¹Participant state is just a first step, before the observer state, to become a member state.

country is still in the process of building a viable education system and Holocaust education is not its current priority.³²

This sudden burst of the Holocaust memory enforcement in the Western Balkans should make us apprehensive since, on the one hand, in the former Yugoslavia the Holocaust *per se* had almost been unrecognised. In socialist Yugoslavia, as in other communist countries, the suffering of Jews was interpreted as a generic manifestation of the broader terror regime instituted by the Nazis against the civilian population. Nazi anti-Semitism was treated as an expression of racism directed not just at the Jews but also at the Roma and the Slavs. As a result, Jewish victims of the Holocaust were, for the most part, subsumed under the category of ‘victims of fascism’, which avoided the specificity of who killed whom, and remembered only in the context of the broader memorialisation of the People’s Liberation War and anti-fascist resistance.³³

In fact, the post-Communist transition in the region was accompanied by revisionist trends in national historiographies and the revival of right-wing and anti-Semitic political ideas that affected the public perception of the Holocaust. During and after the wars of the 1990s, hundreds of Second World War monuments and memorial sites were destroyed and defaced. For example, in Croatia alone 2964 Second World War monuments and memorial site were either ‘demolished or desecrated and removed’ after the 1990s.³⁴ Similar examples are to be found all across Bosnia, where the partisan monuments suffered the most damage.³⁵ Additionally, after 2000 Serbian and Croatian government officially revitalised pro-fascist Ustasha and Chetnik legacies.³⁶

But if the revival of the Holocaust remembrance against this background of ultra-nationalist ideologies in the Western Balkans is not surprising enough, let us take a look to a place that has the least reason in the world to adopt and promote anything even remotely connected to the Holocaust – Palestine. Not only was the Holocaust historically and geographically distant from both Arab and Palestinian histories, but the Holocaust lies at the base of part of the foundation myth of Israel: that the creation of Israel on the land of Palestinians was justified because of the horrors of the Holocaust. Over the years, well-grounded arguments have been raised arguing that Jews both inside and outside Israel have abused the Holocaust for political reasons, using it to justify the state’s territorial expansion

³²OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Council of Europe, ‘Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina: Roma in the Genocide’, 2014. <http://roma-genocide.org/en/map/bosnia-and-herzegovina>.

³³See more in Jovan Bajford, *Staro Sajmište – Mesto sećanja, zaborava i sporenja* [Staro Sajmište: A site remembered, forgotten, contested] (Beograd: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 2011); and Srđan Radović, *Gradski prostori od mesta do nemesta, i vice versa: slučaj beogradskog Starog Sajmišta, Spomen mesta – istorija sećanja* [Memorial Places - History of Remembrance] (Beograd: Etnografski Institut SANU, 2009).

³⁴Tamara Banjeglav, ‘Sjećanje na rat ili rat sjećanja? Promjene u politikama sjećanja u Hrvatskoj od 1990 do danas [Remembering the War or a War of Remembrance? The Politics of Remembrance in Croatia Since the 1990s]’, in *Re:vizija prošlosti: politike sjećanja u Bosni i Hercegovini, Hrvatskoj i Srbiji od 1990 godine*, eds. Darko Karačić, Tamara banjeglav and Nataša Govedarica (Sarajevo: ACIPS, 2012), 91–154.

³⁵Darko Karačić, ‘Od promoviranja zajedništva do kreiranja podjela [From the Promotion of Multiculturalism to the Creation of Divisions]’, in *Re:vizija prošlosti: politike sjećanja u Bosni i Hercegovini, Hrvatskoj i Srbiji od 1990 godine*, eds. Darko Karačić, Tamara banjeglav and Nataša Govedarica (Sarajevo: ACIPS, 2012), 17–78.

