Big Events on a Small Scale:
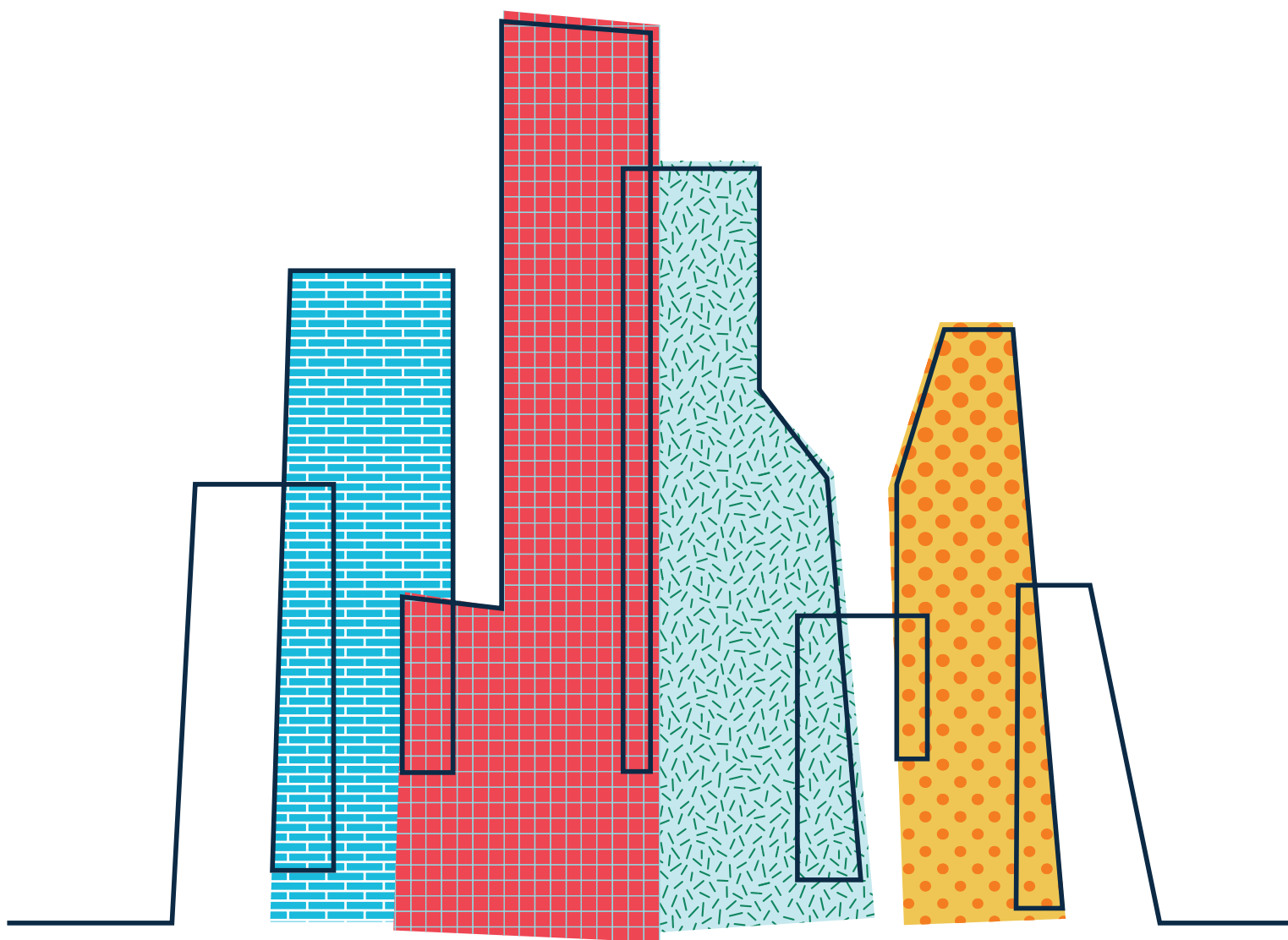## Exploring Identity-Based Mass Violence in Cities

By Ariana Markowitz | December 2020

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Executive Summary

This research explores how urban violence intersects with mass atrocities to establish identity-based mass violence (IBMV) in cities as a cross-disciplinary field of scholarship and practice. Cities affect mass violence in three main ways. First, cities offer places and reasons to gather. Second, neighborhoods, mobility infrastructure, utility systems, and other city spaces can be read as proxies for specific groups of people. Third, violence can be both a cause and a symptom of urbanization, a uniquely urban process by definition, such that urbanization can be one way to mortally wound a city. Scholars and practitioners working to prevent urban violence and the atrocity prevention community have more that unites than divides them, and preventing urban atrocities requires the active engagement of them all.

Nine case studies of IBMV from Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Mazar-i Sharif, Afghanistan; Kaduna, Nigeria; San Salvador, El Salvador; Nairobi, Kenya; Flint, Michigan, USA; Aleppo, Syria; Ciudad Juárez, Mexico; and Jerusalem, Israel, illustrate the multiplicity of forms that such violence can take. The cases aid in the development of a typology of urban atrocities, a tool to identify potential risk and protective factors. An overall finding is that the local context and the built environment were salient for efforts to prevent mass violence. This was especially true where the city (1) was an enclave or was divided into enclaves, (2) had a place of encounter where groups in conflict were likely to cross paths, or (3) experienced a recent political shock. Attackers sought to dehumanize their victims as often as they sought to kill them and were most likely to define their victims based on religion. Given the prevalence of cases that featured enclaves, places of encounter, and recent political shocks, we mapped out how these values related to all other values and compared those results to the overall frequency analysis, revealing relationships that differed from what the overall frequency analysis would have predicted.

Taken together, the cases shed light on four pivotal questions for preventing urban atrocities:

– How does structural violence contribute to both acute and chronic mass violence in cities?

– How does scaling atrocity prevention to the city affect the Responsibility to Protect?

– How can municipal actors be better recognized, resourced, and empowered?

– How can city residents and institutions work in partnership to take inclusive steps toward justice and healing?

The analysis discusses urban vulnerability to lethal and especially nonlethal violence and unpacks the perils and possibilities of external involvement.

By acknowledging the challenges to effective local peacebuilding while celebrating successful initiatives, this report establishes common ground between atrocity prevention and urban violence prevention, identifying five strategies to sustain and strengthen cities, their inhabitants, and the communities of scholarship and practice that support them. This research thus champions the fundamental role that cities play in reducing risk, building sustainable peace, and enabling community transformation. The report advocates for using urban space for justice and healing, learning from local peacebuilders, working with formal and informal actors and tools, identifying models of urban violence prevention practices, and committing to an inclusive ethics of care.

"Peace is impossible without peaceful cities."

—Kristine Höglund, Emma Elfversson, and Ivan Gusic, "The Promise and Perils of Postwar Cities—Political Violence at a Glance"

Introduction: Sensing Danger

Hakam Shaar felt electrified seeing footage of Cairo's Tahrir Square in February 2011 filled with people demanding that Hosni Mubarak step aside after three decades as Egypt's president. At the time, Shaar—who now works for the Aleppo Project—was watching the news with family friends in Aleppo, Syria. He turned to them, expecting them to be equally invigorated, and faltered when he found them visibly unsettled. Mubarak was hardly an ideological ally to Syria, he remembered thinking. "Is the idea that dictatorship was good? Why all of a sudden now we think, 'Oh no, this is not the right way to go about it'?" He realized, abruptly and with apprehension, that if and when Syrians made revolutionary demands, "we were going to hit a brick wall with much of the population." Shaar's friends are Alawites, like President Bashar al-Assad and his father Hafez, who was president before him, a minority sect that has ruled Syria for almost half a century. Nine years later and with East Aleppo in ruins, Shaar clarifies that these friends are "very kind people. They're some of the few who I'm still friends with on Facebook."[1]

Shaar's recollection exposes the microdynamics of conflict, illuminating how local actors may pick up on the risks of mass violence more readily than might national- or international-level players. Indeed, while local actors continually protect their vulnerable neighbors, resolve disputes, and prevent displacement,[2] successfully finding room to maneuver despite having circumscribed agency, the international community has a mixed record in halting mass atrocities.[3] The human rights regime, a pillar of atrocity prevention, "is set up to reinforce the state as the primary actor, but that's not an accurate reflection of the way that violence plays out in individual people's lives," argues Kate Cronin-Furman at University College London.[4] To better recognize this reality—and better capitalize on existing opportunities—this exploratory research scales atrocity prevention to the city, demonstrating how space, place, relationships, and urban geopolitics can ease or inflame identity-based mass violence (IBMV). By exploring common ground between atrocity prevention and urban violence prevention it reinforces the fundamental role that cities and their inhabitants play in reducing risk, building sustainable peace, and making possible the transformation of communities.

This report begins with a conceptualization of mass violence in cities, providing an overview of areas of overlap between atrocity prevention and urban violence prevention and laying out some of the ways urban space shapes mass violence. The report adopts a broad definition of *mass violence*, which includes crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, identity-based violence of all kinds, and other forms of lethal and nonlethal chronic and systemic communal violence by state and nonstate actors. It builds on the definition of *mass killings* from the Early Warning Project of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which includes deliberate attacks against noncombatant civilians and those perceived to be in a specific group.[5]

The next section explains the research methodology. It first details the selection of the nine cases of IBMV for study. The process for identifying cases of IBMV drew from Protection Approaches' definition of *identity-based violence* as "any act of violence motivated by the perpetrator's conceptualisation of their victim's identity, for example their race, gender, sexuality, religion or political affiliation."[6] Next, there is a description of each case in order to outline the broad strokes of all of the events studied while underscoring key questions that each of them raises. Throughout the report, the terms *IBMV* and *urban atrocities* are used interchangeably. From there, the report turns to the development of a typology of urban atrocities, a key methodological contribution of this research.

The final section toggles between theory and practice, celebrating innovative city initiatives that reinforce urban capacity, resilience, and peace. A crosscutting discussion of all nine cases comes together around four themes, informed in part by data analysis that the typology enables. Delving into these themes—structural violence as a risk factor

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for both acute and chronic mass violence, scaling the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) to the city, the role of municipal actors, and urban justice and healing—sheds light on how internal and external actors can work to prevent urban atrocities. This report does not shy away from mixed results or unanswered questions, positioning them as fruitful topics for exploration and collaboration (see figure 1). It also seeks to encourage reflection, keeping in mind lopsided current and historical global power dynamics. "Atrocity prevention isn't just something that people in the global North do to people in the global South," cautions Alex Bellamy at the University of Queensland. "It's really important that, as we ask certain questions of other places, societies, and communities, we also ask those same questions of ourselves."[7]

Conceptualizing

Although atrocity prevention and local peacebuilding are siloed into separate communities of scholarship, organizations working on the ground have found few differences when operationalizing these fields of study. Peace Direct, an organization that supports local communities and action, found that

> in practice, on the ground in conflict settings, the distinction [between the two fields] matters little. Ultimately, they share common goals, tools, and approaches. The common mission of both fields of work, to prevent violence and mass atrocity, overrides most differences. Indeed, local peacebuilders have worked to prevent genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing long before these terminologies existed. As we heard repeatedly, "It's the work that matters, not the labels."[8]

Bellamy agrees. "Park the concepts and lead with the context," he counsels, adding, "The whole prevention and peacebuilding thing is an artificial construction of academics who forced it onto some governments and UN agencies, but in practice it makes no difference.[9]

People who work to build peace in cities tend to focus on preventing chronic mass violence through rehabilitating spaces, repairing intra- and inter-community ties, boosting local institutional capacity, and disrupting structural patterns and expectations. While chronic mass violence can often seem natural, inevitable, and mundane, acute mass violence is notable by definition. Because it is also rare, however, it may be understood as less of a priority in the day-to-day work of local peacebuilders. In February 2020, for example, city leaders met in Amman, Jordan, to strategize for the Peace in Our Cities network, a joint initiative facilitated by Impact:Peace, +Peace, and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies. Participating city leaders identified their top violence prevention priorities, two of which usually manifest as chronic violence: violence against women and girls, and gang/group/youth violence. Despite awareness that a slow burn can become a raging conflagration, they perceived atrocity crimes (i.e., genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes[10]) and other types of acute mass violence to be less of an urgent risk.

