

AGE, GENDER, AND THE CRIME OF CRIMES: TOWARD A LIFE-COURSE THEORY OF GENOCIDE PARTICIPATION*

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This article asks whether genocide follows the age and gender distributions common to other crime. We develop and test a life-course model of genocide participation to address this question using a new dataset of 1,068,192 cases tried in Rwanda's gacaca courts. Three types of prosecutions are considered: 1) inciting, organizing, or supervising violence; 2) killings and other physical assaults; and 3) offenses against property. By relying on systematic graphic comparisons, we find that the peak age of those tried in the gacaca courts was 34 years at the time of the genocide, which is older than the peak age for most other types of crime. We likewise find that women were more likely to participate in crimes against property and comparatively unlikely to commit genocidal murder. Symbolic–interactionist explanations of crime suggest people desist from crime as a result of shared understandings of the expectations of adulthood. We argue that this process may be turned on its head during genocide as participants may believe they are defending their communities against a perceived threat. Thus, in contrast to other criminological theories suggesting that people must desist from crime to be accorded adult status, some adults may participate in genocide to fulfill their duties as adult men.

During the twentieth century, more people died as a result of genocide than as a result of all other crimes (Brannigan and Hardwick, 2003; Savelsberg, 2010). Despite the scale of this violence, few criminologists have systematically examined genocide participation. As Savelsberg (2010) and Hagan and Raymond-Richmond (2009) demonstrated, however, explanations of crime and genocide are closely connected, from state-level studies of preconditions to individual-level analyses of perpetrators. In line with this reasoning, we develop a life-course model to test how the two strongest correlates of crime—age and gender—are linked to genocide.

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We focus on the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, where up to one million people were killed within several months. By using new data on more than one million cases tried in Rwanda's *gacaca* courts, we examine the age and gender distributions of defendants and compare them against age and gender distributions typical of other crimes. Our analysis reveals that participation in genocide declines with age and that more men than women participated. Yet, unlike classic research on age and crime—which suggests that participation in crime peaks in adolescence and early adulthood—we find that the peak age of Rwandan defendants was 34.7 years during the genocide. This surprising finding also contradicts much scholarship on Rwanda that has emphasized the preponderance of *young* men among the perpetrators (e.g., Des Forges, 1999; Jones, 2002) as well as general scholarship on “youth bulges” and armed conflict (e.g., Urdal, 2006).

To explain this finding, we turn to life-course theories of crime. According to most explanations of crime and the life course, people desist from crime as a result of shared understandings of the expectations of adult citizens—for people to “grow up,” there is typically a cultural expectation that they must inevitably “settle down” (Massoglia and Uggen, 2010). During genocide, however, this process may be turned on its head. Genocides are frequently framed through the lenses of duty and honor, and perpetrators often report that they act to protect their family or country from dangerous outsiders. In this sense, crimes of genocide can be aligned with the gendered expectations of responsible adult citizenship. Thus, in contrast to criminological theories suggesting that people must “age out” and desist from crime to be accorded adult status, we argue that some adults may participate in genocide to fulfill their duties as adult men.

In what follows, we first explain why genocide is a crime and address its similarities with other crimes. We then review scholarship on the relationships among age, gender, and crime as well as related research on genocide perpetrators. Next, we draw on this scholarship to develop and test a life-course theory of genocide with our database of *gacaca* court trials. Finally, we discuss the implications of a life-course theory of participation in genocide.

GENOCIDE AS CRIME

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide deemed genocide a crime of international law in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust. This new crime was defined as acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” Although this definition remains heavily criticized—with many scholars suggesting that any group could be targeted—the treaty nonetheless established genocide as a crime of international law. Several international tribunals have since solidified the idea of genocide as a crime (see Sutherland, Cressey, and Luckenbill, 1992: 4), and today genocide is one of several crimes under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

Despite its devastating social impact, genocide has been more commonly studied by historians, political scientists, and legal scholars than by criminologists (but see Hagan and Raymond-Richmond, 2009; Karstedt, 2013; Rafter, 2016). This is surprising as genocide has much in common with other forms of crime. Like hate crimes (Grattet and Jenness, 2001), for example, genocide is defined by the targeting of particular groups. Like

many other forms of state crime (Rothe, 2009), genocide is often organized by the state (Melvern, 2006). Like corporate and organizational crimes (Clinard and Yeager, 1980), genocide is typically characterized by a high degree of social organization (Meierhenrich, 2006). Like rioting (Myers, 1997) and terrorism (LaFree, Morris, and Dugan, 2010), genocide is unstable over time and does not occur every day or every year (Harff, 2003). Like gang-related crimes (Short and Strodbeck, 1965), genocide is often a crime of obedience in which perpetrators claim they were following orders (Arendt, 1963). Finally, like many other crimes (Stolzenberg and D'Alessio, 2008; Vandiver, 2010), genocide is perpetrated with co-offenders, often including both soldiers and "ordinary citizens" (Fujii, 2009).

We do *not* mean to imply that genocide should be subsumed under another criminal offense category as genocide is unique for its distinctive *combination* of these elements and its explicit focus on the destruction of a social group. Rather, we draw these parallels to show how genocide and other crimes are comparable social phenomena. Indeed, genocide *is* crime, and it likewise comprises a series of actions that are criminalized worldwide, such as rape and homicide (see Karstedt, 2013). Comparing genocide with other forms of crime is thus an important endeavor for developing theories of genocide and probing the boundaries and scope conditions of criminology. As Tilly (2003) illustrated through his juxtaposition of genocide, peasant revolts, and gunfights, comparing distinct forms of violence can yield important insights.

To this end, we consider two of the most enduring and widely accepted empirical generalizations in life-course criminology: that 1) crime declines with age and 2) men are more likely than women to commit crimes at every age. These strong and robust correlates have been tested on myriad crimes, ranging from embezzlement to homicide. Most notably, Travis Hirschi and Michael Gottfredson (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983) went so far as to characterize the relationships as invariant (1983: 554), noninteractive (1983: 572–3), and inexplicable (1983: 580–1). Such claims have generated a productive debate, advancing knowledge and informing policy. Understanding the age and gender distributions of people who commit genocide is thus a fundamental building block for a criminological account of genocide. Put another way, understanding *who* participates in genocide can shed light on the process of genocide and on responses to this crime.

AGE, GENDER, AND CRIME

Contemporary life-course criminology has its roots in Quetelet's (1984 [1831]) observation that age and gender are closely linked to criminal propensity (or *penchant*). Quetelet's French data showed the highest rate of crime among men in their late teens and twenties, and many criminologists have since replicated this finding. In fact, the curvilinear relationship between age and crime—which ascends during adolescence, peaks in early adulthood, and then declines—remains one of the most durable empirical relationships in criminology.

This *general* pattern holds across many types of crime, ranging from crimes against property (like theft) to violent crimes (like homicide) and white-collar offenses (like embezzlement). Although violent crimes typically peak comparatively earlier and decline more quickly than do white-collar offenses (e.g., Ulmer and Steffensmeier, 2014: 387), the

curves are similar for violent and property crimes, including those committed in groups.¹ Different methods of data collection can also yield different results as self-reported criminality tends to begin and peak somewhat earlier than do official arrests and convictions. Nevertheless, self-reports have shown a similar pattern of initiation, escalation, and desistance (Blokland and Nieuwebeerta, 2005; Loeber et al., 1991), suggesting a robust relationship between age and crime.

The *general age-crime* relationship also holds across time and space. For example, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) studied crime in the United States and the United Kingdom in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, concluding that the curves were similar in each setting. Subsequent researchers have identified some historical variation (O'Brien and Stockard, 2009), with Steffensmeier and colleagues (1989) finding an older peak age during earlier periods in the United States. These differences are not unimportant, although a basic curvilinear pattern has been observed in numerous eras. Similarly, a robust, general age-crime relationship is apparent across studies in diverse nations (Bohannon, 1960; Fabio et al., 2006; Nivette, 2011), even though the curve may be somewhat flatter outside highly age-stratified Western societies (Steffensmeier et al., 1989).