³⁶The most striking examples of such revisionism, where the ultranationalist movements were revived and officially supported are to be found in Bleiburg, where partisans liquidated the political leadership of the Croatian Ustasha regime along with thousands of soldiers and civilians during the Second World War, and in Ravna Gora, where a Serbian general, Draža Mihailović, formed the Chetnik resistance movement. From 2004 Croatian official representatives not only participate in Bleiburg commemorations but the state also funds both the commemorations and the memorial site. In Serbia, in 2015, Draža Mihailović, a leader of the Chetnik movement has been rehabilitated.

and suppression of the Palestinian people and also to provide justification even for aggression and torture as legitimate acts of self-defence.³⁷ In Palestine, from the very beginning, the Holocaust has been perceived within the context of the general Arab struggle with Zionism and of their particular tragedy and sense of victimhood.³⁸ Gilbert Achcar, in 'The Arabs and the Holocaust,' provides a more differentiated overall assessment of Holocaust perceptions, highlighting the wide range of Palestinian attitudes towards Holocaust memory: from 'apparent indifference' over isolated cases of Holocaust endorsement and denial to the more frequent charge that Israel exaggerates 'the scope of the genocide,' and the most common attitude, which accuses Israel of imitating or reproducing atrocities and, sometimes, of going one better than the Nazis.³⁹

But even here, in the midst of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we see attempts to frame the Holocaust differently. In 2014, on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel, President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas issued a formal statement calling the Holocaust 'the most heinous crime to have occurred against humanity in the modern era' and expressing sympathy with victims' families. In 2009 in the Palestinian village of Ni'lin (which belongs to the villages of the Palestinian popular struggle movement), a museum exhibition dedicated to the Jewish Holocaust in Europe 'to create mutual awareness of Jewish and Palestinian suffering'⁴⁰ was opened. Prior to that, in 1998, Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian Liberation Organization's Chairman, was willing to pay a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, though that visit eventually never took place since the museum's board of directors refused to extend him an official VIP invitation.⁴¹

Why did Holocaust remembrance suddenly become so appealing to conflict and post-conflict states? And how do Holocaust memorialisation policies that focus primarily on the Jewish suffering affect commemorations of mass killings in different (post) conflict settings? There are two reasons, I argue, why Holocaust remembrance matters in the (post) conflict settings. First, for the countries still waiting to enter the European Union, the promotion of the Holocaust remembrance is a valuable public signifier of their moral boundaries. Embracing Holocaust remembrance is yet another policy that must be followed at least officially, and is therefore also a necessary requirement to join the European free market.⁴² It is understood as a necessary step that improves the chances of the candidate states to become accepted into the EU.⁴³ Second, even though the Holocaust has not become a single universally shared memory, as Levy and Sznajder envisaged, it has become, as Assmann

³⁷David Stannard, 'Uniqueness as Denial: The Politics of Genocide Scholarship', in *Is the Holocaust Unique?* ed. Rosenbaum S. Alan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 163–208.

³⁸Meir Litvak and Esther Webman, 'Perceptions of the Holocaust in Palestinian Public Discourse', *Israel Studies* 8, no. 3 (2003): 123–40.

³⁹Gilbert Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust. The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2011), 221.

⁴⁰'Palestine's Holocaust Museum', Aljazeera, April 30, 2009.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/2009/04/2009429133130101883.html>.

ynet 21.04.09 'מצעד הימים' בנעלין: 'אם יידעו, אולי יהיה שלום'.
<http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3704234,00.html>.

⁴¹This initiative failed miserably. See more in: Litvak Meir and Webman Esther, 'Perceptions of the Holocaust in Palestinian Public Discourse *Israel Studies*', 8, no. 3 (2003): 123–40.

⁴²Henry Russou, 'History of Memory, Politics of the Past, For What?' in *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*, eds. K. Jarausch and T. Lindenberger (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), 23–37.