In the rare instances when acute mass violence does happen, it provokes a reaction that breaks through the noise, creating a sudden crossroads in the script of what might otherwise seem like an intractable conflict.[11] In these moments, acute violence can function as an independent variable by foreclosing certain paths and redirecting the course of events.[12] "In our literature, the story we tell is that distrust builds, attitudes harden, and violence emerges," recounts Cronin-Furman, but sometimes the violence itself can trigger a hardening of attitudes, as in Myanmar's Rakhine state.[13] That said, the degree of organization of the actors involved, interorganizational processes, and the rigidity of norms around conflict all affect whether mass violence will break toward further escalation or deescalation.[14] Violence is "a live adaptive process," explains Jan Willem Honig at King's College London, with its own built-in mechanisms for control and resolution.[15]

Urban space affects the likelihood and practices of violence because places are suffused with political meaning, transforming the built environment into a geopolitical stage.[16] As a result, cities present distinctive opportunities for IBMV. First, large populations and high population density could allow for a single attack to kill or wound many people. In addition, cities also have a higher concentration of symbolic and high-impact places and things relative to suburban and rural areas, and these places and things are closer to each other than they are elsewhere. This creates compelling reasons to use nonlethal violence alongside or instead of lethal violence. Homes can be destroyed, mobility disrupted, utilities and educational and medical services disabled, and gathering places and monuments defaced, among many more types and targets of damage. As cities come to represent particular groups of people and ideas, the physical space itself becomes a place "to affirm or resist contested socio-political messages."[17]

Taking intentional harm to urban space to the extreme, cities can be the victims of urbicide, "the murder of a city."[18] Murdering a city can rely on a range of processes, each with its associated tools.[19] Sara Fregonese, for example, writes that Beirut's urbicide during the early years of the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) transpired through partition, destruction, possession, and assault. Bogdan Bogdanović, an architect and former mayor of Belgrade, Serbia, alluded to the idea of urbicide as a crime against humanity when he bemoaned in 1993, "We—we Serbs—shall be remembered as despoilers of cities, latter-day Huns…[acting in] flagrant, wanton opposition to the highest values of civilization." Eyal Weizman exposes the exclusionary use of three-dimensional infrastructure systems—electricity cables, water pipes, bypass roads, and more—to exert control over Palestinian communities in the West Bank, causing a slow process of decay. Building on this, Deen Sharp highlights the counterintuitive notion that construction and reconstruction of built environment systems, rather than just their destruction, can also be urbicidal tactics.[20] In sum, the tools of urbicide aim to break or build specific sites or systems in the course of a sudden shock or a gradual process.

In part because urbicide can be constructive, urbanization often accelerates during periods of acute violence, becoming both an effect of past violence and a driver of future violence.[21] One explanation for this is that violence may be evidence of limited state capacity or else the state may be preoccupied by it. In either case, the enforcement of planning laws and regulations may suffer. Potentially exacerbating these dynamics, high-wattage urban megaprojects may be concessions to external actors to compensate for financial shortfalls caused by violence, or a means to project power or distribute patronage amid instability.[22] Especially in poorer cities, infrastructure development and service provision have not kept pace with the rate at which urban populations have ballooned throughout the world, increasingly driven by more frequent and more severe environmental crises. Reflecting on recent research in Mogadishu, Somalia; Nairobi, Kenya; Kabul, Afghanistan; and Karachi, Pakistan, Antônio Sampaio at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime notes, "Violence tends to be very concentrated in areas where there is socio-economic marginalization," which he defines as areas that offer opportunities for propaganda or fundraising to armed groups and where public service provision and governance are inadequate.[23] Urbanization, then, may be both a symptom and a cause of violence. It is not inherently a conflictual or violent process, but, managed poorly, it can "destroy rather than cultivate the delicate social ecologies of cities."[24]

To summarize, urban violence and mass atrocities intersect in three main ways. First, cities offer places and reasons to gather. Second, city space—neighborhoods, mobility infrastructure, utility systems, educational or medical facilities, monuments, places of worship, among others—can be read as a proxy for specific groups of people. Third. violence can be both a cause and a symptom of urbanization, a uniquely urban process by definition, such that urbanization can be one way to mortally wound a city. Urbicide can also rely on destruction, possession, assault, exclusion, control, decay, and more. Urban

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violence prevention actors and the atrocity prevention community have more that unites than divides them, and preventing urban atrocities requires the active engagement of them all.

Exploring and Building

This section details the research methodology and key background information on each case study, beginning with an explanation of the process for select cases. Subsequent descriptions of each one bring to the fore some of the knotty issues they raise. Those questions are taken up in earnest in section 4 of this report. The second part of this section turns to the development of a typology for understanding and analyzing urban atrocities.

Case Selection and Descriptions

The process for identifying cases of urban identity-based mass violence for this research was a collaborative endeavor involving staff from Impact:Peace and the Stanley Center for Peace and Security in addition to 13 exploratory conversations with country and subject-matter experts. All cases of urban violence, with two exceptions explained in the case descriptions below, meet the following four criteria:

1. **The violence happened in a city.** The event occurred in a place with a population of at least 100,000 people.

2. **The incident has a date.** No case is exclusively "slow" violence, hard-to-notice violence that is dispersed across time and space.[25] In addition, the events studied happened during a specific moment or period of time during the last 25 years.

3. **The target was intentional and collective.** The violence was motivated by the perpetrator's conceptualization of a specific group defined on the basis of its members' identity.

4. **The violence resonated.** All violence can have shattering impacts on individuals, families, and communities. Yet the incidents in these cases captured the public imagination in a different way and signified turning points in understandings of relationships, conflict, power, and place.[26]

Ultimately, the team decided on nine cases described in more detail below:

1. The Srebrenica genocide in 1995.

2. The 1998 massacre of Hazaras in Mazar-i Sharif.

3. The Sharia clashes in Kaduna in 2000.

4. The 2011 burning of a bus filled with passengers in San Salvador.

5. Police attacks on Somalis and Somali-Kenyans in Nairobi at the end of 2012 into early 2013.

6. The water crisis in Flint, Michigan, from 2014 until 2015.

7. The siege, bombardment, and eviction of Aleppo from 2012 until 2016.

8. Ongoing femicides in Ciudad Juárez.

9. The accelerated rate of Palestinian home demolitions in Jerusalem since 2019.

Taken together, they reflect a range of geographies, geopolitical contexts, types of violence, victims, and victimizers.[27]

Srebrenica

The Srebrenica genocide in July 1995 was the systematic killing of 8,000 Bosniak men and boys parallel to the forced displacement and abuse of at least 25,000 women, children, and older people by the Bosnian Serb army during the Bosnian War.[28] According to Honig, the genocide was an example of "demonstrative violence."[29] "You don't necessarily want to kill everybody, but you want to kill people who matter," he explains.[30] During the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the Serbs argued that in this case the men and boys were legitimate targets because they were (potential) soldiers.[31] "By taking the menfolk away, you're making it much more difficult for women ever to return. … Through these killings and the terror they cause, people begin to flee."[32]

Unlike the other eight cases studied, Srebrenica is not a city, but it is included here for its unusual framing as a subnational atrocity. The town achieved name recognition when the United Nations Security Council designated it a "safe area" in 1993.[33] First the Canadian Battalion and then, starting in 1994, the Dutch Battalion of the UN Protection Forces were authorized to safeguard the lives of the people who had sought refuge there following the flight or forcible displacement of the town's residents. In spite of the safe area designation and the presence of peacekeepers, however, in July 1995, Bosnian Serb soldiers entered the town and detained thousands of Bosniak men and boys, ostensibly for interrogation and sometimes with the peacekeepers' acquiescence. Mass killings of detainees began within days.

Beyond the partial culpability of the Dutch Battalion for facilitating the deaths of refugees,[34] the international community also bears responsibility for insufficiently committing to deterrence. "This was not the kind of deterrence that anyone who studies deterrence would recognize," maintains James Gow at King's College London.[35] Indeed, when the international community was confronted with the threat of Serbian troops, there was ambivalence in practice despite ongoing rhetoric in support of proactive, aggressive action to protect civilian lives.[36]

Investigations and trials have documented what happened in Srebrenica to work toward redress and accountability. On the ground in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, the story is more complicated. "Young people from the Republic of Serbia have no idea" what happened in Srebrenica, remarks Gow, and "nobody wants to talk about reconciliation." At the same time, in his last visit to Srebrenica, Gow found that former residents were returning to the town to claim their land, constructing new,

brightly colored homes alongside the shells of homes from which people had fled or been expelled. Meanwhile, Mladen Grujičić, the mayor of Srebrenica since 2016, denies the genocide and encourages genocide denial by Serb nationalists within the community.[37]

Mazar-i Sharif

After the Taliban seized control of Kabul in 1996 and rapidly brought much of Afghanistan under their dominion, the Hazaras, a historically marginalized religious and ethnic minority, initiated a successful—and brutal—campaign of anti-Taliban resistance in the multiethnic northern city of Mazar-i Sharif in 1997. Hundreds of Taliban soldiers were killed, and the campaign halted the group's advance. The importance of the city was such that the Taliban could no longer claim to be Afghanistan's undisputed rulers.[38]

According to Elham Gharji at the University of Coimbra, the Taliban have "a sense of historical claim over the state and the national identity" because they are Pashtun, Afghanistan's dominant ethnic group for two centuries. Adherents to a fundamentalist interpretation of Sunni Islam, the Taliban maintain that the Hazaras, who are Shia Muslims, are heretics. "There is a sense that the Hazaras are a threat…to the idea of the Islamic emirate," says Gharji. "They are the most visible and expressive force of difference in the eyes of other Afghans."[39] In August 1998, the Taliban returned to Mazar to avenge their defeat and reassert their power, massacring between 5,000 and 6,000 civilians, mostly Hazara men and boys, over two days. They also detained and then imprisoned and tortured thousands more and perpetrated widespread sexual and other types of violence against Hazara women and children.[40]

Despite the ferocity of the violence, there has been no formal recognition of the harms Hazaras have suffered. Kerry Whigham of the State University of New York at Binghamton notes, "In atrocities, there's often a lot of competition around the idea of victimhood and who gets to claim that identity." The tendency to bind victimhood to innocence "guides the way people tell the story and the parts of the events that they latch onto."[41] As a result, victims who have victimized other people are routinely undercut.[42]