Taken together, this research has shown that claims of strict "invariance" in the relationship between age and crime are untenable (see also Farrington, 1986; O'Brien and Stockard, 2009; Steffensmeier and Streifel, 1991). Rather, offenses such as homicide, aggravated assault, driving while intoxicated, and embezzlement tend to have slightly older peak ages (in the late twenties or early thirties) relative to offenses such as vandalism and shoplifting (Ulmer and Steffensmeier, 2014). Criminologists often characterize those whose first conviction at 21 years of age or older as "late onset" (Zara and Farrington, 2009), although significantly later age of onset has been observed for certain offenses requiring positions of authority. Weisburd, Chayet, and Waring (1990), for example, reported a mean age of onset of 54 for antitrust violations, 43 for bribery, and 42 for securities fraud. Nevertheless, for both men and women, crime seems to rise in the teens and early twenties and then fall precipitously for almost every type of crime across space and time (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; see also D'Unger, Land, and McCall, 2002).

Like age, gender is a long-established correlate of criminal behavior, with men more likely than women to commit most criminal and delinquent offenses (Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, 2004; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Quetelet, 1984 [1831]). As with age and crime, the relationship between gender and crime holds across many offenses (Giordano and Cernkovich, 1997; Mears, Ploeger, and Warr, 1998), self-reported and official measures (Schwartz and Steffensmeier, 2012), time (Steffensmeier and Allan, 1996), and space (Antonaccio et al., 2010; Kruttschnitt, 1993; Piquero, Brame, and Moffitt, 2005).

Again, however, this association is not strictly invariant (Antonaccio et al., 2010; Vandiver, 2010; Zimmerman and Messner, 2010) as the differential between men and women is smaller in magnitude for less serious crimes, such as crimes against property (Quetelet, 1984 [1831]; Schwartz and Steffensmeier, 2012). There is also evidence of a diminishing U.S. gender gap (Lauritsen, Heimer, and Lynch, 2009; Steffensmeier et al.,

1. Less information is available for property crimes similar to genocidal looting, although the age distribution of those arrested for rioting tends to be comparatively younger (Briggs, 2012: 284). Additionally, even though some argue that co-offending accounts for the age-crime relationship (e.g., Warr, 1993), the inverse-U distribution remains for co-offending (Stolzenberg and D'Alessio, 2008).

2006; but see Schwartz et al., 2009), as well as some cross-national variation (Junger-Tas, Marshall, and Ribeaud, 2003). Yet, none of these studies have challenged the basic finding that men offend at significantly higher rates than women do.

Much research has thus established that participation in crime declines with age and that men are more likely to engage in criminal behavior. As a result of the strength of these relationships, Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) posited that they cannot be explained by life-course events, such as getting married or securing employment. Rather, they attributed such differences to variation in the opportunity to commit crimes. For example, few teenagers are in a position to embezzle funds.

Life-course criminologists, however, have developed theories and evidence supporting a causal connection between crime and life events,² including age-graded transitions into adult work (Uggen, 2000) and family roles (Laub and Sampson, 1993). Control-based theories view these transitions as informal social controls (Laub and Sampson, 1993), suggesting that as people transition out of adolescence, social controls keep them from engaging in crime. Symbolic–interactionist theories highlight how transitions into adult work and family roles influence identity, positing that criminal behavior is inconsistent with the prescribed role expectations of adult citizens (Massoglia and Uggen, 2010). In each case, factors such as starting a full-time job, becoming a parent, and spending less time with delinquent peers help account for the decline in crime in adulthood. In fact, Sweeten, Piquero, and Steinberg (2013) explained up to 69 percent of the drop in crime from 15 to 25 years of age by adjusting for employment, marriage, peer exposure, and psychosocial development.

These transitions are also gendered. Gender is an actively constructed identity that is produced and reproduced through speech, action, and the organization of social life (West and Zimmerman, 1987). In many societies, gendered divisions of labor have placed greater responsibility for child-rearing and household management on women and greater responsibility for economic activities on men. The cognitive transformations that accompany these shifts are similarly gendered, with women more likely to view children as catalysts for change (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph, 2002).

Applying theories of age, gender, and crime to genocide would consequently suggest that the modal participants should be young men in their late teens and early twenties. Several accounts of genocide, including the genocide in Rwanda, would support this hypothesis. As we will explain, however, there is also reason to hypothesize a later peak age for genocide—and a distribution that more closely approximates the peak age of military and government service workers.

GENOCIDE, CRIME, AND THE GENDERED LIFE COURSE

Although criminologists have devoted little attention to the perpetrators of genocide, other scholars have studied perpetrators across several episodes of genocide, largely focusing on the Holocaust and Rwanda (see Loyle, 2009; Owens, Su, and Snow, 2013; Verdeja, 2012). To date, these studies have reached one enduring conclusion—perpetrators³ of genocide are “normal.” For example, Browning’s *Ordinary Men* (1998)

2. Biology no doubt plays a part as well (e.g., Gove, 1985).

3. Although we define “perpetrators” as people who participated in the genocide, some Rwandans were killers as well as rescuers, often within the same week (Campbell, 2011; Luft, 2015).

argued that members of German Police Battalion 101, who committed many murders during the Holocaust, were family men of working-class backgrounds. This idea of the “banality of evil” (Arendt, 1963) has found much support in other studies (Milgram, 1974; Zimbardo, 2007; but see Perry, 2013), and scholars typically agree that those who commit genocide are not markedly distinctive (but see Goldhagen, 1996).

Such characterizations reflect a reaction against assumptions that genocide perpetrators are marked by psychiatric disorders. In discrediting claims that perpetrators of genocide are evil or psychologically unstable, however, scholars have often de-emphasized their distinguishing social characteristics, like gender and age. For example, research on perpetrators has focused on men but often has not explicitly analyzed gender (for some exceptions, see Jones, 2002; Lower, 2013; Sharlach, 1999). As noted, one of the most famous studies of perpetrators is titled *Ordinary Men*. Similarly, 95 percent of Mann’s (2000) sample of more than 1,500 presumed German war criminals were men. In Verwimp’s (2005) small sample of perpetrators in Rwanda, 91 percent were men. And Straus (2006) limited his interviews with Rwandan perpetrators to men as his preliminary research indicated most perpetrators were men.

Although this research has suggested that more men than women participate in genocide, Brown (2014) argued that scholars’ emphasis on men is a product of gendered notions of who *can* commit genocidal violence. For instance, several thousand women SS auxiliaries supervised Nazi camps from 1939 to 1945, with some rising to high-ranking positions (Lower, 2013). Tens of thousands of Cambodian women were part of the Khmer Rouge regime and served as leaders and guards in labor camps (R. Smith, 1994). An African Rights (1995) study of Rwanda likewise documented that many women became involved in the genocide by killing their neighbors and looting dead bodies, illustrating that even though men may comprise the majority of perpetrators, it is also important to understand women’s participation.

When we turn to age, most Rwanda scholars have suggested that many perpetrators were *young* men, much in line with the criminological research cited earlier. Although no studies (to our knowledge) have *systematically* addressed the age of people who committed genocide in Rwanda or in other cases, age is frequently noted in descriptive accounts of perpetrators. Many have documented how youth militias, recruited before and during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, played a large role in the violence (e.g., Des Forges, 1999). Descriptions of citizens who were not directly recruited make clear how challenging it was for young people to make basic work and family transitions at the time of the genocide. An expert on the genocide noted, “Of the nearly 60 percent of Rwandans under the age of twenty, tens of thousands had little hope of obtaining the land needed to establish their own households or the jobs necessary to provide for a family” (Des Forges, 1999: 14). In other words, young men had few options available to them, which may have influenced their participation in the genocide.

Similarly, Jones (2002) argued that young Rwandan men became perpetrators in large part because of a gender crisis induced by a crippled economy. Economic prospects dimmed in the late 1980s when the price of coffee, which accounted for 75 percent of Rwanda’s trade, dropped sharply (Verwimp, 2013). At the time, most men were self-employed agriculturalists and needed land to marry (Jones, 2002), which helps explain why the average age of marriage was 26.8 years (IPUMS International, 2012). Family formation was further impeded by the economic crisis and Rwanda’s extremely high population density.