⁴³David, 'The Holocaust Discourse as a Screen Memory', 63–87.

suggested, the paradigm or template through which other genocides and historical traumas are often perceived or presented.⁴⁴ The Holocaust has thereby not replaced other traumatic memories around the globe but has provided instead a language for their articulation, or a wider context that enables reframing selective fragments of the past.⁴⁵

Holocaust remembrance hence became the global formative power of the imagined moral community, allowing the Jewish suffering to achieve the status of ultimate victimhood. More importantly, cases brought by Holocaust survivors and political pressure organised by Israel have also set legal and moral standards for compensation and restitution for victims of genocide, as well as demands for an apology, reparations and return of property. The outcome of such ethnically bound framing of the Holocaust memorialisation policies seems to be very appealing for the (post) conflict states: there are both material and symbolic pay-offs for being globally recognised as 'victim people'. In that sense, for Palestine, just as for Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, enforcing Holocaust remembrance has to do with an important agenda – not necessarily because human rights matter – but rather because becoming a member in the imagined community of a proper morality sets a platform for addressing one's own past injustices and claiming victimhood status recognition.

Srebrenica genocide resolutions: a war to become a victim nation

If the Holocaust memorialisation policies provided the entrance ticket to the moral community of the righteous among states and created a set of practices identifying (select) victims, then the Srebrenica genocide resolutions widened the scope of the 'ultimate victim' to make payoffs seem possible for many ethnic groups that suffered past atrocities. First and foremost, the Srebrenica resolutions provide quasi-legal discursive patterns for ethnic groups to claim recognition over past atrocities which are meant to empower the victims. It is precisely the possibility of the payoffs that exposed limits and dangers of a 'forced' remembering. By establishing settings in which material and symbolic payoffs seem to be achievable, Srebrenica genocide resolutions opened room not for the human rights value adoption, but for endless instrumentalisation and exploitation of the victim groups' sufferings.

The Srebrenica genocide refers to the July 1995 killing of 7000–8000⁴⁶ Bosnian Muslim males in the town of Srebrenica during the last months of the Bosnian War (1992–1995). In August 2001, a trial chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) handed down the tribunal's first genocide conviction. In this landmark case: Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstić (the Serb officer on trial), the chamber determined that the 1995 Srebrenica massacres – in which Bosnian Serb forces executed 7000–8000 Bosnian Muslim men – constituted genocide. However, the ICTY decision was not the first-ever

⁴⁴Aleida Assmann, 'Europe: A Community of Memory?' *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 40 (2007): 11–25.

⁴⁵Jovan Byford, 'When I Say "the Holocaust" I mean "Jasenovac" – Remembrance of the Holocaust in contemporary Serbia', *East European Jewish Affairs* 37, no. 1 (2007): 51–74.

⁴⁶ICTY: The Conflicts: The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. <http://www.icty.org/sid/322>; Helge Brunborg and Henrik Urdal in their 'Report on the Number of Missing and Dead from Srebrenica' write that 'a minimum of 7,475 persons from the Srebrenica enclave are missing and presumed dead'. See more in http://www.icty.org/x/file/About/OTP/War_Demographics/en/krstic_srebrenica_000212.pdf.

conviction for aiding and abetting genocide.⁴⁷ In 1998, on 2 September, the first conviction for genocide by an international court was handed down when an International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda trial chamber found Jean-Paul Akayesu, a Democratic Republican Movement politician from Rwanda, guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity. This was important as it gave momentum to the ICTY prosecutors to consider broadening the scope of the characterisation of genocide.⁴⁸

In what follows, I do not dispute any of the well-known facts in regard to Srebrenica such as the number of victims, their post-mortem displacement or the fact that the victims were executed for the sake of being Muslim Bosnian males by the Serbian army. My argument here does not deal with the legal definitions of genocide but it has to do with the political uses of the genocide discourses. In that sense, I find Robert Hayden's argument convincing that the invocation of the term 'genocide' in connection with the Srebrenica massacre was primarily a political process which depended 'not on the accuracy with which the images reflect the events they supposedly represent, but rather with how well the images invoke emotional reaction from the intended recipients.'⁴⁹ Hayden describes how the Holocaust inventory has been used in a process of the genocide construction in Bosnia, such as the power of Jewish and Nazi tropes in depicting victimisation, intensively 'playing' with victim numbers.⁵⁰ Katherine Southwick similarly points out that this came out of the 'need for a dramatic expression of moral outrage at the most terrible massacre in Europe since the Second World War' but she also states that 'the chamber's interpretation of genocide has problematic implications for the tribunal, enforcement of the international humanitarian law, and historical accuracy.'⁵¹