Moreover, in the years since the massacre, Pashtun areas where the Taliban were active have borne the brunt of Afghanistan's violence, including US bombardments, air raids, and night raids. "After a while there is so much happening in the country—more violence, more bloodshed—that it is not easy to talk about particular incidents," says Niamatullah Ibrahimi at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia,[43] leaving both Hazaras and Pashtuns "haunted" by the specter of a violent past and the expectation of an equally violent future.[44] According to both Ibrahimi and Gharji, this foreboding reverberates with new urgency in 2020 as the parties to the Afghan conflict initiated historic peace talks in Doha.[45]

Kaduna

The riots that erupted in Kaduna city in northern Nigeria in 2000 were another violent episode between Muslims and Christians amid decades of tension and mistrust over power, access, and respect. In the context of a central government that has devolved certain powers while hoarding resources to limit local autonomy,[46] Kaduna was one of several Nigerian states—but the only one with a large Christian population—to implement Islamic law at the turn of the century, ostensibly to lessen social and economic inequalities.[47] More cynically, it might have redirected attention away from those inequalities and toward potential threats to the traditional gendered social order.[48] The participants in the riot were almost exclusively young men, a group that was especially vulnerable to social pressure around notions of manhood.[49]

In response to the law's passage and despite the history of communal violence in the city, Christian organizations urged mass mobilization in the state capital, and religious leaders amplified the call in their Sunday sermons.[50] The so-called Sharia clashes that broke out the following day and produced aftershocks for months left between 2,000 and 5,000 people dead.[51] Christian and Muslim religious leaders changed tack and urged calm, exercising their "dual function of calling for demonstrations and also calling for peace," says Henrik Angerbrandt at the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention. "They are the ones controlling the situation, so the government is dependent on them."[52]

Tens of thousands of residents who were displaced from their previously heterogeneous neighborhoods sought safety among their own community, reinstating the spatial segregation that characterized the city during the colonial era.[53] With time, the separation between the two communities began to ease, though not because of government intervention. "The government may be comforted by the fact that not many people are dying because of segregation," says Hussaini Abdu from PLAN International. But, he cautions, "it is making reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts difficult because it creates a false impression that things are okay."[54]

San Salvador

In June 2011, tit-for-tat violence escalated between two gangs, the MS-13 and the 18th Street, in the San Salvador, El Salvador, suburb of Mejicanos. Members of the 18th Street killed 17 people in attacks on two city buses, including one in which they boarded the bus, shot the driver and the fare collector, and set the vehicle aflame. Violence on buses is endemic in San Salvador because buses and bus routes are constitutive of gangs' territorial integrity and control. For decades, Salvadoran gangs have divided the city among themselves, claiming control over specific territories and the people, things, and activities that happen within them, which become extensions of their power. This de facto geographical partisanship is what incited the 18th Street Gang to attack the bus: irrespective of whether the driver, fare collector, or passengers had any association with MS-13, they were on a vehicle that traveled a route that the MS-13 Gang claimed as its own. In the eyes of 18th Street, this transformed the entire transport assemblage into a legitimate target.[55] Despite the frequency of violence on buses, however, the scale and savagery of this attack made a searing imprint on the city and the country as a whole.[56] For the majority of Salvadorans who had, and still have, no choice but to ride buses to work and school, as well as for bus drivers and transit operators,

the attack signified their constant, inescapable vulnerability and deepened stigma and trauma around the use of public transit.[57]

In general, state actors tend to treat acute mass violence as a spike in crime that requires more-aggressive law enforcement.[58] In San Salvador, already widespread perceptions of the gangs as bloodthirsty and irrational hardened. The government passed iron-fisted criminal justice policies intended not as a solution to the gang problem but as a response to public outcry.[59] Along with heavy-handed laws has come increasingly heavy-handed law enforcement, particularly in areas where gangs have a strong presence. Extrajudicial abuses in these areas, which tend to lack public services and public spaces,[60] drive wedges between these communities and the state, in some cases creating common cause between gangs and marginalized communities in the territories they control.

Nairobi

At the end of 2012, following a string of attacks thought to be the work of the Somali Islamist group al-Shabab, the Kenyan police unleashed xenophobic violence against some 1,000 Somalis and Somali-Kenyans in the Nairobi neighborhood of Eastleigh, locally known as Little Mogadishu. This followed Kenya's invasion of Somalia under the auspices of counterterrorism[61] and coincided with the Kenyan government suspending refugee assistance in Nairobi and demanding that Somali refugees living in the city relocate to camps.[62] The Kenya High Court threw out this order in July 2013, determining that it violated refugees' rights and was unfounded and unconstitutional. By April the following year, however, after additional attacks in Mombasa and Nairobi, the police were again detaining thousands of people in Eastleigh.[63] A 2016 report found that 10 percent of Eastleigh residents had experienced police violence, an "alarmingly high vulnerability to state violence [which] is aggravated by poor access to immediate assistance, rehabilitation, and justice."[64]

Views of the significance of the episode in 2012 and 2013, however, are mixed. Munini Mutuku at Kenya's National Cohesion and Reconciliation Committee believes the problem lies with the institutional weakness of the police rather than any systematic prejudice against Somalis. "Crime is committed by everyone, and [everyone] is equally harassed by the police," she contends, dismissing the government's call for forced relocation as populist posturing. She further argues that other types of chronic violence in Nairobi have a greater impact on the city's inhabitants, including violent slum clearances and the arson of small businesses to seize land.[65]

Emma Elfversson from Uppsala University in Sweden, however, notes, "If you talk about urban or atrocity violence in Nairobi, people are probably going to think of other violence before they think of violence against Somali people." Though what happened in 2012 and 2013 may not register for all Kenyans, among Somalis and Somali-Kenyans, the incident provoked a reckoning. The community took steps to better protect and advocate for itself and especially to prevent the radicalization of young Somali men.

Sureya Roble of the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization reports that prior to 2012, the Somali community in Kenya only looked outward and pointed fingers, but since 2013, "we have owned up" to the fact that "our boys are let down."[66]

Flint

In 2011, the government of the state of Michigan appointed an unelected official to take charge of Flint, a small, low-income, majority Black city in dire financial straits in the Detroit metropolitan area.[67] In April 2014, this official, the emergency manager, switched the city's water source from the Detroit system to the Flint River without implementing recommended anticorrosion measures.[68] Residents took to the streets and began appearing at city council meetings with "jars of muck."[69] After six months, the automobile company General Motors opted for an alternative water source for manufacturing since the Flint River water was corroding auto parts.[70]

For 18 months, state officials disputed mounting evidence of the water's contamination on residents' public health.[71] "What triggered action in the end was translating [the evidence of broad harm] into the subset of issues dealing with lead, documenting lead exposure [on children] through heroic community-led science, and then the findings of that science being verified by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha," asserts Peter Hammer at Wayne State University.[72] The harm included lead poisoning and an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease and other types of pneumonia that killed nearly 130 people.[73] Dan Levy at the Michigan Civil Rights Commission maintains that what tipped the scales for Flint and its majority Black population was when white people started to care.[74]

When state officials did reverse course, they alleged that the problem was a technocratic one caused by individual errors at the water treatment plant. Hammer disagrees and instead attributes the government abuse and neglect to "a fundamental belief that Flint lives didn't matter. There's no question that in real time there was access to forms of knowledge that would have told you that something is outrageously wrong here, but that knowledge didn't count." This disregard was part of a historical trajectory of discriminatory policies throughout the United States. "In the US, intentional targeting became gross negligence that people accepted," explains Bridget Moix from Peace Direct. "Housing laws and zoning laws targeted minority communities and then became part of a system. They become 'structural atrocities.'"[75]

Aleppo

This case covers the period from 2012 until 2016, which included the siege and bombardment of Aleppo and the subsequent eviction of its remaining residents, resulting in the deaths of more than 30,000 people and the displacement of some 177,000.[76] Aleppo was late to join the uprising in Syria, and initial protests in the city in 2011 were modest. In part, this was because Aleppo was the economic engine of Syria, so even people outside of the Assad government's traditional support base had a stake in maintaining the status quo.[77] In addition, cosmopolitan Aleppians were skeptical of the Islamist segment of the opposition and invested in

the freedoms they had under the secular, even if authoritarian, Syrian government.[78] Since the 1970s, the Baath regime has disempowered local leaders, restricted civil society, and trafficked in sectarian grievance, inhibiting the forging of bonds that might have united people against them. While the heads of city councils in Syrian cities and towns are elected, real power—apart from the management of basic utilities and services—resides with governors who are appointed by the central government.[79]

In July 2012, armed opposition groups entered the city and lodged themselves in the narrow alleyways and neglected buildings of historic East Aleppo among a population that was mostly Sunni and poorer relative to West Aleppo. The armed groups' arrival drove people to flee, though Kali Rubaii cautions against ascribing ideological motives to people who stayed.[80] With time, the presence of armed opposition groups compounded existing ideological divisions and began to cleave the city in half. The Assad government trained its weapons on civilian targets and blocked humanitarian aid in defiance of international law,[81] waging a calculated campaign of urbicide to make East Aleppo physically and psychologically uninhabitable.[82] Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United States joined the fray.

In the years since the siege, noted journalist Valerie Cler observes, "the authorities [have] used urban planning as a weapon, not only by destroying opponents' houses and bombarding the quarters held by armed opposition, but also by drawing up projects for urban renewal (i.e., demolition and reconstruction) of specific neighborhoods."[83] To impede millions of displaced Syrians whom the government views as potential threats from returning to their cities, the government passed planning legislation permitting the expropriation of former opposition territory, the expulsion of residents, and wholesale land redevelopment. This effort to "homogenize" Syria is evidence of the government consolidating its rule.[84]

Ciudad Juárez

During the second half of the twentieth century, garment factories in Ciudad Juárez, a Mexican city on the US border, created significant job opportunities for low-wage Mexican workers, especially women. At the same time, cartels, whose foot soldiers were predominantly men steeped in a violent, misogynist subculture,[85] sought control over drug and human trafficking routes that converged in the city en route to the lucrative US market.