Beyond criminological studies of age, these observations are consistent with studies of political and ethnic violence that have directed attention toward youth. Many analyses of civil war, for example, have suggested that violence is committed by young men and that “youth bulges” influence the onset of political and ethnic violence (Goldstone, 1991; Gurr, 1970; Urdal, 2006). In general, these studies have argued that higher percentages of young men translate to more potential perpetrators. Thus, much literature on genocide, as well as on other forms of violence, has fallen in line with criminological theories oriented to young men.

Nevertheless, an examination of the defendants tried at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which prosecuted many of those deemed most culpable for the genocide, finds that most defendants were in their forties in 1994. Many of these individuals were military personnel and political leaders. Although the 1991 Rwandan census did not record the ages of people in the army, the modal age of those elected to parliament in 1988 was 36 to 40 [Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2014]. This suggests that those who orchestrate genocide may require some degree of social capital, which is associated with age. It also suggests that, to account for middle-aged perpetrators, a life-course theory of genocide may need to look beyond standard criminological research and studies of youth bulges.

In fact, data from several other studies likewise point toward comparatively older perpetrators, even when examining the “foot soldiers” who implemented the violence. Browning (1998) reported an average age of 39 among men in German Police Battalion 101, and Mann (2000) observed an average age of 32 to 41 in a study of 1,581 men and women involved in the Holocaust (see also Brustein, 1996). Similar patterns have been observed in small-scale studies of Rwanda. For example, Straus’s (2006) 230 interviewees had a modal age range of 30 to 39, and the 65 perpetrators in Verwimp’s (2005) study were, on average, 33 (see also McDoom, 2014).

In the case of the Holocaust, many perpetrators in the aforementioned studies were recruited through particular mechanisms, which could help explain the age distributions. For instance, the men in German Police Battalion 101 were deemed “too old” for the *Wehrmacht* (armed forces). In Rwanda, recruitment mechanisms were less formalized, although evidence on recruitment appeals is illuminating. Specifically, a rebel army of Tutsis had attacked Rwanda several years before the genocide, initiating a civil war. Soon afterward, government actors began discussing the possibility of creating a civilian defense corps. Among these propositions, a colonel proposed training one person from every ten households. As Des Forges explained (1999: 83), “The persons to be armed . . . would be ideally between twenty-five and forty years old, married, patriotic, and of high moral character.”

A program of civilian defense, which included supervising roadblocks and carrying out night patrols, was subsequently instituted for a short period of time but eventually lapsed (Des Forges, 1999: 83). Although these efforts could not have reached all people who eventually participated in the genocide, a few aspects of this recruitment process are noteworthy. First, these efforts targeted patriotic men (25–40 years of age) in good standing. Even though the genocide had not yet begun, fighting the “Tutsi enemy” was already depicted as an act of national service, and well-established men were identified as those who should defend their families and their country. This suggests that age-graded adult role expectations linked to life-course explanations of crime—such as becoming a responsible,

productive, and active citizen in one's community—may have guided both recruitment and behavior during the genocide.

The expectations of good citizens, however, may be inverted during such times. To the extent that potential perpetrators are called on to defend their families and their nation against a grave threat, crimes of genocide may be aligned with the gendered expectations of responsible adult citizenship. Just as delinquent youth typically “age out” of crime as they take up the duties of adult citizenship, so too may citizens “age into” genocide participation as they attempt to fulfill the same duties and obligations, suggesting an older peak age for genocide participation.

If participation in genocide is framed as defending a country and its values, we would also expect few women participants. At the time of the genocide in Rwanda, a gendered division of labor typically began in early childhood as girls performed chores while women managed the household. Boys were charged with shepherding livestock and were often taught combat techniques, whereas men performed heavy labor (Burnet, 2012; Jones, 2002). Men were also expected to defend the country by serving in the armed forces.

Even though Rwandan history reveres powerful women—such as the Queen Mother—Rwandan women were nonetheless marginalized at the time of the genocide. Before marriage, their identities derived from their fathers and brothers, and after marriage, their identities derived from their husbands (Burnet, 2012). Inheritance practices also discriminated against women as daughters were prohibited from inheriting land from their fathers, and widowed, divorced, and separated women had no ownership rights to marital property (Polavarapu, 2014). Nationally, women were minimally represented in the government, although men held all governor (*prefet*) and mayor (*bourgmestre*) positions. Thus, gendered expectations of women's duties, as well as their actual political clout, suggest they would be comparatively underrepresented among perpetrators who were called on to defend the country.

Taken together, then, criminological research has suggested that genocide follows age and gender distributions typical to other crimes, whereas scholarship on genocide and Rwanda-specific knowledge has pointed toward an older age distribution among perpetrators and few women perpetrators. We thus identify two basic competing propositions, each with specific hypotheses:

Proposition 1. *Age, Gender, and the Generality of Crime*

- Consistent with general age-invariance arguments, the age distribution of genocide should parallel the age distribution for other crimes.
- Consistent with gender-based arguments, the gender distribution of genocide should approximate the gender distribution of other crimes.

Proposition 2. *Age, Gender, and a Life-Course Model of Genocide*

- Consistent with some research finding an older age distribution of perpetrators of genocide and life-course expectations of perpetrators, the age distribution of genocide should be older than the age-crime distribution for other crimes.
- Consistent with the gendered notions of defense and gendered distributions of power in pre-genocide Rwanda and elsewhere, fewer women should participate in genocide as compared with other crimes.

Finally, within either proposition, there may be age-graded and gendered influences on the types of genocidal crimes that men and women commit. We thus suggest one additional proposition regarding the offenses committed during genocide.

Proposition 3. *Age, Gender, and Offense Specificity*

- Consistent with variations in criminal opportunity (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990) and the age distribution of crime, the peak age should be later for organizing and inciting genocide than for killing or for property-related genocide offenses.
- Consistent with women's greater participation in non-genocide property offenses than in non-genocide violent offenses, there should be more women involved in genocide-related looting than in genocide-related killing or organizing.

GACACA DATA FILE

GENOCIDE AND THE GACACA COURTS

To test these hypotheses, we examine the case of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. After decades of tension between Rwanda's two main ethnic groups—the Hutu and the Tutsi—tensions heightened on October 1, 1990. On this day, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)—composed mostly of Tutsis—initiated a civil war with the government of Rwanda (Mamdani, 2001). This civil war spread fear throughout Rwanda, and the mostly Hutu government used propaganda to suggest that all Tutsis were enemies. Despite subsequent peace negotiations, sporadic violence persisted, and many government actors feared losing power (see Des Forges, 1999; Lemarchand, 1970; Newbury, 1988, for additional history).

Then, on April 6, 1994, unknown assailants shot the Rwandan president's plane as it was landing in the capital city. Targeted killing began a few hours afterward, and radio broadcasts and local leaders urged Hutus to attack Tutsis, blaming them for the plane crash and warning that the country was in imminent danger. Many listened, and army officials, leaders, and civilians began killing Tutsis and the Hutus with whom they were associated (Des Forges, 1999; Straus, 2006). In fact, although government leaders orchestrated the violence, it was mostly civilians who killed Tutsis and stole their property. Some of these civilians had been recruited into civilian defense corps and youth wings of political parties prior to 1994, but many others were urged to participate through radio broadcasts and other propaganda as the violence unfolded. The RPF also reinitiated its war with the government, and several months later, up to one million⁴ people had been killed and millions were displaced. Hundreds of thousands were raped, and many more had lost their homes and belongings (African Rights, 1995; Mullins, 2009).

Several years after the violence ended, new government officials began to assess how to respond to the great number of civilians who had participated in the genocide. As noted, the United Nations created the ICTR to try the architects of the genocide, and Rwanda was responsible for bringing other participants to justice. After initially holding

4. Estimates of those killed range from 500,000 to 1,200,000, although most scholars have placed the estimate around 800,000 (see Verwimp, 2013: 1–2, 56–7).

trials in their national court system, government actors put another mechanism in place to accelerate the process—the *gacaca* courts.