The politicising of the legal discourses over the definition of genocide is important. Once the crimes at Srebrenica were identified as a genocide, the particular type of memorialisation policies followed. Importantly, given the failure of the international community, and the EU in particular, to intervene and prevent the events at Srebrenica the calls for memorialisation were also about saving face for the international actors. The European Parliament adopted three resolutions on the Srebrenica genocide – the first one on 7 July 2005, the second one on 15 January 2009 and the third on 7 July 2015. All three resolutions outline the proper way to remember Srebrenica. The policy framework of the proper memorialisation standards was being tailored through precise wording that was meant to establish power orders of the moral community of righteous. Thus, the European Parliament: 'Stresses', 'Recalls', 'Regrets', 'Expresses', 'Praises' and 'Reaffirms' – in order to draw moral lines between ethnically bounded victims and ethnically bounded perpetrators. Moreover, it '[C]alls on the Council and the Commission to commemorate *appropriately*⁵² the anniversary of the Srebrenica-Potočari act of genocide by supporting Parliament's recognition of 11 July as

⁴⁷Katherine G. Southwick, 'Srebrenica as Genocide? The Krstić Decision and the Language of the Unspeakable', *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal* 8 (2005): 188–227.

⁴⁸William A. Schabas, 'Was Genocide Committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina? First Judgments of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia', *Fordham International Law Journal* 25, no. 1 (2001): 23–53.

⁴⁹Robert M. Hayden, 'Mass Killings and Images of Genocide in Bosnia in 1941–45 and 1992–95', in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave; Macmillan, 2008), Ch. 19, 487–516.

⁵⁰Whereas right after the war in BiH the estimated numbers of the Bosnians killed was around 250,000, today internationally recognized number is around 97,000. See more Mirsad Tokača, *The Bosnian Book of Death*. (Sarajevo: The Research and Documentation Centre, 2013).

⁵¹Katherine G. Southwick, 'Srebrenica as Genocide? The Krstić Decision and the Language of the Unspeakable', *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal* 8 (2005): 188–227.

⁵²My italics.

the day of commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide all over the EU, and to call on all the countries of the Western Balkans to do the same.' The resolutions, under the motto of 'justice for victims', has signalled to all that, as Tzvetan Todorov puts it, 'though nobody wants actually to be a victim of genocide, it is really advantageous to claim to have been a victim of genocide'.⁵³

But we need to go beyond the legal debate to understand the implications of identifying Srebrenica as genocide. One can fully accept that Srebrenica massacre constitutes a genocide in legal terms, but this still does not explain why for different ethnic groups it is so immensely important to label the extent of their own victimisation as 'genocide'. Is the pain more bearable for the victims' survivors once the crime is named 'genocide' as opposed to 'ethnic cleansing', 'mass-killing' or simple 'massacre'? Or, are the people invoking the number of dead in this way trying to make very real claims to political power, property, and other resources? And, who are those 'people' raising those claims?

In the Western Balkans, the Srebrenica genocide resolutions have triggered different sentiments and political actions within various ethnonational groups. For the Bosniaks, the resolutions are used as canonical documents for the establishment of the sacred foundations of the Bosniak nation. The government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010 declared 11 July as Srebrenica genocide day. Elevating Srebrenica victims to a national symbol of Bosniak suffering has made other Bosniak victims across Bosnia seem less worthy – second-class victims.⁵⁴ However, the compensation for privileging Srebrenica victims could be excused by the 'upgrade' of the whole nation to the status of the 'victim nation'. The stance of the victim's nation is a powerful one: the victim nation is always morally right, neither responsible nor accountable and forever entitled to sympathy.⁵⁵