By the mid-1990s, young, darker-skinned women doing low-wage work began disappearing.[86] If their bodies were found at all, it was most often because victims' families, neighbors, and friends searched for them, uncovering them in filthy and desolate spaces, desecrated and mutilated to lay bare their sexual violation.[87] When mothers reported their disappeared daughters to the police, officials questioned why a young woman would go to a dangerous place on her own. "The police ask for a photo and the mothers end up losing even the photos they have of their daughters," says Verónica Corchado at the Municipal Institute for Women in Ciudad Juárez. "Victims experience impunity as a very active condition," Cronin-Furman explains. "What does it mean to exist in that state

over a period of years? Is it one harm, is it many harms? What does it do to the original injury in terms of not just reinscribing but compounding?"[88]

In 2009, victims' family members and feminist activists brought a case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, "a crime against the humanity of women."[89] The court found Mexico complicit in the deaths of three women in Ciudad Juárez and established femicide as a legal category of systematic, lethal, gender-based violence.[90] Julia Monárrez at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte says the victory was a critical juncture. Yet more than 10 years later, women continue to be killed and forcibly disappeared, as the Mexican government has done little to protect their lives. That the government has not addressed these risks, seemingly without consequence, raises questions about the utility of international court rulings if they are unable to compel change on the ground. Where the ruling has had an impact, however, is in the way mothers of disappeared women talk. "The mothers used to say that their daughters went missing," Monárrez observes, "but now the discourse is about human rights and forced disappearance."[91]

Jerusalem

Since Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967, the proportion of Palestinian residents has increased to 40 percent from approximately 25, driving continuous Israeli efforts to turn back the demographic clock and preserve Israeli authority over the city.[92] Urban planning policy is a fundamental tool for maintaining Israeli influence, exemplified by the systematic denial of building permits to Palestinians, trapping Palestinian neighborhoods "in a perpetual state of planning-without-building."[93] By the 1980s, the denial of permits had resulted in a severe housing shortage, compelling around half of East Jerusalemites to move outside city limits.[94] In 1996, suburbanization came to an abrupt halt when Israel retroactively began requiring Palestinian Jerusalemites to prove that their "center of life" remained within the city,[95] and in the first 15 years of the policy's implementation, some 10,000 Palestinians lost their residency.[96] The rush to return to the municipality caused housing prices to skyrocket, but increased demand did not drive increased supply, and the approval of Palestinian building permits remained rare.[97] This was not the case for building applications in East Jerusalem's Jewish settlements.[98]

Contesting demolition orders requires funds that most East Jerusalemites lack for lawyers, architects, planners, and official documents.[99] In contrast, in Palestinian areas that Israel sectioned off from the city in 2002 with the construction of the separation barrier, Israel has mostly turned a blind eye to Palestinian development, authorized or not, resulting in rapid densification.[100] With the encouragement of the administration of US President Donald Trump, the municipality is demolishing more Palestinian homes: from 2018 to 2019, the number of demolitions tripled. Palestinians, for their part, have increasingly opted to demolish their own homes because doing so costs less than what the municipality charges.[101] Efforts to designate all areas that lie within the separation barrier as part of Israel have taken Jerusalem off the table politically and "harmed the city," according to Rami Nasrallah at

the International Peace and Cooperation Center. "It harmed the potential for any peaceful solution and the Palestinian belief in that solution. The vision of two states with two capitals is no longer feasible."[102]

Toward a Typology of Urban Atrocities

We conducted 25 semistructured interviews between August and October 2020 with 11 women and 14 men who are affiliated with academic, nonprofit, and governmental organizations in 12 countries. Eighteen of these interviews were with specialists in the nine case contexts. We also undertook seven conceptual interviews spanning a range of topics: atrocity prevention, IBMV, urbanization and conflict, human rights, local peacebuilding, mental health and psychosocial support, and memorializing mass violence. Appendix A lists the name and affiliation of each participant and the case about which he or she spoke, if applicable. The recruitment of all participants relied on existing professional networks, unsolicited contact based on authorship of relevant publications, or snowball sampling using references from previous interviewees.

Drawing from these conversations, secondary literature, and previous work by Impact:Peace, we created a typology of 13 variables divided into three categories to assess the attributes of urban atrocities and aid in further analysis. The first category examines the general context of the city while the second and third categories relate to the specifics of the cases studied. All starred variables in tables 1, 2, and 3 below can be coded for multiple values. The full typology with the attributes coded for each case appears in Appendix B.

Characteristics of the City

Table 1 displays the attributes and possible values of the first category, the characteristics of the city. These attributes explore the capital status, degree of diversity and cross-communal interaction, and major recent events of each city.

The first attribute, the city's national or regional status, signals whether the city is a national or provincial capital or neither.

Capital cities tend to have significant symbolic importance: the seat of national or regional governments, the site of cultural institutions and monuments, the highest population densities, the most complex infrastructure, and more. In short, they offer an array of high-impact, meaningful targets, though they may also be more fortified in terms of personnel and technology for law enforcement and surveillance.[103] Srebrenica is neither a national nor provincial capital but attained symbolic importance.

The diversity of a city also matters because "spatial organization of social difference can be predictive of violence."[104] An enclaved city is one in which either the entire city is an enclave for a particular minority group—Flint is a majority Black city in a majority white state—or where different communities live in separate areas demarcated by visible or invisible boundaries, as in San Salvador, a city crisscrossed by gang lines.

Cities with cross-communal places of encounter have at least one place in which victims and victimizers are likely to meet in their day-to-day lives, such as the Shrine of Hazrat Ali in Mazar-i Sharif, which is revered by Sunni (Pashtun) and Shia (Hazara) Muslims and is the site of regular cultural celebrations.

A territorial conflict refers to a dispute or multiple disputes related to control over land and the resources that that control affords. Cartels in Ciudad Juárez, for example, have been locked in a decades-long struggle to control the city insofar as that control gives them exclusive rights to traffic drugs and people through specific areas. In contrast, though Kaduna's Muslims and Christians have long vied for political, economic, and social dominance, they do not generally pursue those ambitions via territorial claims.

Finally, a recent contextual shock refers to any major event in the decade before the violence under study that contributed to an overall increase in precarity, desperation, and/or instability. Aleppo, for instance, was under strain from the twin shocks of the eruption of Arab Spring protests across the Middle East in

Table 1. All possible values for the attributes of the characteristics of the city

Characteristics of the City				
National or regional status	**Enclaved**	**Cross-communal place of encounter**	**Territorial conflict**	**Recent contextual shock***
National capital	Yes	Yes	Yes	Environmental
Provincial capital	No	No	No	Financial
Not a capital				Political

2011 and a major national drought from 2006 until 2010 that drove significant rural-to-urban migration.

Characteristic of the Violence

The attributes and possible values for the second category, the characteristics of the violence, appear in table 2. The attributes examine who was involved in the incident, what the intended harm was, under what circumstances it occurred, and where in the city it happened.

In Ciudad Juárez, decades of government inaction to protect young women and girls is indicative of "political humiliation that has to do with having no value as a citizen or a political subject."[105] All of the intended harms are similarly focused on prevention rather than the tactics or aims of mass violence. To that effect, returning to the example of Ciudad Juárez, ensuring the safety of women and their communities requires restoring and affirming their humanity.

The second attribute, the involvement of external actors, is related in part to the city's sensitivity to interests and events outside the city. In some cases, however, external involvement was inevitable since higher levels of government retain certain competencies. In Kaduna, riots broke out after Christian organizations called for mass mobilization to oppose the imposition of Islamic law, urging Christians to travel to the state capital to protest. Though the unrest began in the city center at the Kaduna State House of Assembly, it quickly spread through the city, generating generalized violent unrest.

Normalization and Chronicity of Violence

The variables under the final category, the normalization and chronicity of violence, describe the extent to which people in positions of power use violence to deal with problems and how authorities and victimizers sought to address and redress the atrocity.

Table 2. All possible values for the attributes of the characteristics of the violence

Characteristics of the Violence				
Basis for identification of target group*	**Involvement of actors who are outside the city**	**Intended harm***	**Wartime**	**Location**
Gender	Yes	Death	Yes	City center
Nation	No	Dehumanization	No	City periphery
Partisanship		Destruction		Generalized
Race/ethnicity		Disenfranchisement		
Religion		Displacement		
Socioeconomic status		Dispossession		

Table 3. All possible values for the attributes of the normalization and chronicity of violence

Normalization and Chronicity of Violence		
Violence is officially sanctioned	**Direct involvement of people in power***	**Recognition of violence**
Yes	Government	Digging in**
No	Military	Recognition with limited structural change
	Nonstate armed authorities	Silence
	Police	
	None	

* All starred variables in tables 1, 2, and 3 above can be coded for multiple values. ** Digging in: Means victimizers digging in in the aftermath of the incident—doubling down on claims that the violence they perpetrated was justifiable or legitimate—rather than pursuing limited structural change.

In Nairobi, the government did not encourage or authorize the police to assault, harass, detain, or extort Somalis and Somali-Kenyans, but the police did so anyway. The military did not intervene to defend the neighborhood's residents for two months.[106]

With respect to recognition, none of the victimizers in any of the cases studied categorically denied that the violence happened, but "denialism takes lots of different forms," observes Whigham. "It's not just about saying it didn't happen at all. Oftentimes, denialism is about saying that, yes, it happened, but not in this way or not in the way that the victim group is characterizing it."[107] For example, the Israeli government demolishes Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem because the homes lack the required planning permissions, sidestepping the fact that the municipality denies most applications from Palestinians. Because Palestinians are largely blocked from building in areas of the city inside the separation barrier erected in 2002, Palestinian suburbs outside the barrier have rapidly densified, enabling Israel to continue denying planning applications on the basis that "there is no need for Palestinian housing development in the city."[108]

Learning

This section describes the findings from frequency and relationship mapping analyses that the typology enabled, highlighting potential focus areas for preventing urban atrocities while allowing space for diversity in the cases studied. An overall finding was that the local context and the built environment were salient for efforts to prevent mass violence. Four focus areas—the impact of structural violence on chronic and acute mass violence, R2P at the city scale, the role of municipal actors, and urban justice and healing—are unpacked in detail below. The discussion around each area lays out effective strategies for preventing urban atrocities.

To aid in the analysis, we assessed the comparative frequency of all typology values across the nine cases studied (see figure 2). The values that occurred most often, suggesting a potential risk factor for urban atrocities, were (1) enclaved cities, (2) cities with a place of encounter where groups in conflict were likely to cross paths, and (3) cities that experienced a recent political shock. In contrast, the values that occurred least often, perhaps indicating less relevance for urban atrocity prevention, showed that the violence was not usually (1) perpetrated by nonstate armed

Figure 2.
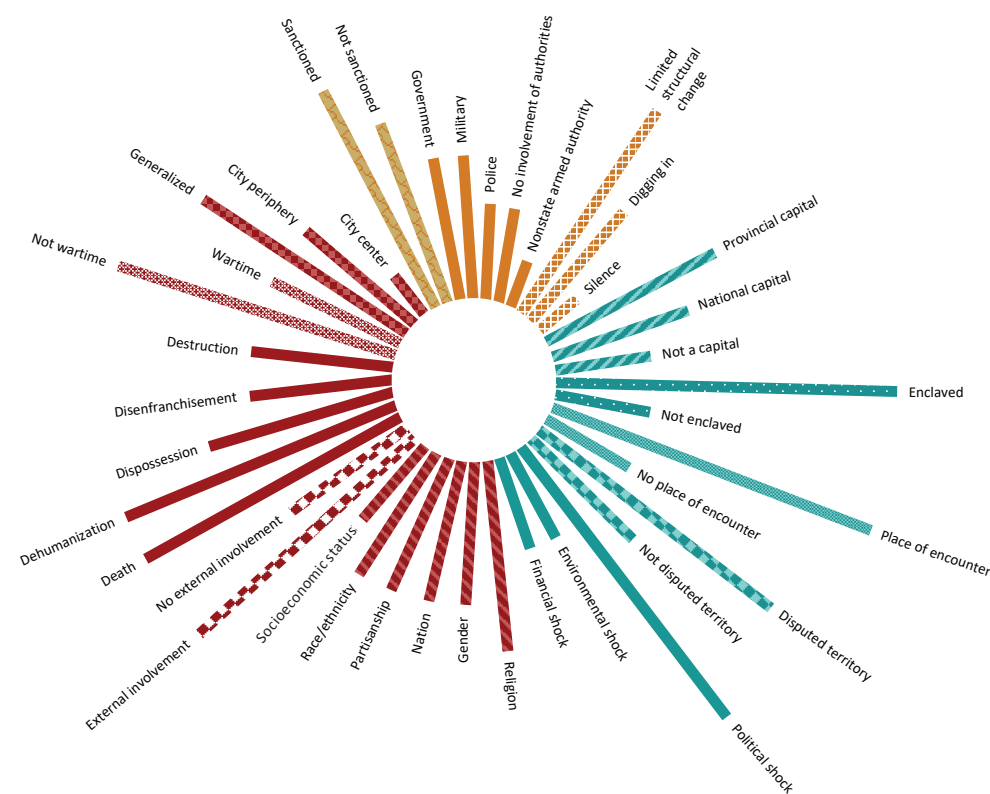
Frequency of typology attributes, organized by category and variable

IBMV happened most often in **ENCLAVED** cities with a cross-communal **PLACE OF ENCOUNTER** that had experienced a recent **POLITICAL SHOCK**. It was least likely to be perpetrated by nonstate armed authorities in city centers and to be recognized afterward with silence.