The practice of *gacaca* pre-dates Rwanda's colonization. At this time, *gacaca* functioned as a community dispute resolution mechanism to restore order and try petty crimes. After the genocide, government officials drew on the *gacaca* model to create new local-level courts to try civilians who participated in the genocide. Community members were elected to preside over the courts as judges (*inyangamugayo*), ostensibly based on their reputation for honesty and justice. These new local *gacaca* courts (named *inkiko gacaca* and heavily modified from the previous *gacaca* system) operated from 2002 to 2012 (see Bornkamm, 2012; Clark, 2010; and Nyseth Brehm, Uggen, and Gasanabo, 2014, for more information on the courts and the *inyangamugayo*).

GACACA COURT DATA

Cases tried at the *gacaca* courts were placed into the following three categories:⁵

- *Category 1*: People accused of planning, organizing, or supervising the genocide; people who acted in positions of authority or leadership at high levels; people who incited genocide; and people who committed acts of rape or sexual torture.
- *Category 2*: Perpetrators or accomplices who intentionally killed someone or injured someone through acts intended to kill her or him. This category also included those who committed dehumanizing acts on the dead, torture, and other criminal acts against people.
- *Category 3*: People who committed offenses against property, such as looting.

Each *gacaca* court elected a secretary to keep the records of all cases. These records are currently being archived, although when the courts closed in 2012, abbreviated data from all records—including the defendant's gender, year of birth, and category of crime—were compiled in Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA) files.⁶ Through a partnership with the Rwandan National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide, we obtained access to these data and compiled a database of records from more than 12,000 *gacaca* courts (see also *Gacaca Report Summary*, 2012). These courts tried 1,779,893 cases prior to appeals, which we do not consider here because age and gender are associated with the ability to seek an appeal (see Nyseth Brehm and Uggen, 2015). Previous studies of *gacaca* court records have relied on much more limited data that were made available online several years before the courts closed (e.g., Friedman, 2011; Yanagizawa-Drott, 2014).

We analyze a database of person-cases. If a person was accused of a category 2 and a category 3 crime, he or she was tried in two separate cases. Similarly, if people were

5. The courts were originally designed with four categories of crime. Note also that offenses against property are not typically considered crimes of genocide, although property crimes influence forced displacement and social death. Critics suggest these cases were included to increase the number of court prosecutions, although survivors also benefit from reparations.

6. We calculated age by subtracting the year of birth from 1994; nonsensical birth years are excluded. Although the courts did not distinguish gender and sex, these data likely reflect judges' perceptions of gender. As we theorize participation in genocide through the lens of the gendered life course, we use the term "gender" throughout this article.

accused of crimes in more than one region, they were tried in separate cases in each region. This approach parallels the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program arrest data that are often used to study age, gender, and crime. To ensure the robustness of our results, however, we also replicated our analyses after collapsing people with multiple trials into a single line of data. These results are shown in appendix A of the online supporting information.⁷

Overall, our analytic data file contains 1,068,192 cases with information on age and gender. These can be separated into the three categories of cases detailed earlier, which we term organizing or inciting (category 1), killing (category 2), and looting (category 3). In total, there were 52,564 cases in the organizing and inciting category; 315,916 cases in the killing category; and 699,712 cases in the looting category. These numbers constitute the total cases tried and do not indicate the outcome of the case; they are thus analogous to arrest data rather than to conviction data. This is preferable for our purposes because arrest data provide more complete information on defendants' age and gender and because conviction is associated with these characteristics (at least in the United States; Johnson, 2005; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, and Kramer, 1998). In total, 18 percent of the 1,068,192 cases considered here were acquitted (compared with 14 percent of all cases). We thus also replicated our analyses on convictions to ensure the robustness of our findings (appendix B in the online supporting information).

The 1,068,192 cases considered here comprise 60 percent of the 1,779,893 cases tried at the *gacaca* courts prior to appeal. The cases excluded are missing birth year or include nonsensical birth years and thus must unfortunately be excluded. Nevertheless, we conducted several tests to ensure the robustness of findings based on our analytic data file. First, we found more missing data in the regions that tried the most cases, suggesting that missingness is linked to institutional constraints on data collection as well as to the possibility that defendants did not know their birthdate. Second, to assess how these missing data may have influenced the results, we analyzed the district with the least missing data (Rutsiro) in appendix C in the online supporting information. In Rutsiro, more than 85 percent of cases had data on age, and the appendix shows that the results from this district mirror the results from the full dataset. Note also that far fewer cases are missing in regard to gender (5.7 percent), but we restrict the dataset to cases in which the age of the defendant is also known, which does not meaningfully alter the gender distribution (see appendix D in the online supporting information).

These official data are subject to the constraints that come with all official data. Official reports especially overlook crimes not known to authorities and are subject to the biases of those who make and enforce the law. As we further address in the discussion, there are most certainly individuals who committed genocide but who were never tried by the *gacaca* courts. Additionally, as noted, self-reported data also tend to show somewhat earlier peak ages (Blokland and Nieuwbeerta, 2005; Loeber et al., 1991) and narrower

7. Youth younger than 14 years of age in category 1 or 2 were not supposed to be tried by the *gacaca* courts but were instead to be sent directly to a youth correctional facility. Nevertheless, there are youth of this age in our database, suggesting that some were indeed tried. Excluding people younger than 15 years of age from the analysis does not alter the results presented, however, and these results are available by request. Additional supporting information can be found in the listing for this article in the Wiley Online Library at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/crim.2016.54.issue-4/issuetoc>.

gender gaps (Schwartz and Steffensmeier, 2012) than official statistics do, in particular, for less serious offenses. Our interviews with judges (*inyangamugayo*) and *gacaca* staff in Rwanda also suggested that some young adults may have lied about their age in an attempt to receive a more lenient punishment as punishments were lighter for people 18 years of age and younger. Although a close examination of the data does not show a particular spike in the number of cases with 18-year-old participants, we recognize that some defendants may have lied about their age.

Beyond the biases inherent in all official data, some have suggested that the government of Rwanda has a particular interest in controlling and manipulating information about genocide perpetrators. We have found no evidence to suggest that our data were subject to such manipulation; we obtained these data in a disorganized state and assembled them ourselves. Nonetheless, like other court systems, the *gacaca* trials were not immune from corruption (Kirkby, 2006). For example, communities sometimes discovered that the judges they had elected had participated in the violence. Additionally, there are documented cases of individuals being brought to court for revenge (Clark, 2010), and numerous scholars and international organizations have raised human rights concerns regarding the trials. These concerns include but are not limited to the traumatic effects of testifying; the lack of due process rights for the accused; the limited role of local communities in creating the courts; the inclusion of crimes against property; and the lack of trials against members of the RPF, the ruling party who assumed power after the genocide and whose members were accused of committing crimes in stopping the genocide and in its immediate aftermath (see, for example, Waldorf, 2006). Even though these concerns are serious, they are unlikely to compromise the data gathered by the *gacaca* courts for purposes of testing our life-course model of genocide participation.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

We rely on simple yet powerful descriptive statistics to test our propositions. We start by examining the age and gender distributions in the *gacaca* court data. Then, to test proposition 1 (Generality of Crime) and proposition 2 (Life-Course Model of Genocide), we compare these distributions against age and gender distributions of other crimes. Ideally, we could compare age and gender distributions from the genocide to distributions for crimes committed in Rwanda during the early 1990s. Unfortunately, pre-genocide crime data were destroyed during the genocide and no longer exist. We thus examine post-genocide data from Rwanda and 1994 arrest data from the United States. The data from Rwanda help address potential concerns about making comparisons across countries, whereas the 1994 U.S. comparison data help address potential concerns about making comparisons across historical periods.

Of course, we do not equate street crime in the United States with genocidal crime in Rwanda. Instead, we present this comparison to examine the generality of the age-crime and gender-crime relationships. The United States provides an appropriate baseline for comparison because most research on age and crime has been conducted with U.S. data, which often serve as a point of reference for cross-national studies. The U.S. data come from the FBI's UCR (1994 and 2013), which provides comprehensive national arrest data. We obtain Rwanda crime data from the Office of the Prosecutor [National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA), 2010], and we examine data from 2010 as genocidal violence likely influenced crime patterns after 1994.