The articulation of a particular type of nation-building policy enforced through different forms of memorialisation de facto delegitimises Republika Srpska (RS). This is exactly the reason why the Bosnian Serbian leadership is dismissing interpretations of Srebrenica genocide as a symbol of genocide of the entire Bosniak population, rather than just for Srebrenica, as ruled by the ICTY. Since Bosnian Serbs were framed as perpetrators in ethnic terms, the Srebrenica genocide resolutions did not equip the Serbs in Bosnia with meaning-making processes for the better implementation of the human rights regime. To the contrary: leaving little or no place for their own victims has made local politics and coexistence on the ground sodden with resentment, hostility, permanent animosity and (mutual) feelings of injustice. For the Serbs in Serbia, the Srebrenica genocide resolutions keep reactivating the horrors of Jasenovac concentration camp by ignoring it, and the Croatian Ustasha massacre over Serbs during the Second World War. In March 2010, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia did adopt a declaration on Srebrenica but without using the term 'genocide'. In Serbia and the RS, what is being triggered by the Srebrenica genocide resolutions is not the process of dealing with what the Serbian Army did to Bosniaks in July 1995, but the recollections of the past atrocities committed against Serbs that, in their own perception, have received inadequate international recognition and moral payoffs. Thus, whenever

⁵³Tzvetan Todorov, *Hope and Memory: Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 143.

⁵⁴Lea David, 'Critical Assessment of Human Rights: A Road Back to Nationalism?' *Coalition for Recom* (2015), e-journal: <http://www.recom.link/critical-assessment-of-human-rights-a-road-back-to-nationalism/>.

⁵⁵Ivana Franović, 'Dealing with the Past in the Context of Ethnonationalism – The case of Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia', *Bergof Occasional Paper* 29 (2008): 1–59.

Serbia's politicians face international pressures to commit to certain memory politics, they instantly invoke Jasenovac.⁵⁶

For that matter, it is useful to go through editorial and readers' comments every time Srebrenica resolutions are being mentioned in the Serbian press. Though it also shows a great variety of positioning, the most distinct voices keep recollecting the unjust forgetting of Serbian suffering: 'This is obviously a double standard! So according to the resolution, Jasenovac, Jadovno, Kragujevac, Sremska Mitrovica are not genocides, but Srebrenica is?';⁵⁷ or 'In the 20th century, Jasenovac was a genocide! It's a textbook example of a genocide: slaughtering, killing, population transfer'. Srebrenica resolutions provoke mnemonic battles across temporal and spatial dimensions:

The biggest hypocrisy is that the Croats initiated the resolution adoption! Those folks are really shameless. They expelled 300 thousand Serbs from Croatia, committed mass crimes, burned hundreds of houses, and they get to decide on genocide! And not to mention Jasenovac and other scaffolds.⁵⁸

The outrage in Serbia was also heightened by the fact that on 2 July 1999, during the NATO bombardment on Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia filed a suit against Serbia⁵⁹ in the International Court of Justice (ICJ), accusing Serbia of committing genocide in Croatia between 1991 and 1995.⁶⁰ Croatia, in order to increase its chances of winning, waited until the conclusion of the Bosnian genocide case before it proceeded with its own case. 'We will show you that the crimes that took place in the campaign against Croats amount to genocide,' Croatia's agent to the court, Vesna Crnic-Grotic, told the judges.⁶¹ Not surprisingly, on 4 January 2010, Serbia accused the Republic of Croatia for committing genocide against local Serbian population. Both Serbia and Croatia's applications had financial aspects, seeking compensation for damages. Nevertheless, the legal battle was primarily about settling historical disputes between Serbia and Croatia. As such, the judicial stage was used for setting a performative competition over victimhood and strengthening further local right-wing electoral bodies in both countries.⁶²