The colors correspond to the three categories of variables above—blue for the characteristics of the city, red for the characteristics of the violence, and orange for the normalization and chronicity of violence—and each variable has its own pattern. The longer the line, the more frequently the value occurred.

authorities, (2) exclusively in city centers, or (3) met with silence in the aftermath. Despite the importance generally assigned to homicide as a metric for assessing insecurity,[109] in these cases, the attackers sought to dehumanize their victims—to humiliate, shame, and subjugate them, making clear that they had less value than other people[110]—as often as they sought to kill them. Attackers were also most likely to define their victims on the basis of religion.

Given the prevalence of cases that featured enclaves, places of encounter, and recent political shocks, we mapped out how these values were related to all other values and compared those results to the overall frequency analysis. This process revealed unexpected correlations related to enclaves and places of encounter; in other words, certain relationships differed from what the overall frequency analysis would have predicted (see figure 3). Specifically, IBMV in enclaved cities

was unexpectedly correlated with four factors related to the city's status, where in the city the violence occurred, who was targeted, and what happened afterward. Those four factors are (1) being a national capital rather than a provincial one, (2) violence that occurred in the city periphery rather than throughout the city, (3) victims targeted on the basis of their national, partisan, or racial/ethnic identity instead of their religion, and (4) victimizers digging in in the aftermath of the incident—doubling down on claims that the violence they perpetrated was justifiable or legitimate—rather than pursuing limited structural change. In addition, IBMV in cities with a place of encounter was also unexpectedly correlated with four factors having to do with whether the violence was sanctioned, who was targeted, the participation of agents of the state, and what happened in the aftermath. Those four factors are (1) violence that was not officially sanctioned rather than violence that was, (2) victims targeted on the basis of their partisan or racial/ethnic identity, (3) violence perpetrated by the police instead of the government or military, and (4) victimizers digging in in the aftermath. There were no unexpected correlations with recent political shocks.

Figure 3.

Expected and unexpected correlations with the top three most frequently appearing attributes

IBMV in enclaved cities was unexpectedly correlated with being a **national capital**, targeting people in the city **periphery** based on **nation**, **partisanship**, and **race/ethnicity**, and more likely met with **digging in** rather than meaningful recognition.

IBMV in cities with places of encounter was unexpectedly correlated with violence motivated by **partisanship** and **race/ethnicity** that was **not officially sanctioned.** It was more likely perpetrated by the **police** or **did not involve people in power**, and it was more often met with **digging in** rather than meaningful recognition.

There were no unexpected correlations with IBMV that happened in cities that experienced a recent political shock.
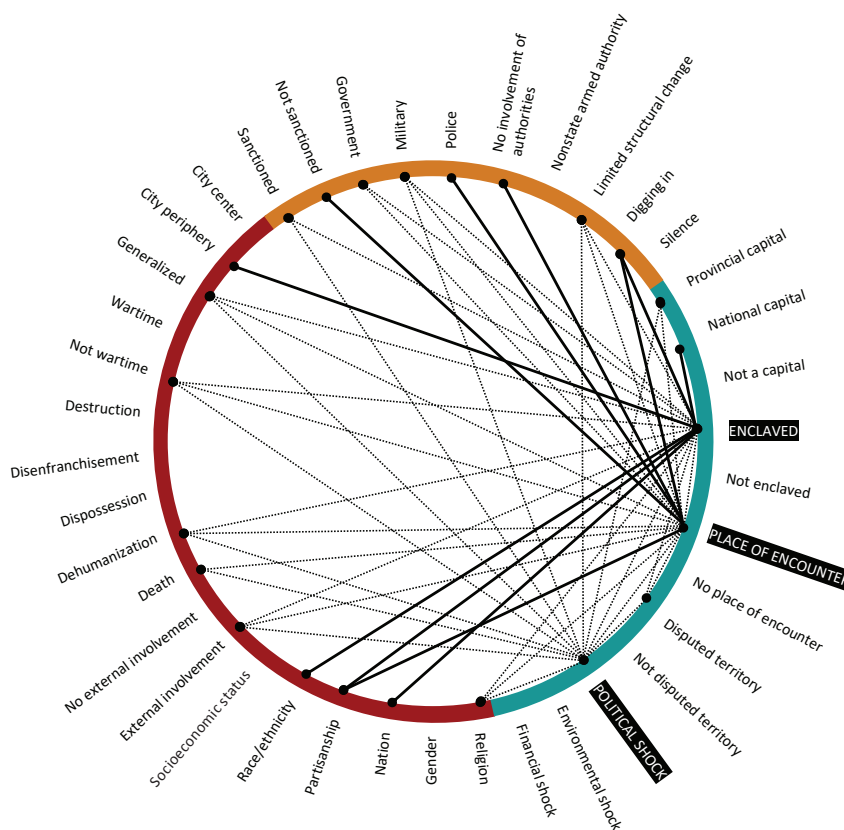
Dotted lines signify expected outcomes while solid lines signify unexpected outcomes.

This research focuses on a smaller sample size in order to more intensively plumb the depths of each case and fine-tune the typology accordingly, but the limited sample size precludes establishing causation or building predictive models. Nonetheless, the emergence of patterns and flows merits further exploration. In

particular, it could be worthwhile to examine another set of cases instead of or in addition to the nine studied here to see if the same findings hold true. Adjusting the case inclusion criteria could enable a focus on specific geographies, time periods, and/or political, social, economic, or environmental phenomena. The typology itself could also be modified; for example, an earlier version permitted the inclusion of violence that did not reach atrocity level to enable a comparison between nonatrocity and atrocity violence. Categorizing and organizing data in a typology creates a frame that enables many types of analysis and contributes to a fuller understanding of how local context and the built environment make IBMV more or less likely.

How Does Structural Violence Contribute to Acute and Chronic Mass Violence?

Another key finding of this research is that preventing structural violence and dismantling the discriminatory and oppressive systems that fuel it would be an impactful area for collaboration between urban violence prevention actors and people who work to prevent atrocities. That is because structural violence, which is rooted in asymmetric power relations, is a risk factor for chronic violence—including extremely high rates of violent crime over long periods of time[111]—and IBMV.[112] The prevalence of enclaving in the cases studied speaks to one way structural violence often manifests in cities and could be a focal point for work to prevent various types of urban violence.

Though enclaving is not always associated with violence or indicative of discrimination, it frequently has some basis in exclusion or conflict.[113] Individuals and families may make intentional, though not necessarily malicious, choices to live in enclaves because of shortcomings in the state's ability or willingness to provide security. According to Bellamy, "When [people] feel their security is threatened, they believe they can trust their own group more than the other group."[114] This was the case in Kaduna as historical tensions spilled over into violence and triggered the spatial realignment of the city along religious lines, an example of enclaving as a consequence of violence. It is also the case in San Salvador where, in the years before and especially since the attack on the bus, bus drivers have become the proxy of choice for gangs seeking to defend their territory and flex their power by targeting public transport. As a result, extortion and even homicide are now occupational hazards for bus drivers, creating tremendous stress

for them and degrading the quality and safety of public transport across the city.[115]

The persistence of these risks suggests that Salvadoran authorities are unwilling to or incapable of improving transport service for users and operators. In response, elites have largely disengaged from public transport, with knock-on effects on other public services and public space more generally, in an effort to privatize their way out of chronic insecurity. Their disengagement creates a negative feedback loop by reducing the pressure on government to address public problems.[116] As in Managua, Nicaragua, where elites have "disembedded" city land to create separate, fortified systems and networks,[117] San Salvador has become a segregated city filled with private cars, walls, barbed and electrified wire, private security guards, and electronic surveillance systems. As residents have increasingly perceived their neighbors as a threat, enclaving is concentrating and compounding exclusion and fraying the already damaged urban fabric. Municipal authorities intensify this exclusion by disproportionately investing in infrastructure for drivers over cyclists and pedestrians while granting planning permission for exclusive gated communities without requiring developers to build social housing or support public projects.[118]

Urban violence prevention actors and atrocity prevention actors could work alongside local communities and municipal planners to amplify and fund existing cooperative and egalitarian initiatives, not just in San Salvador but in unequal cities throughout the world. Positioning deepening structural inequality and the structural violence it engenders as a risk for continued chronic and acute mass violence, including IBMV, could help dislodge the narrative that a segregated and fortified city is a safe city.

In Flint, a century of spatial and environmental racism has driven marginalization and violence, helping create the conditions that allowed the water crisis to happen[119] and sustaining one of the highest homicide rates of any US city.[120] General Motors, which was founded in Flint in 1908, upheld and reproduced discriminatory planning policies that limited where Black people could live and work, laying the groundwork for Flint to become a majority Black city in a state that is 80 percent white.[121] Federal laws and legal processes were not enough to reverse these policies in practice. According to Hammer, "It's really quite dramatic how intentional [housing segregation] was: how exploitative it was for labor purposes and for making sure that people didn't have independence or autonomy as full citizens," and how it was reproduced through the school system.[122] Flint residents have also borne the brunt of compounding environmental injustices, resulting in higher-than-average rates of chronic health conditions.[123] This pattern is repeated in other majority Black enclaves around the country[124] and has been particularly apparent throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as Black, Latino, and Native American communities have suffered disproportionate mortality rates.[125] The Keith Center for Civil Rights, which Hammer directs, partners with marginalized urban communities to demand equal justice under the law, and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission investigates charges of identity-based violence and

discrimination throughout the state. Both organizations would be effective entry points for efforts to better understand the links between structural violence and chronic and acute mass urban violence, beginning in southeastern Michigan.

Where enclaving overlaps with stigma, it can exacerbate vulnerability. Honig suggests, "The makeup of your victim population and where they live and congregate influences the possibilities you have of getting them and killing them, the mechanics of the process."[126] Somalis in Kenya are stigmatized due to xenophobic fears that they are linked to the Somali Islamist group al-Shabab.[127] The distinctly Somali character of the Eastleigh neighborhood of Nairobi makes the area a target for anyone seeking to harm many Somalis at once. Moreover, as Eastleigh has come to represent the larger Somali community in the city and throughout Kenya, as evidenced by its nickname, Little Mogadishu, an attack on Eastleigh has become symbolic of an attack on Somalis in general.[128] Even though enclaves, like Eastleigh, can be beneficial to vulnerable communities by enabling extensive intra- and inter-communal business collaboration that spurs the local economy, enclaves can also delineate the boundaries of a target area.[129]

In summary, though enclaves are not always proof of violence or exclusion, their prevalence in the cases studied here calls for further exploration and care. In San Salvador, Flint, and Nairobi, discrimination has reverberated through each city's spatial organization in different ways, increasing their actual and potential exposure to chronic and acute mass violence, including IBMV. Neighborhood- and city-level actors, with their granular knowledge of their communities and constituencies, are valuable partners for disrupting and dismantling the root causes of structural violence in cities.