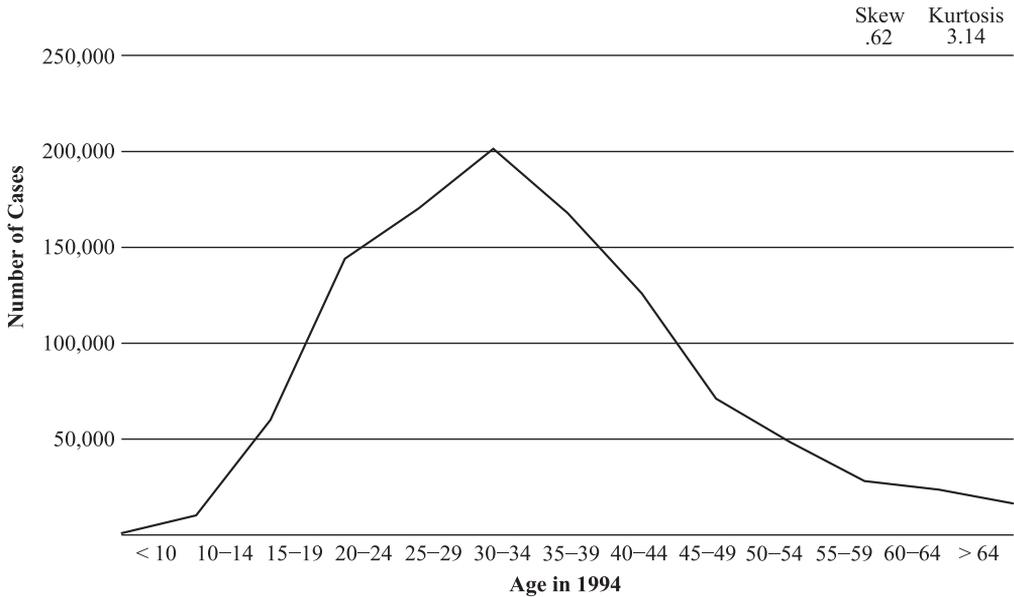
We also age-adjust our data to account for different population structures across countries and across periods. To do so, we divide the percentage of people in an age group who were accused of committing a crime by the percentage of the population in that age group.⁸ We use 1991 Rwandan census data (IPUMS International, 2012)—from the census just preceding the genocide—and U.S. Census Bureau estimates from 1994 to age-adjust curves.

We then compare the age and gender distributions of crimes in *gacaca* categories 1 (organizing and inciting), 2 (killing), and 3 (looting) against non-genocide offenses that share similar characteristics to test propositions 1 and 2 further and to test proposition 3 (Offense Specificity). Specifically, we compare the age and gender of the *gacaca* looting category with the age and gender of people arrested for burglary in the United States as both represent crimes against property. We compare the *gacaca* killing category against U.S. homicide, although we also examined aggravated assault (which shows similar patterns) and further note that this category extended beyond direct killing to include acts such as exposing where a Tutsi was hiding or participating in mob violence. Lastly, we compare *gacaca* category 1, organizing and inciting genocide, against crimes of terrorism in the United States. Terrorism is also an extreme form of violence that typically involves planning, is implemented for political reasons, and is perpetrated through co-offending. Terrorism is not included in the UCR, and there is no comprehensive database of the ages of people who commit terrorism. Our comparison data come from Al-Qaeda convictions in the United States between 1997 and 2010 (Simcox and Dyer, 2013; Victoroff, 2005: 8), including 171 suicide bombings.⁹ Note that organizing and inciting is the most unique category and that it involves different crimes, including rape and sexual torture. As this makes it difficult to find an analogous crime, we show comparisons with rape and embezzlement, which involves a degree of planning, in appendix F in the online supporting information. Furthermore, note that the major orchestrators of the genocide—who could be akin to the leaders of Al-Qaeda—were not tried in the *gacaca* courts but rather at the ICTR or in national courts.

We start by comparing age distributions. To facilitate comparison with the UCR data, we aggregate the *gacaca* court data into five-year categories. We then use Stata's (StataCorp, College Station, TX) *summarize* command to calculate the modes of the curves as well as the skew, which is a measure of curve asymmetry, and the kurtosis, which is a measure of curve peakedness (but see Balanda and MacGillivray, 1988). As a point of reference, a standard normal distribution has a skew of 0 and kurtosis of 3. We also compare indices of dissimilarity, which are the percentages of arrests that would have to be redistributed among age groups to achieve congruence between two curves (see Steffensmeier et al., 1989, for the formula). Finally, we compare the gender

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8. We explored standardizing by the percentage of people 10 to 64 years of age as a result of Rwanda's young population (see appendix E in the online supporting information), which did not change the peak ages in any of the categories. Note also that although the genocide influenced Rwanda's age distribution, 62 percent of the population were younger than 25 years old in 2012, mirroring the young population prior to the genocide.
 9. These data include age at conviction rather than arrest. Nevertheless, nine out of ten major terrorism cases in the United States have resulted in conviction (Simcox and Dyer, 2013: xvi). A time lag between arrest and conviction would skew the age-crime curve of terrorism older. Additionally, we do not use the data from Brent Smith (1994) because these terrorism data include many acts that only damaged property, making them quite different from the Category 1 offenses.

Figure 1. Age of All Rwandan *Gacaca* Defendants in 1994 (Not Age-Adjusted)



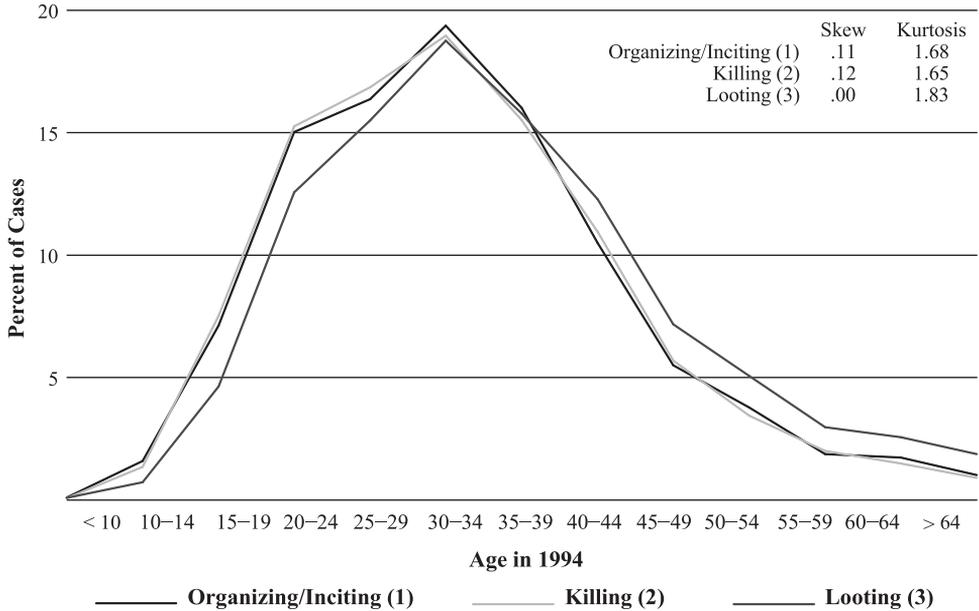
distributions of the perpetrators. We could compute *t* tests to provide formal tests of the difference in proportions, but the unusually large size of our dataset permits detection of trivial differences that are statistically significant but practically insignificant. Moreover, the data file represents the entire population of cases tried by the *gacaca* courts (albeit with missing data), so standard sampling-based parametric tests are not strictly appropriate. We therefore report differences in the percentage of men and women for each offense category. Nevertheless, the age and gender differences reported here would be statistically significant at standard ($p < .05$) significance levels.

GENERALITY AND DISTINCTNESS OF GENOCIDE

AGE OF PERPETRATORS OF GENOCIDE

Figure 1 presents the age of all defendants in each of the 1,068,192 *gacaca* court cases. It is immediately evident that there is a clear age-genocide curve, and the modal age of all defendants was 30–34 in 1994 Rwanda. More precisely, the mode and median age of defendants is 34, whereas the mean age is 34.7. We find virtually identical results when the data are restricted to only those who were found guilty (appendix B) as well as when the data are collapsed with one record per person (appendix A). This finding lends preliminary support to the Life-Course Model of Genocide (proposition 2), which suggests that those who committed genocide were in their thirties and forties. In doing so, it lessens support for the notion of a uniform age-crime distribution across crimes (proposition 1), which is surprising in light of general theories of crime as well as in light of Rwanda scholars' arguments that most participants were *young* men.