⁵⁶Since the 1980s onward, the Jasenovac debate, in particular regarding the number of Serbian victims executed has been heated, often hostile and politically charged. The numbers ranged from tens of thousands to over a million. One of the main protagonists of mitigating the numbers was Franjo Tuđman, the first President of Croatia and their leader during the wars of 1990, who wrote the book 'Bespuća povijesne zbiljnosti. Rasprava o povijesti i filozofiji zločinja' in 1989. Presently, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington estimates that the Ustaša regime murdered between 77,000 and 99,000 people in Jasenovac between 1941 and 1945. The Jasenovac Memorial Site quotes a similar figure of between 80,000 and 100,000 victims. It was also invoked as part of the process of stoking national hostilities during the breakdown of Yugoslavia and its escalation into bloody wars. Recent Jakov Sedlar's movie 'Jasenovac – the truth', however, has downplayed the number of people killed by the country's pro-Nazi Second World War regime at the Jasenovac concentration camp to no more than 20,000 to 40,000. The movie has been praised by the then Croatian culture minister, and also provided a further boost for the pro-fascist sentiments in Croatia. See more at: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatian-jews-outraged-by-holocaust-denial-film-04-05-2016#sthash.eUKxoCnk.dpuf>; and in Betty Denich, 'Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide', *American Ethnologist* 21, no. 2 (1994): 367–90.

⁵⁷Anonymous talkback 'Sta Srbija misli o Srebrenici'. B92, 26.06.2015 http://www.b92.net/info/komentari.php?nav_id=1008848.

⁵⁸Anonymous talkback 'EP usvojio rezoluciju o Srebrenici'. B92, 9.07.2015. http://www.b92.net/info/komentari.php?nav_id=1013659.

⁵⁹Then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

⁶⁰Application of the convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide – Croatia v Yugoslavia. International Court of Justice. 2 July 1999. <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/118/7125.pdf>.

⁶¹Mike Corder, 'At ICJ, Croatia Accuses Serbia of Genocide', March 3, 2014. AP, <http://news.yahoo.com/icj-croatia-accuses-serbia-genocide-101103902.html>.

⁶²On 3 February 2015, the ICJ ruled that neither Serbia nor Croatia proved sufficient evidence that either side committed genocide, thereby dismissing both cases.

Politicising the definition of genocide and enforcing political orders through Srebrenica genocide resolutions produced a pattern for ethnic groups that suffer historical injustice to follow. The increasing tendency to claim and frame atrocities as genocide became extremely effective for strengthening mutually hostile national identities across ethnic lines. Returning to the cases of Israel and Palestine, the accusation of committing genocide towards the Palestinians was recently heard from none other than the President of the Palestinian authority, Mahmoud Abbas. In his speech to the UN General assembly on 26 September 2014, Abbas asserted a direct link between ‘the historic injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people in Al-Nakba (catastrophe) of 1948’ and current events, while appealing to the international community to ‘prevent a new Nakba.’⁶³ Linking Nakba with genocide, however, is not new. For example, genocide scholars and human rights activist alike have tried to promote different agendas arguing against and for the legal application of the genocide definition to the Palestinian case.⁶⁴ In particular, this debate has been moved forward by Martin Shaw, a prominent genocide scholar, who drew on the Srebrenica genocide definition in the ICTY to argue that ‘the Nakba is an episode of genocide.’⁶⁵ Just as Mouhamad Abbas used human rights language for negotiating moralities, Shaw justifies the application of the term genocide to Nakba, claiming that ‘so long as Israel does not come to terms with the genocide of 1948 and its enduring injustice, its leaders will continue to resort to brutal, degenerate war as a method of keeping the Palestinians in their place.’⁶⁶

Israel, on its part, rejects fully the comparisons between Holocaust and Nakba. It is also reluctant to encourage any comparison between genocide and Holocaust⁶⁷ in fear of losing its privileged status of the nation-victim. This reluctance is visible by the fact that the Israeli government has not responded to the Srebrenica genocide resolutions and is one of the few countries that has not sent delegations to Srebrenica commemorations. Either way, neither the Western Balkan nor Israeli/Palestinian experiences with ‘facing the past’ have resulted in the desired implementation of the human rights regime that was so readily expected by the international community’s peacebuilding efforts.