How Does Scaling Atrocity Prevention to the City Affect R2P?

Heads of state formalized R2P at the UN World Summit in 2005, individually and collectively committing to "an international norm that seeks to ensure that the international community never again fails to halt the mass atrocity crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."[130] The commitment has three pillars: (1) states must protect their own populations from mass atrocity crimes, (2) the international community must encourage and assist states in upholding this obligation, and (3) in the event of a state failing to protect its populations, the international community must take collective action.[131] Though these pillars are conceptualized at the national and international levels, the cases studied raise questions about what R2P would entail at the city scale and the implications of that shift on direct and structural violence prevention.

How does the fluidity of municipal boundaries affect how R2P scales to the city?

Compared to national borders, city boundaries are less defined, fixed, or controlled,[132] and this elasticity muddles the "who" and

"where" of city-level R2P. Particularly in cities like Jerusalem and Aleppo, where many people have fled or been forcibly evicted, determining who needs protection and restitution—and who is responsible for ensuring both—is not straightforward. As described above, the Jerusalem municipality, which ostensibly has a responsibility to protect all city residents, has favored Jewish Israeli residents over Palestinian ones. In the process, it has blocked Palestinian development, corralled that development into certain areas and separated those areas from the rest of the city, and implemented policies that divest East Jerusalemites of their legal residency status.[133] In East Aleppo, largely due to national government action,

How does mass violence impact the dynamics between cities, suburbs, and their hinterlands?

more than 1.7 million residents fled the city or were evicted, and the government has since instated policies to prevent their return.[134] In both cities, suburbs have grown and urbanized, shifting centers of power and urban-suburban-rural dynamics while creating urban sprawl that relocates city boundaries de facto, if not de jure. In addition, there are sizable Jerusalemite and Aleppian diaspora communities. Local peacebuilding initiatives in cities and camps with large populations of refugees and/or internally displaced people, such as Istanbul and Kampala, could offer lessons for unpacking and confronting these challenges.

R2P is first and foremost about achieving "peace by peaceful means": preventing violence, protecting people from harm, and using force only as a last resort.[135] All the cases studied are stories of safeguarding that ultimately failed, but the effectiveness of the use of force is hard to parse. In Srebrenica for example, Honig argues that the international community's failure to mount robust deterrence—its porous commitment to maintaining the UN-designated safe area at all costs—had grievous consequences. In contrast, following the attack on the bus in San Salvador, the national government pursued nonviolent political means to crack down on gang violence but neglected to devise mechanisms to block abuses of power by agents of the state. This failure amounted to tacit permission to use violence against marginalized communities under gang control. Repeated violations of human rights with few repercussions undermined the rule of law and aggravated the long-term grievances and inequalities that gave rise to gangs to begin with. Similarly misguided efforts to stamp out criminal groups in Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Venezuelan cities have likewise paved the way for some of the highest rates of state violence in the world.[136]

The case of Kaduna is similarly ambiguous. When the Sharia riots began, the government dispatched the police and military to quell the violence, but some instead inflamed tensions by intervening on behalf of their religious group rather than serving and protecting the city as a whole. In the years since 2000, agents of the state have increasingly responded to unrest with more and bigger weapons. Erstwhile and would-be demonstrators now perceive a

higher risk of serious harm, causing some to refrain from taking to the streets. Their withdrawal has helped to diffuse immediate tension and prevented violent flare-ups from becoming more widespread and destructive.[137]

What these examples have in common is that the authority for preventing violence is shared between different levels of government and even, in the case of Srebrenica, multiple foreign governments.

> Which actors at which levels are best placed to intervene?

Especially in the wake of or amid an ongoing urban crisis, external actors may shift their attention to the struggling city. This tendency may partly account for the high prevalence of external actor involvement in the cases studied, all of which had experienced a recent shock. Though external actors may boost the capacity of local actors, they can also tie the hands of city leaders and curb their ability to intervene, including through planning, one of the most powerful tools at a city's disposal for addressing structural violence. As in San Salvador and Kaduna, when governments make national-level decisions, they sometimes employ federal personnel and resources to implement those decisions at the municipal level. San Salvador is unusual in having a municipal police force, the Metropolitan Agents Corps, but officers are poorly trained and resourced relative to the National Civil Police, and their mandate is limited.[138] In general, it is not clear whether decentralizing policing functions or assigning more responsibility to municipal law enforcement prevents violence,[139] so it is worth continuing to evaluate the evidence. Urban violence prevention actors and the atrocity prevention community could also direct their advocacy toward strengthening demands for enhanced local oversight of the implementation of national policies and building capacity at all levels for peaceful resolution of power contestations. Additional research could help determine which actors at which levels are best placed to intervene.

Reconstruction is part of R2P's guarantee of nonrecurrence[140] and often requires collective action. After the water crisis in Flint, for example, public officials argued that neighboring municipalities could and should have been empowered to play a formal role in working to resolve the Flint's financial crisis, acknowledging and capitalizing on shared resources and systems.[141] In Aleppo, the government's corruption and ruthlessness limits collective action to rebuild the city. Max Martin, a former adviser to the special envoy to Syria at the US Department of State, laments, "The effectiveness of reconstruction would be called into question because the regime is so kleptocratic that it would absorb a lot of the assistance." Plus, he says, the international community tends to cast investments in Syria as tantamount to rewarding a war criminal. A 2019 survey of displaced Syrians found that while most have retained proof of their land ownership in Syria, they do not trust the government's reconstruction agenda and lack access to relevant local officials. "Respondents are not optimistic about 'reconstruction,'" the survey write-up concludes, and they

"have few hopes of securing their property rights."[142] Nonetheless, the urgency of the responsibility to rebuild remains undiminished because whenever Syrians return, write Shaar and Robert Templer, many will return to cities. "Unless those cities recover a degree of pluralism, public space and economic diversity, the conflict is likely to start again."[143]

Cities already support and assist their neighbors as well as cities farther afield through modeling initiatives that create the structural conditions for peace by building community and expanding opportunity. Barcelona and Bilbao, Spain, for example, are successful cases of urban regeneration without runaway gentrification; Curitiba, Brazil, excels in environmentally sustainable planning; and Bogotá, Colombia, is on the forefront of innovations in mobility. More recently, Medellín, Colombia, has gained recognition for its postconflict resilience. Spearheaded by an activist municipal government committed to "social urbanism," the city has prioritized improvements in public space and public services in marginalized, impoverished, and conflictual areas of the city.[144] None of these models are uncontested—Medellín, for example, has stubbornly high rates of inequality, and while homicides have dropped enormously since their peak, violence still stalks the city—and all urban development is tailored to specific contexts and circumstances. Still, the initiatives in these five cities and countless others offer inspiration and concrete tools for thinking through holistic approaches to preventing mass urban violence.[145]

R2P at the city level offers opportunities for direct and structural violence prevention just as it does at the national and international levels. Working in partnership, urban violence prevention actors and the atrocity prevention community can use their complementary knowledge and experience to overcome the conceptual and practical challenges of adapting the norm to the shift in scale. Urban violence prevention actors are well versed in historic and ongoing local initiatives and plugged into the networks advancing them. They can provide in-depth information and comparative analysis within and across cities to identify incisive examples of urban protection practices. The atrocity prevention community counts among its ranks seasoned experts in the application of international frameworks for protection and human rights, including specialists in peacekeeping, refugee protection, and migrant management. It also has trusted relationships with high-level actors. Together, these communities of scholarship and practice can clarify and strengthen the mandate, and the obligation, that cities already have to protect their residents. This could include evaluating and adjusting legal implications as well as assessing how groups that engaged in mass violence in cities were, or were not, brought to justice.

How Can Municipal Actors Be Better Recognized, Resourced, and Empowered?

As discussed above, cities do not have full autonomy to make their own decisions and may not have the institutions or resources to do so. This section draws on literature on critical participation to explore, first, how and why higher-level (i.e., state or provincial, and federal) government actors may intentionally limit

city authority. This report echoes existing research on local peacebuilding that concludes that recognized, resourced, and empowered city-level actors are often the best placed to mount effective interventions for building and maintaining peace.[146] Yet city-level actors can be compromised, and they may misdiagnose the problems around them. The second half of this section delves into those complications, exploring how to integrate gangs into processes for social change and highlighting the need to better understand the role of masculinity in urban atrocities.

In both Michigan and Nigeria, the state or federal government, respectively, devolves power to municipalities without truly enabling the latter "to steer processes and meet demands."[147] This practice builds on a flawed conception of participation in which authorities transfer responsibilities to their marginalized constituents in the name of "empowering the poor." The underlying objective, however, is often to dodge obligations and avoid blame for difficulties.[148] To illustrate, Michigan's emergency management law allows the state to appoint an unelected official to take over a city in financial distress. The state defends this fundamentally undemocratic decision on the grounds that the municipality failed, though it defines failure in narrow, exclusively financial terms.[149] At its heart, the law signifies the state's belief that it is better positioned to navigate local crises and more deserving of the resources to do so than local actors are. In Michigan, "It's not about how the state can help the locality," clarifies Levy. "They don't even ask that question. They ask how the state can make the locality help itself while ignoring the fact that the resources are all being used elsewhere." In effect, certain municipalities—in this case, where residents have suffered years of direct and indirect discrimination—are set up to fail and then punished when they do. "Municipal distress is archaeological evidence of structural racism," argues Hammer. Flint's emergency manager was "given draconian powers in a setting where there [was] no political or social infrastructure to support the use of those powers."[150]

Similarly, the Nigerian government has pursued decentralization since gaining independence from Great Britain in 1960 and especially since the 1990s. At the same time, the federal government has guarded access to certain types of resources and control, "circumscrib[ing] local autonomy in ways that often have unpredicted consequences," according to Angerbrandt. In Kaduna, as in other Nigerian municipalities, the local government has the power to determine who is indigenous to the city—and thus entitled to certain privileges such as government employment, reserved places at universities and/or funding, and land rights—and who is not. The grievances that these determinations generate are especially acute in Kaduna, where indigeneity is defined exclusively on ethnoreligious grounds without accounting for family history of settlement.[151] Though grievances have periodically spilled over into hostilities and hostilities have occasionally descended into IBMV, the central government has repeatedly responded with military force rather than sustained investments in education reform or resource redistribution.[152]

Faranak Miraftab, professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Illinois, distinguishes between "invited" and "invented" spaces of citizenship. Invited spaces are those in which authorities invite communities to participate in the exercise of power provided they do not challenge the status quo. In contrast, invented spaces are ones that communities create for themselves to make demands that question dominant systems and structures.[153] Especially in places with deep power disparities, leaders must be willing to hear those demands and integrate the groups that make them into official decision-making processes.[154] Admittedly, this is an uphill battle: people in power usually fight for that power based on a conviction that they are the best for the job. Conflict or failure under their watch could reflect poorly on them, jeopardizing their ability to remain in power or implement their agenda. Urban violence prevention actors and people working in atrocity prevention can support grassroots efforts to demand transparency, accountability, and participatory governance. A report by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, for example, recommended replacing or restructuring the emergency management law to focus on the root causes of municipal financial collapse over its immediate triggers. They also advocated for local authorities retaining oversight over all crisis-management processes.[155] These actions amount to steps toward stability, nonviolence, and engaged citizenship, not a zero-sum forsaking of power and resources.