Figure 2. Age of Rwandan *Gacaca* Defendants by Category of Crime in 1994 (Not Age-Adjusted)



NOTE: The y-axis displays the percentage in an age group rather than the number to facilitate comparison.

Figure 2 shows the Rwandan *gacaca* cases by category of crime and illustrates that the age distributions for the three categories are not appreciably different. All have the same mode of 30–34, and the skew and kurtosis of each curve are remarkably similar. This contradicts part of proposition 3, which suggested that those who participated in inciting and organizing the genocide would be older. Looting does skew just slightly older, which may be linked to the lack of physical strength required for the activity. Nevertheless, although acts tried in the three *gacaca* categories are clearly different, the similar age structures suggest that genocidal crimes are specific instances of a more unified social phenomenon. This reflects the broader social organization and process of genocide—they are separate crimes but are part of one event. For comparison, appendix G includes the age–crime distributions of the analogous crimes we will discuss.

As noted, a different pattern emerges for the 79 high-profile cases tried¹⁰ at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Figure 3 shows the ages of ICTR defendants in 1994. Here, the mode is a full 10 years older than the mode for cases tried at the *gacaca* courts. Although far fewer defendants were tried at the ICTR, this pattern suggests that there may be some difference in the age distribution of those who plan genocide. The ICTR sought to try many who were deemed specifically responsible for the violence. For

10. This also includes acquittals and appeals, although the modal age of those found guilty is 40–44 as well. An examination of all 91 individuals indicted by the ICTR (excluding the 2 individuals who were found guilty of contempt of the court) also yields a modal age of 40–44 (figures available by request).

Figure 3. Age of International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda Defendants in 1994



the case of Rwanda (as in many other genocides), those who orchestrated the genocide were in positions of power within the government or other powerful institutions, and such positions are positively associated with age. A peak age in the mid-forties also parallels that of other crimes requiring authority and social organization, such as corporate criminal conspiracy (Steffensmeier, Schwartz, and Roche, 2013).

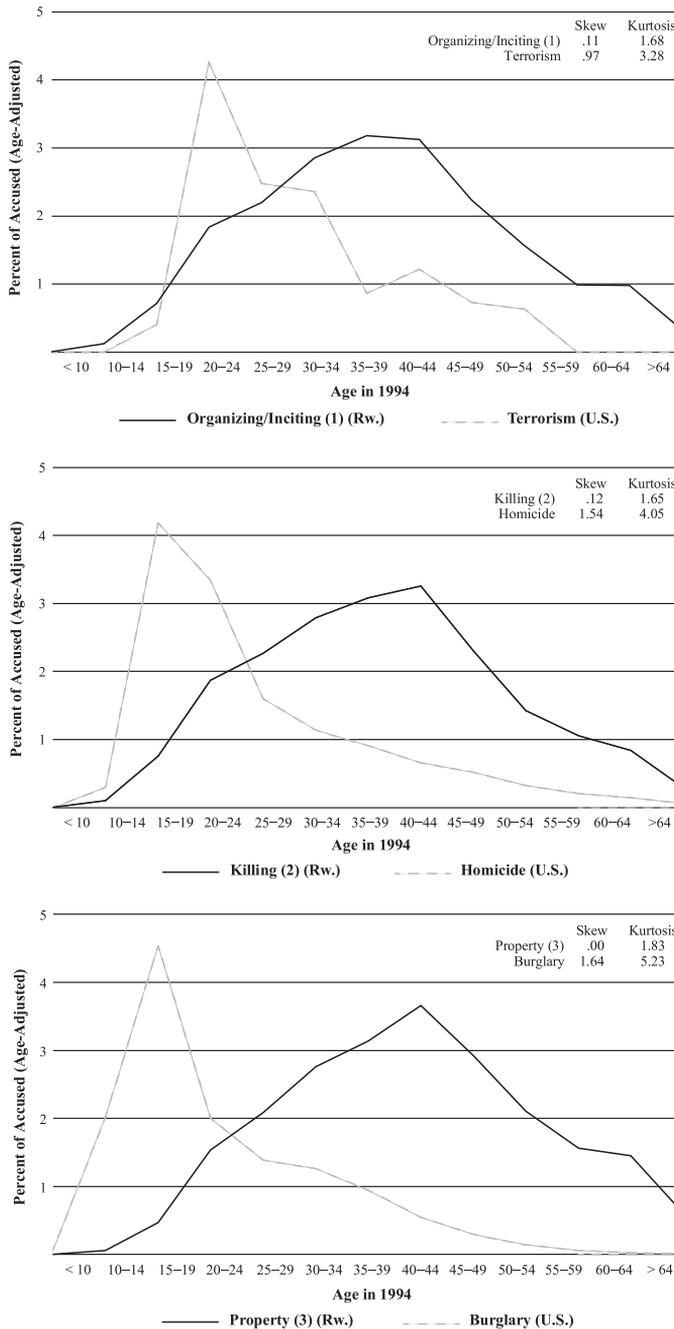
Thus, we have shown that the age distribution of genocide cases in Rwanda peaked at 34, unlike general age-crime curves, which peak during late adolescence or the early twenties. In addition, this peak is consistent across types of genocidal crime, even though there is some evidence that those tried at the ICTR were markedly older. Next, we compare the age-crime curves for genocide with nongenocidal crimes, which will allow us to adjudicate further between proposition 1 and proposition 2 and will assess part of proposition 3.

COMPARING AGE-CRIME CURVES

Panels A, B, and C of figure 4 show the three categories of *gacaca* court crimes—organizing and inciting (1), killing (2), and looting (3) compared against U.S. terrorism, homicide, and burglary, respectively. These curves are age-adjusted to facilitate comparison across countries; age adjusting the data from Rwanda results in a 10-year increase in the modal age as a result of the comparatively younger age structure of Rwanda.

Each of the graphs in figure 4 illustrates similar patterns. The mode is much later for the three categories of genocidal crimes (solid lines) than it is for the respective comparison crimes from the United States (dashed lines). In fact, although the mode is 15–19 for U.S. burglary and homicide, it is 40–44 for genocidal looting and killing. The mode is slightly later for U.S. terrorism (20–24) and slightly earlier for organizing and inciting genocide (35–39). But, the clear differences between the categories remain, and these

Figure 4. Age Distributions of *Gacaca* Crimes Versus U.S. Crimes (Age-Adjusted and Age in 1994 Displayed)



NOTE: As noted in the text, age-adjusting involves dividing the percentage of people in an age group who were accused of committing a crime by the percentage of the population in that age group.

Table 1. Summary of Age–Crime Curve Comparisons of Rwanda *Gacaca* Trials Versus U.S. Arrests in 1994

Crime	Mode			Skew	Kurtosis	Index of Dissimilarity
Property (<i>gacaca</i> cat. 3)	40	–	44	0	1.83	39.89
Burglary (U.S.)	15	–	19	1.64	5.23	16.76
Killing (<i>gacaca</i> cat. 2)	40	–	44	0.12	1.65	33.70
Homicide (U.S.)	15	–	19	1.54	4.05	—
Organizing and inciting (<i>gacaca</i> cat. 1)	35	9	39	0.11	1.68	34.08
Terrorism (U.S.)	20	–	24	0.97	3.28	23.64

NOTES: Sources of data are included in the sections on the *gacaca* data file and our analytic strategy. For Rwanda data, there were 699,712 *gacaca* looting cases, 315,916 *gacaca* killing cases, and 52,564 *gacaca* organizing and inciting cases. For U.S. data, there were 321,343 burglary arrests, 18,551 homicide arrests, and 171 terrorism cases.

ABBREVIATION: cat. = category.

differences remain in gender-specific age–crime curves (appendix H of the online supporting information).