Conclusion: memorialisation policies and setting the stage for new conflicts

Both Holocaust memorialisation policies and Srebrenica genocide resolutions are promoted as necessary peacebuilding practices and are justified in terms of fostering the universal moralities of human rights. However, the Holocaust is not remembered as a crime against all of humanity. Rather, it is framed as the culmination of a history of anti-Semitism that only happened to Jews. This is of crucial importance.⁶⁸ Once the remembrance of Holocaust

⁶³Full text of Mahmoud Abbas’s speech to the UN ‘Israel has made this “a year of a new war of genocide perpetrated against the Palestinian people”’, *The Times of Israel*, September 26, 2014.

⁶⁴See for example works of Mitchell Plitnick, a former Director of the US Office of B’Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, as well as scholars such as Martin Shaw, Jonh Docker, Damien Short arguing that the Nakba should be considered as a genocide, whereas scholars such as Israel Charny, Omer Bartov, William Schabas and Michal Ratner, President Emeritus of the Centre for Constitutional Rights in New York strongly oppose to such framing.

⁶⁵Martin Shaw, ‘Palestine in an International Historical Perspective on Genocide’, *Holy Land Studies* 9, no. 1 (2010): 1–24.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁷There has been long and at times hostile debate with clear political implications for whether the Holocaust is unique. See for example Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, ‘The Politics of Uniqueness: Reflections on the recent polemical Turn in Holocaust and Genocide Scholarship’, *Holocaust Genocide Studies* 13, no. 1 (1999): 28–61.

⁶⁸Levy Daniel and Sznajder Natan, ‘Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory’, *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 (2002): 87–106.

has been bound to ethnicity, other genocide memorialisations followed the pattern. By classifying recent Western Balkan events as ‘genocide,’ the nature of the events themselves is actually obscured rather than explained, competition over victimhood promoted and ethnic animosities reinforced.⁶⁹

Memorialisation policies, mandating the manner in which decontextualised international norms must be applied to specific local (post) conflict settings, are not only failing to resolve the contradictions between local cultural knowledge and international norms but also reflect the outsourcing of colonial-style rule.⁷⁰ With memorialisation policies, the case seems to be that the over-capacity of the forced remembering sustain and perpetuate conflicts in the loop, and sanctifies the ideal of victimhood nations, enforcing ‘what we think they should be rather than what local people see them as being or wish them to be.’⁷¹ Quite often, this external prescription of ways to deal with the past is used by nationalist elites to suggest that their particular ethnic group suffering is being overlooked. As a result, and contrary to the expected, mandating memory in the name of human rights is destabilising, potentially adding fuel to the very same nationalist fires that it is supposed to extinguish. In fact, memorialisation policies have power to actually trigger the mutation of nationalist doctrines into violent acts.⁷²

It is precisely the transition from a supposed ‘duty to remember’ to a policy-oriented and mandatory ‘proper way of remembrance’ that makes the selective remembrance of the past atrocities locally transparent and patently unjust. Memorialisation policies bring justice for some victims but render many other victim groups invisible. They set a stage for competing not only for nominal recognition and particular rights but also for the supremacy to determine who gets to be perceived as an ultimate victim, creating competing hierarchies of suffering. Thus, one reaches the full circle: ultimately, competing sufferings and victimisation across ethnic lines is just where the conflict begins. My critique of the appropriateness of labelling atrocities as ‘genocide’ for political motives does not mean we should stay blind to human suffering. However, we do need to recognise commercialisation of victimhood, make critical and case-sensitive assessments on the purposes of policies and their effects on the ground.

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⁶⁹Lea David, ‘Critical Assessment of Human Rights: A Road Back to Nationalism?’ *Coalition for Recom* (2015), e-journal: <http://www.recom.link/critical-assessment-of-human-rights-a-road-back-to-nationalism/>.

⁷⁰Oliver Richmond, ‘A Post-liberal peace: Eirenism and the Everyday’, *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009): 557–580.

⁷¹Robert M. Hayden, ‘Moral Vision and Impaired Insight: The Imagining of Other Peoples’ Communities in Bosnia’, *Current Anthropology* 48, no. 1 (2007): 105–131.

⁷²Siniša Malešević, ‘Is Nationalism Intrinsicly Violent?’ *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 19, no. 1 (2013): 12–37.

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