Groups that are victimized may also use violence themselves, however, which may erode support for participatory governance.[156] Gangs are an example of this type of compromised actor. Countering us-versus-them approaches that cast negotiations with gangs as capitulation, urban social anthropologist and social policy specialist Caroline Moser and professor of development geography at King's College London Cathy McIlwaine contend that, "Once gangs are seen as institutional actors they can also be recognized as part of fundamental societal change." Adrian Bergmann at the University of El Salvador encourages working with gangs to develop political projects, redirecting their organizational muscle toward prosocial goals through nonviolent means.[157] The idea has promise: during El Salvador's strict coronavirus lockdown from March to June 2020, local and international news outlets reported that homicide rates plummeted and gang members enforced the quarantine, though they sometimes used force or the threat of force to do so. Criminal groups throughout Latin America and the Caribbean reportedly did the same.[158] Bergmann also argues for acknowledging the "social economy" of criminal activity. Reflecting on rampant extortion in El Salvador, he asks, "How can we deal with extortion not by just endlessly arresting whoever happened to be picked to collect the money today? Let's instead deal with the why."[159]

> How can government actors be encouraged to commit to participatory processes?

Finally, for municipal actors to be better able to prevent violence and build peace, they must understand which populations are at risk. The conflict in Kaduna, for example, is framed as a struggle between Muslims and Christians, but in both groups, young men are the ones in the streets, driven to violence by older male religious leaders.[160] Likewise, though the police in Nairobi targeted men and women of Somali descent,[161] the fears around Somali radicalization that prompted the attacks tend to conjure up images of young men.[162] "Our young boys are disappearing, the police are killing them," says Roble. "There is no trust at all because the police believe that [our boys] are the perpetrators."[163]

Religion is a central fault line around which violence flares in Kaduna and Nairobi, but gender, and especially conceptualizations of masculinity, may be just as important. Looking across the cases reinforces this notion: the Serb army targeted Bosniak Muslims for elimination in Srebrenica, and the Taliban massacred Hazaras in Mazar-i Sharif, but in both cases, the attackers sought to kill young men. This decision reveals a gendered assumption about who poses a threat. Equally, the members of Salvadoran gangs and Mexican cartels are predominantly men. "All too often we take such things for granted," writes Colette Harris of SOAS University of London, "and do not question why it is men who fight."[164]

> Are there links between IBMV and understandings of masculinity?

An essential task in building and maintaining peace in cities is recognizing, resourcing, and empowering municipal actors while acknowledging that they, like national or international actors, are diverse, complex, and flawed. Their authority is unique in that they tend to be more accountable to their constituents than more-remote leaders at higher levels while having fewer tools and smaller budgets to handle local crises that more directly affect them. Initiatives that institutionalize transparency and accountability mechanisms, including a commitment to participatory governance, are worthwhile goals, but the processes may be fraught, and successes may be partial and slow. "That's not an excuse not to act," Hammer emphasizes. "That's an invitation to think about how you act strategically over generations."[165]

How Can City Residents and Institutions Work in Partnership to Take Inclusive Steps Toward Justice and Healing?

This section examines what it means to confront and heal from the harm that mass violence and atrocities provoke, honoring, amplifying, and uplifting local actors' resilience, creativity, and grit. The questions they grapple with—how to move beyond one's own suffering, how to express suffering without antagonizing others who have also endured violence, how to tell different stories, and how to persist in dignity and safety—unfurl space to reckon with past violence in order to prevent future recurrence. Because urban space is imbued with meaning, the interactions between harm and space can impact people's capacity for active citizenship, compassion, and empathy. The quality of those interactions can contribute to, or detract from, cities' inherent dynamism and capacity for renewal.

But first, building sustainable peace necessitates an appreciation of the suffering that people are enduring. Participants in this study who come from Aleppo and Ciudad Juárez, for example, described their suffering in similar terms, both alluding to Whigham's concept of "resonant violence."[166] Shaar, who is from Aleppo, recounts how minimizing harm as a coping strategy ultimately gives way to grief. "You might be feeling like, 'At least I'm alive, at least I didn't lose a limb,' but a lot of the time you are not actually feeling that. You're actually feeling a lot of sorrow." In Ciudad Juárez, Corchado describes being overcome to the point of defeat. "You become a person who is no longer trying to strive, just living and waiting to die." Friederike Bubenzer at the South African Institute for Justice and Reconciliation observes the "ripple effects" of living amid violence, not just for victims and survivors but for everyone.[167] Accounting for the ways trauma stretches across time, between bodies, and across space[168] is much more than a "trauma-informed" approach, she clarifies. "It's [the recognition of] the insidious effect that daily stress has on the wellbeing of people."[169] It is also the recognition that struggling to process suffering during and after violence is human, not evidence of a pathology or a disorder.[170]

In Aleppo and Mazar-i Sharif, where violence has harmed many communities, enduring grievances on top of continued precarity and physical divisions impedes the ability to fully grasp the suffering of others, which in turn complicates prospects for recognition and reconciliation. Armed opposition groups in besieged East Aleppo dropped mortar shells on West Aleppo, impacting both the regime and civilians, but the tactics

> How can people who have endured great harm move beyond their own suffering?

and the corresponding level of destruction in the two sides of the city was asymmetrical. "We're talking about [East Aleppo] being wiped out," Shaar clarifies, "and you're worried about a mortar shell falling and blaming the victims [of barrel bombing] who are trying to defend themselves."[171] Relatedly, in both Nairobi and Jerusalem, Kenyans and Jewish Israelis may be unaware of the violence that Somalis and Palestinians experience or else preoccupied with threats that have a more immediate impact on their lives. In Ciudad Juárez, leaders may deprioritize the deaths and disappearances of women and girls because the absolute number of femicides accounts for a small percentage of total homicides in the city.

In Afghanistan, Hazaras and Pashtuns bracket the violence they experienced within different timescales. Ibrahimi reflects on Hazaras' strong sense of historical victimization going back to

the nineteenth century. In contrast, other groups, especially international actors, start the clock more recently, in 1978 with the pro-Soviet coup or in 2001 with the US invasion, arguing, "We can't just go back in history forever." Each starting point centers the suffering of a different group: while Hazaras were enslaved in the nineteenth century, the Pashtuns have experienced much of the violence related to the 2001 US invasion and ongoing occupation. "How do you find a language to help express your feelings, what you want, and your experience of marginalization as a group when other groups have also experienced violence?" asks Ibrahimi. "How do you talk about yourself without antagonizing others?"[172]

Straining to articulate that language, actors from across Afghanistan's four main ethnic groups have mostly coalesced around silence in light of the recently launched Afghan peace negotiations. Ibrahimi observes that politically active Afghans tend to self-consciously avoid anything that could be read as sectarianism so as not to "look parochial or stuck in the past." Instead, he says, there is public pressure to adopt a national outlook, presented as forward looking, inclusive, and necessary for political and social cohesion and progress.[173] Abdu recalls Rwanda as an example of communal silence after atrocities despite the significant national and international recognition that Rwanda's genocide has received. In Rwanda's silence, Abdu perceives the erosion of resilience, a possibility that "if the kind of government you have in place leaves, it could lead to another conflagration."[174]

> How can people express their own suffering without antagonizing others who have also suffered?

Moving beyond violence requires "a truth process" in order to retell the story and correct and expose history, but many of the local actors in the cases studied have fallen short of that. Since the international court ruling that found the Mexican state complicit in femicides in Ciudad Juárez, "The government has done what governments do, which is to pay out money," recounts Monárrez. "That's easy. But saying what happened and why it was allowed to happen implies that leaders must say that they are the ones who are responsible for [women's] safety." In Kaduna, Abdu charges that the government has not done enough to resolve the underlying causes of violence. He further argues, "Everything we do must have an integrated conflict management mechanism in place, but at the moment, we wait for the explosion of the conflict and then we begin to manage it."[175] Beyond reluctance or lack of capacity to challenge entrenched systems or structures, deep-rooted communal antagonism weighs heavily on the continuation of conflict. Efrat Cohen-Bar of the Israeli human rights organization Bimkom, for example, articulates the mainstream Israeli perspective on the disenfranchisement and dispossession of East Jerusalemites:

> They clean our houses, they build our houses, they serve us in restaurants, and they pave our roads, but

ultimately, [Palestinians] are our enemies. I feel that if you are not Israeli, if you are not educated here, lucky you, you will not understand how deep this is in our flesh and blood. … For me to understand that [Palestinians] are people with rights, I had to make a long journey, but I can understand the other side because of where I come from. How can people from the rest of the world understand this way of thinking?[176]

Recognizing an alternate narrative can aid in breaking seemingly intractable conflicts.[177] "Those moments, those mitigating interventions, are the ways that make people see that [continued violence] is not essential—that it's constructed and therefore can potentially be deconstructed," Whigham emphasizes. The Michigan Civil Rights Commission's report on the Flint water crisis opens with a letter to city residents acknowledging that elected and unelected officials at the state and local levels systematically ignored city residents. This failure resulted in "unprecedented harm and hardship, much of it caused by structural and systemic discrimination and racism that have corroded your city, your institutions, and your water pipes, for generations." This type of recognition by a government body "makes visible the operation of power," affirms Cronin-Furman, by "naming and specifying what the emotional harms are."[178]

> How can entrenched narratives be dislodged and rewritten?