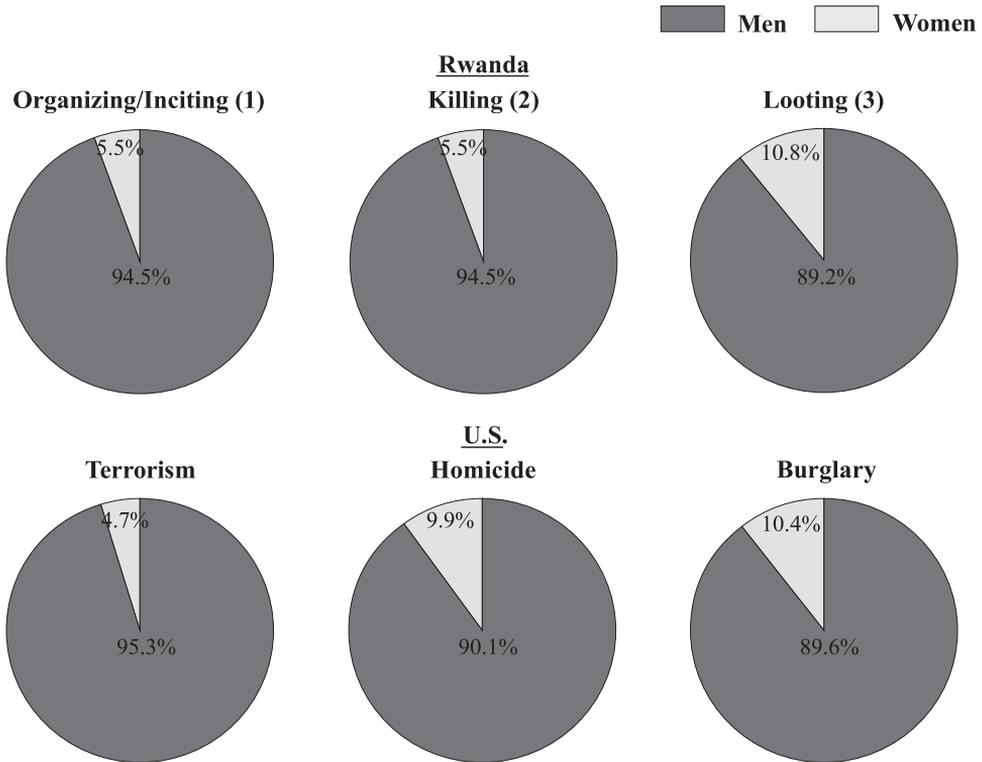
Table 1 summarizes the mode, skew, kurtosis, and index of dissimilarity for all curves in figure 4. The age distributions of U.S. burglary, homicide, and terrorism are all much more positively skewed than are the age distributions for genocidal looting, killing, or organizing and inciting. The age distributions of U.S. burglary, homicide, and terrorism are also comparatively more peaked, as indicated by higher kurtosis values. The index of dissimilarity—which is the percentage of arrests that would have to be redistributed among age groups to achieve congruence between two curves—confirms that age–crime curves of genocide are measurably different than are age–crime curves of the U.S. comparison crimes. We computed this index using homicide as the norm as homicides are among “the most fully enumerated crimes and [are] the [crimes] least subject to reporting changes over time” (Gartner and Parker, 1990: 355). Steffensmeier and colleagues (1989) use 15 as a cut-off for assessing differences in curves. By this standard, all curves are significantly different from the age–crime curve for homicide. But, the three curves for crimes of genocide have indices of dissimilarity that are almost double those for the analogous crimes considered.

To summarize, we find evidence that age is associated with the crime of genocide, although we do not find evidence in favor of proposition 1 as the three categories of genocide are markedly different from the age–crime curves for the analogous crimes considered. This lends support to proposition 2—that the age curve of genocide peaks later than does the curve for comparable crimes. Our analysis of *gacaca* court data also reveals great similarity in the curves for different crimes, suggesting that seemingly different crimes of genocide are strongly intertwined and illustrating that differences in the type of crime do not drive our findings.

GENDER OF PERPETRATORS OF GENOCIDE

Men, who comprised 49 percent of the Rwandan population in 1991, were defendants in 91 percent of the 1,068,192 *gacaca* cases. To assess how this compares against U.S. crimes, figure 5 compares the gender distributions of category 3 (genocidal looting) with U.S. burglary, category 2 (genocidal killing) with U.S. homicide, and category 1

Figure 5. Gender Distributions of *Gacaca* Crimes Versus U.S. Crimes in 1994



(organizing and inciting genocide) with U.S. terrorism. In line with proposition 1, the gender distributions of genocidal looting (category 3) and U.S. burglary are quite similar, with 10.8 percent women and 10.4 percent women, respectively. There is less similarity in the gender distributions of genocidal killing and U.S. homicide (5.5 percent women and 9.9 percent women, respectively). Lastly, 5.5 percent of women were tried in category 1 (organizing and inciting genocide) compared with 4.7 percent of women in Al-Qaeda terrorism in the United States. Moreover, only one woman was tried by the ICTR.

This evidence provides partial support for proposition 1 as the gender distributions of categories 1 and 3 approximate the gender distributions for analogous crimes in the U.S. context. Nevertheless, in line with proposition 2, the percentage of cases involving women in category 2 crimes in Rwanda (killing) is almost half those involved in U.S. homicide. Consistent with variation in the gender distribution of analogous non-genocide offenses, we also observe a higher percentage of women involved in looting during genocide than in genocidal killing or inciting and organizing genocide, which supports proposition 3.

NONGENOCIDAL CRIME IN RWANDA

Thus far, we have found an older age distribution for *gacaca* defendants than for most other crimes. We have also found that the proportion of women defendants in *gacaca*

courts varied by the type of crime, with almost twice the proportion of women being tried for property crime than for crimes against people during the genocide and with the proportion of women tried for genocidal killing at half the proportion of women tried for homicide in other contexts. To ensure that our findings from the *gacaca* data are not an artifact of crime in Rwanda more broadly, we also examined ordinary (that is, non-genocide-related) crime data from Rwanda. As pre-1994 crime data from Rwanda do not exist and as current crime data are not publicly available, we made an official request to Rwanda's Office of the Prosecutor to obtain data for all cases introduced to this office in 2010.

These data include 286 cases of murder and an additional 390 cases of homicide, attempted homicide, homicide premeditation, and murder of parents or children where age and gender was known (a small percentage of cases were missing age data; two cases were missing gender data). The modal age category for murder in Rwanda was 20–24 in 2010 (based on the age at which the case was introduced to the Rwandan Prosecutor, which may skew slightly older than the age of arrest). Likewise, 89 percent of murder cases involved men. Looking at a slightly broader category of crime—including murder, homicide, and attempted homicide—the modal age category at the time of prosecution was 25 to 29, with 84 percent¹¹ of cases involving men (figure 6).

These crime data provide reassurance that the comparatively older age distribution for genocide is not simply a reflection of an older age distribution of crime in Rwanda. Although some of these statistics point toward a somewhat older non-genocide age–crime curve (peaking between 25 and 29), it is clear that the modal age for non-genocidal killing in Rwanda is less than 34. In addition, the crime data from Rwanda show that approximately 11 percent of homicide offenders in 2010 were women, which is more than twice the percentage of women in the *gacaca* killing category. In sum, the differences we observe between genocidal crimes and non-genocidal crimes do not seem to be artifacts of unusual age- or gender-patterning of non-genocidal crime in Rwanda.¹²

TOWARD A LIFE-COURSE THEORY OF GENOCIDE

Like other criminal activities, genocide participation is socially structured and stratified by demographic characteristics. We examined competing propositions regarding two of the strongest correlates of criminal behavior, age and gender: 1) that the age and gender distributions of genocide are similar to those of most other crimes (motivated by arguments regarding the generality of crime), and 2) that the age and gender distributions of genocide are different from those of most other crimes (motivated by a life-course model of genocide).

Beginning with age, the modal age of those tried for all three categories of genocidal crime in Rwanda was 34, which is significantly older than research on age and crime would suggest. Beyond this, an average age of 34.7 (and, when taking the population

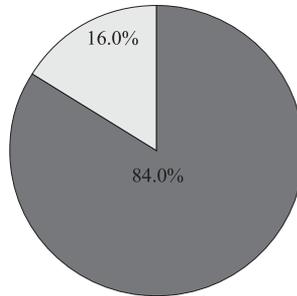
11. The latter category includes infanticide, which is predominantly committed by women.