Outside of government, pressure from civil society can chip away at dominant narratives about violence, sometimes precipitating their abandonment and rewriting. "A vibrant civil society that is informed, trained, and actively doing peacebuilding work is fundamental for safeguarding," declares Moix. That said, "You can't ask the oppressed to be the ones who decide [to work toward reconciliation]. … You have to change the system, you have to shift the power, and you have to do the work of changing the structures of violence and stopping the direct violence."[179]

And yet, oppressed communities that have experienced significant violence are often the ones that can best imagine and articulate a different way forward,[180] sometimes commandeering urban planning to do so. For example, outside Jerusalem in the Palestinian village of Battir, which straddles the Green Line that divides Israel and the West Bank, a participatory planning process culminated this year in the first model of a sustainable Palestinian village. Within East Jerusalem, residents have initiated and led planning processes on private land to counter Israeli government (in)action to block Palestinian development, building unconventional and often informal tools and networks to do so.[181]

In Ciudad Juárez, victims' family members and feminist activists reappropriate public space as a place to express private grief and find solace in community. On the last Saturday of each month, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of

Mexico, there is a special mass to celebrate the birthdays of disappeared women and pray for their return. In a homily last year, Father Francisco García addressed the mothers of "our disappeared sisters," requesting divine intervention to strengthen "their legs and their feet so they can keep walking, their mouths so they can keep praying and making claims, their minds so they can continue coming up with new ideas, and their hearts so they keep supporting and encouraging each other."[182] The Municipal Institute for Women now has an office in the historic city center—which Corchado describes as "the epicenter of sorrow" for the city's women—where women can seek therapy and legal advice and follow up on their cases without incurring any costs. The institute is also working with the municipality and law enforcement on a safe corridor. After collaborating with local universities to develop a gender-informed protocol for policing, the first component of the safe corridor is a network of public bathrooms with police officers stationed next to each one.[183] Meanwhile, families and activists gather in the area with posters and shirts bearing photos of disappeared women, insisting that their faces remain imprinted on the public consciousness and forming moving walls of memory.[184]

Bubenzer advocates for close collaboration between peacebuilders of all kinds and mental health and psychosocial support professionals. She also stresses that mass violence has direct and indirect impacts and that all of these impacts deserve support. Reflecting on personal experience, Bubenzer remembers returning home to South Africa from South Sudan and realizing, "What I experienced in South Sudan was alive and well on my doorstep." This moment, she explains, was a turning point in "my own journey as a white, privileged South African coming to terms with my ancestry, with my privilege, and with my whiteness."[185] Building on existing literature, this research found clear and repeated evidence of the toll that witnessing, documenting, and recognizing violence takes.[186] Levy, who wrote the Michigan Civil Rights Commission's report on the Flint water crisis, for example, recalls feeling rage and shame as he drafted it. In the years since, he has struggled with how to continue pushing for change. "Where do I get off telling people to be patient?" he asks. "Things have been too bad for too long for incremental progress to be enough. … I'm not prepared to be out advocating for revolution, but the alternative escapes me now."[187] Indeed, preventing urban atrocities requires more than nurturing initiatives and holding space for processes and conversations that may reveal painful truths. It also demands a rigorous, multisited ethics of care, enabling victims, victimizers, activists, scholars, and public officials to fortify and heal themselves and each other.[188]

Conclusion: Beginning

Scaling atrocity prevention to the city makes clear that there are abundant opportunities for close, enthusiastic, and urgent collaboration between urban violence prevention actors and the atrocity prevention community. This research fuses a case study approach with a novel framework for analysis to illustrate how space, place, relationships, and urban geopolitics interact. These interactions reveal a range of ways to sustain and strengthen cities and their inhabitants and the communities of scholarship and practice that support them, described in context throughout this report. They are summarized here in five consolidated strategies to lead effective mass violence prevention in cities, build sustainable peace, and enable community transformation. The strategies are (1) reimagine, reclaim, and repurpose urban space for justice and healing, (2) identify, amplify, and learn from local peacebuilders, especially victims and victimizers, (3) work with official and unofficial urban planners using established and improvised tools and methods, (4) seek out exemplary models of urban violence prevention practices, and (5) commit to a multisited ethics of care.

The exploratory nature of this study leaves questions unanswered. Questions about methodology might demand more time, data, and exploration, whereas questions on the nature of cities and urban violence could benefit from further conceptualization to bridge the gaps between theory and practice and short- and long-term goals. There are several questions that examine privilege, suffering, and the limitations of power; they ask for vulnerability and emotional intelligence. All of the questions are pressing, and many of them are also vexing.

Hannah Arendt writes that humans possess a unique "capacity to begin," to depart from a norm and chart a new path.[189] But starting anew, especially after significant violence, may first require turning back. Abdu was living in Kaduna when the riots broke out, and he recalls the anxious dread he felt on his way to work as throngs of people massed in the streets. Two decades later he is a recognized scholar and humanitarian, yet he admits he would still advise a newcomer to the city to live among his or her own group. He finds his position problematic but sees it as part of a trajectory. "Visiting the past to address the present is very important," he explains. "When you visit the past, you demystify it. You reexplain it, you reanalyze it, you re-present it, you contextualize it, and people gain a better understanding of what actually happened." Cities provide a canvas for these processes, dynamic, flexible, able to give form, and be formed themselves.

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Appendix A: List of Interviewees

Below are the names and affiliations of everyone was interviewed for this research, in addition to the case about which they spoke, if applicable.

Hussaini Abdu. PLAN International, Nigeria | Kaduna

Henrik Angerbrandt. Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention | Kaduna

Alex Bellamy. University of Queensland, Australia

Adrian Bergmann. University of El Salvador | San Salvador

Friederike Bubenzer. Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, South Africa

Efrat Cohen-Bar. Bimkom, Israel/Palestine | Jerusalem

Verónica Corchada. Municipal Institute for Women, Mexico | Ciudad Juárez

Kate Cronin-Furman. University College London, UK

Emma Elfversson. Uppsala University, Sweden | Nairobi

Kate Ferguson. Protection Approaches, UK

Elham Gharji. University of Coimbra, Portugal | Mazar-i Sharif

James Gow. King's College London, UK | Srebrenica

Peter Hammer. Wayne State University, United States | Flint

Jan Willem Honig. King's College London, UK | Srebrenica

Niamatullah Ibrahimi. La Trobe University, Australia | Mazar-i Sharif

Dan Levy. Michigan Civil Rights Commission, United States | Flint

Max Martin. Department of State, United States | Aleppo

Bridget Moix. Peace Direct, USA

Julia Monárrez. Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Mexico | Ciudad Juárez

Munini Mutuku. National Cohesion and Reconciliation Committee, Kenya | Nairobi

Rami Nasrallah. International Peace and Cooperation Center, Israel/Palestine | Jerusalem

Sureya Roble. Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization, Kenya | Nairobi

Antônio Sampaio. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, UK

Hakam Shaar. The Aleppo Project | Aleppo

Kerry Whigham. State University of New York at Binghamton, USA

Appendix B: Full Typology With Attributes Coded for Each Case

Characteristics of the City

Case	National or regional status	Enclaved	Cross-communal place of encounter	Territorial conflict	Recent contextual shock
Srebrenica	Not a capital	Enclaved	No	Disputed	Political
Mazar-i Sharif	Provincial capital	Enclaved	Yes	Disputed	Political
Kaduna	Provincial capital	Not enclaved	Yes	Not disputed	Political
San Salvador	National capital	Enclaved	Yes	Disputed	Environmental Financial
Nairobi	National capital	Enclaved	Yes	Not disputed	Political
Flint	Not a capital	Enclaved	No	Not disputed	Financial
Aleppo	Provincial capital	Enclaved	Yes	Disputed	Environmental Political
Ciudad Juárez	Provincial capital	Not enclaved	Yes	Disputed	Political
Jerusalem	National capital	Enclaved	Yes	Disputed	Political

Characteristics of the Violence

Case	Basis for identification of target group	Involvement of actors who are outside the city	Intended harm	Wartime	Location
Srebrenica	Gender Nation Religion	Involved	Death Dehumanization	Wartime	City periphery
Mazar-i Sharif	Gender Race/ethnicity Religion	Involved	Death Dehumanization Dispossession	Wartime	City periphery
Kaduna	Religion	Involved	Death Dispossession	Not wartime	Generalized
San Salvador	Partisanship	Not involved	Death Destruction Dehumanization	Not wartime	City periphery
Nairobi	Nation Race/ethnicity Religion	Not involved	Disenfranchisement Dehumanization	Not wartime	City center
Flint	Race/ethnicity Socioeconomic status	Involved	Disenfranchisement	Not wartime	Generalized
Aleppo	Partisanship	Involved	Death Dehumanization Destruction Dispossession	Wartime	Generalized
Ciudad Juárez	Gender Socioeconomic status	Not involved	Death Dehumanization	Not wartime	Generalized
Jerusalem	Nation Partisanship	Involved	Destruction Dispossession Disenfranchisement	Not wartime	Generalized

Normalization and Chronicity of Violence

Case	Violence is officially sanctioned	Direct involvement of people in power	Recognition of violence
Srebrenica	Yes	Military	Recognition with limited structural change
Mazar-i Sharif	Yes	Nonstate armed authority	Silence
Kaduna	No	None	Recognition with limited structural change
San Salvador	No	None	Digging in
Nairobi	No	Police	Recognition with limited structural change
Flint	Yes	Government	Recognition with limited structural change
Aleppo	Yes	Government Military	Digging in
Ciudad Juárez	No	Police	Recognition with limited structural change
Jerusalem	Yes	Government Military	Digging in

Endnotes

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17 Ibid., 317.

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25 Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2.

26 In addition to the cases studied here, another example of violence that mattered was the kill-ing of George Floyd, a Black man in Minneapolis, Minnesota, by a white police officer in May 2020.

27 Researcher Ariana Markowitz and most of the research team are from the United States and white, and thus they benefit from oppressive systems of supremacy that cause direct and indirect harm throughout the world. Though only two of the cases studied here occurred in the Global North, the team rejects the belief—common, if often unspoken, in the Global North—that "we have civil rights, so we don't need human rights," and defends the urgent task of protecting and defending those rights in partnership with local communities in all places where abuses occur.

28 To clarify, Srebrenica was one of many sites, including neighboring towns, where mass violence occurred during the Bosnian War.

29 For further information on demonstrative violence, see Nils Böckler et al., "Same but Different? Developmental Pathways to Demonstrative Targeted Attacks—Qualitative Case Analyses of Adolescent and Young Adult Perpetrators of Targeted School Attacks and Jihadi Terrorist Attacks in Germany," *International Journal of Developmental Science* 12, no. 1–2 (2018): 5–24, https://doi.org/10.3233/DEV-180255.

30 Honig interview.

31 Darko Trifunovic, *Report about Case Srebrenica* (Banja Luka: Documentation Centre of Republic of Srpska and Bureau of Government of RS for Relation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, September 2002), http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/documents/srebrenica.pdf.

32 Honig interview.

33 James Gow, interview by Ariana Markowitz, September 23, 2020, London, case interview: Srebrenica . Note that Srebrenica was also a Red Cross-designated safe area, the only one of the six UN safe areas in Bosnia to have both of these designations.

34 In 2019, the Dutch Supreme Court upheld a 2017 decision that the Netherlands was partly responsible for the deaths of 350 Muslim men in Srebrenica, though the court reduced liability from 30 percent to 10 percent.

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41 Kerry Whigham, online interview by Ariana Markowitz, October 8, 2020, conceptual interview.

42 Cronin-Furman interview.

43 Niamatullah Ibrahimi, online interview by Ariana Markowitz, September 18, 2020, case interview: Mazar-i Sharif.

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46 Henrik Angerbrandt, "Political Decentralisation and Conflict: The Sharia Crisis in Kaduna, Nigeria," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 15–31, https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2011.533057.

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53 Harris, "Violence."

54 Abdu interview.

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About the Author

Ariana Markowitz is a social urbanist and feminist researcher specializing in urban violence, participatory urban design, methodology development, and research ethics. She has more than 15 years of cross-sector experience in violence and precarity in 15 countries across North and South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Recent consulting projects have taken her to San Salvador where she led a team in rewriting the city's public space policy; Mexico City and Monterrey to document police reform as part of a joint initiative of Princeton University and the Tecnológico de Monterrey; and various towns and cities in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Benin to strengthen the social impact of entrepreneurial ventures supported by TechnoServe and GIZ. She has also developed, refined, and implemented counterterrorism research methodologies with partners in government and law enforcement throughout the United States and Canada.

Markowitz is currently completing her doctoral dissertation at University College London in which she is proposing a feminist methodology for working on extreme and chronic urban violence. In 2020, she wrote an ethics guide on managing risk and navigating well-being for UCL's Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, and she was the 2019 recipient of a fellowship from Graduate Women International for research to prevent violence against women and girls.

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