12. Given the different levels of development in the United States and Rwanda, we also examined 1935 UCR data (the earliest available and only available in 5-year categories). Then, the peak age for homicide was 25–29 (although only eight more homicides were committed by people ages 25–29 than ages 20–24); the mean age for burglary was 20–24. Both were thus markedly younger than the mean age of 34.7 for genocide.

Figure 6. Age and Gender Distribution of Homicide, Murder, and Attempted Homicide in Rwanda in 2010



■ Men □ Women



structure into account, 44.7) contradicts arguments by Rwanda scholars that most perpetrators were *young* men (e.g., African Rights, 1995; Des Forges, 1999; Jones, 2002). It also contradicts much scholarship on youth bulges and conflict (e.g., Urdal, 2006).

As 34 was hardly young in 1994 Rwanda, we return to the tenets of life-course theory to interpret this finding. Explanations of crime over the life course suggest that people desist from crime (or avoid crime altogether) as a result of the age-graded social controls in their lives, such as marriage and steady employment. The absence of such controls may therefore help to explain youth participation in genocide, which is consistent with social control theories (e.g., Laub and Sampson, 1993). As these theories have greater difficulty explaining the older age distribution we observed, we suggest a symbolic-interactionist process may also be at work in genocidal violence—one in which informal controls

encourage rather than restrain criminal behavior. As noted, the genocide in Rwanda was framed through the lenses of duty and honor. Men of good standing were expected to participate, and the political elite inciting the violence portrayed Tutsis as invaders who threatened Hutu men, their families, and their country. Tutsis were also framed as antithetical to Rwandan values, in line with scholarship suggesting that ideologies of genocide are often invoked to protect certain values and eradicate others (Mann, 2005; Weitz, 2003).

In short, the symbolic–interactionist process in which people must “settle down” and desist from crime in order to “grow up” (Massoglia and Uggen, 2010) seems to be turned on its head during genocide. Yet shared understandings of the gendered expectations of adult citizens remain important for both genocide and other criminal behavior. Indeed, many people who commit genocide understand their actions as protecting their family or country from outsiders who are considered to be dangerous or even subhuman (e.g., Straus, 2006). This was certainly the case in Rwanda, where Tutsis were viewed as outsiders who were attacking Rwanda through a civil war and, thus, as enemies of the nation. In this sense, Rwandan men were called on to defend their families and their country, and crimes of genocide were aligned with the gendered expectations of responsible adult citizenship. Radio propaganda during the genocide even used the euphemism “work” to refer to the crimes, which closely paralleled gendered expectations of adults. Thus, in contrast to other criminological settings in which people must “age out” and desist from crime to be accorded adult status, people may participate in genocide to fulfill their duties as adult men.

These notions of protection and defense are clearly gendered. In 1994, Rwandan women were typically expected to remain in and around the home, and men were expected to serve in the army. Indeed, as the civil war began in 1990, only men were recruited into the civilian defense corps. As such, our life-course model of genocide (proposition 2) also anticipated that fewer women would be involved in genocide relative to their participation in other crimes. We do indeed find that fewer women were involved in genocidal killing (5.5 percent) than in homicide in Rwanda or the United States (10–11 percent), supporting our gendered life-course model of genocide.

Gacaca category 2 (what we term “killing”) also includes *inciting* killing, and numerous reports (and our own interviews for a related project) suggest that many women tried in category 2 did not themselves kill but incited others to kill, often by sharing information regarding where a Tutsi was hiding or by ululating to inspire militias (African Rights, 1995; Des Forges, 1999). This is not to suggest that these women were not responsible for death and destruction, as they—and the many others who cooked their husbands’ meals as they returned home from days of “work”—certainly were participating in the violence. Our findings illustrate, however, that gendered dynamics in 1994 Rwanda influenced *how* they participated.

Indeed, as we examined offense specificity (proposition 3), we also found that women were more likely to be tried in cases regarding property than in cases regarding personal violence. This is in line with much research in the United States and elsewhere showing a greater gender gap for violent crimes than for property crimes, and we suggest that cultural expectations of women in 1994 Rwanda influenced this difference. We also found that 5.5 percent of cases in category 1 (organizing and inciting) involved women. This is higher than some may expect, although it bears mentioning that despite their marginalized position in Rwandan society, some women nonetheless held positions of power.

Beyond this, African Rights (1995) argued that other women saw participation in the genocide as a way to improve their status. Indeed, a radio journalist who was found guilty of a category 1 crime for broadcasting hate speech told us that she saw the opportunity to work at the radio station as a way to enter a field dominated by men.

Overall, then, we suggest that gendered expectations of adults influenced both *who* participated in the genocide in Rwanda and *how* they participated. Tutsis were framed as a threat to Rwanda, and adult men were expected to defend their families and their country. Women, who were not typically involved in defense before the genocide, were correspondingly less subject to these expectations when the violence unfolded. Instead, gender patterned their participation in looting and other activities that took place near the home.

Although our data come from Rwanda, there is some evidence that our findings generalize to other genocides, in which people are commonly called on to take action against a perceived threat. For example, the small subset (138) of people indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia had an average age of 36.5 (in 1992) and 39.7 (in 1995). Likewise, the average age of 110 individuals tried by the War Crimes Chamber of the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which tried cases similar to *gacaca* category 1 crimes, was 30.3 (Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013). The data from the Holocaust cited earlier also support a later age peak.

The mechanisms behind these patterns are subject to case-specific examination, but our gendered life-course model of genocide may hold in these and other cases. Indeed, genocides are often framed in terms of protecting a nation or a group of people. The Ottoman Empire's attempt to eradicate Armenians in the early twentieth century and the Khmer Rouge's societal purification during the 1970s provide apt examples. In these and other cases, the socially constructed nature of age and gender would surely influence the age and gender distributions of those who commit violence. Nevertheless, men are often expected to protect their families and their country in nations around the globe. Adulthood is also a universal concept, and even though the age of adulthood may vary by societies, the broader point that responsible adult citizens may be expected to participate in genocidal violence likely extends to other cases.

The opportunity to commit violence may likewise vary across episodes of genocide. In the case of Rwanda, civilians were broadly encouraged to participate, leading to particularly high levels of civilian involvement. In other cases, such as the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, many of the people who committed violence were soldiers. Civilians did have the opportunity to participate, but many of those who killed Bosniaks or created concentration camps did so in their capacity as police officers or firefighters. In still others, like the genocide in Darfur, the government enlisted soldiers and members of government-sponsored militias (e.g., the Janjaweed) through specific recruitment mechanisms that would likely alter the age and gender distributions of those committing violence. Beyond the question of who participates in genocide, opportunity structures may also influence the particular forms of violence committed. For instance, in cases of state-sponsored genocide, many of those orchestrating the violence would hold positions of power within the government, which are clearly gendered and structured by age throughout the world.

Of course, every genocide also has distinctive features and a unique history that may influence such patterns. For example, the genocide in Rwanda took place a few decades

after many Hutus complained of marginalization. Radio broadcasts urging Hutus to participate in the violence drew on these memories and concepts of marginalization, which may have had an especially strong impact on the cohorts of citizens with such memories. The education system also began teaching particularly discriminatory messages against Tutsis when Rwanda gained independence (King, 2013), and the first cohort subject to these messages would likely have been in their mid-thirties in 1994. Whereas the specific nature of these memories and experiences differs across genocides, however, an age-graded response is likely quite general.

Although our empirical findings are clear, this study is not without limitations. As noted, we rely on newly available official data with certain imperfections. As a result of missing data on age, the full dataset of *gacaca* trials was reduced from 1.7 million to 1.1 million cases. Appendix C showed that our findings hold in Rutsiro district, where only 15 percent of cases were missing data on age. Even though these results are reassuring, the potential bias from missing data must be kept in mind when interpreting our results.

For example, a great number of the people who participated in the genocide fled Rwanda in July 1994. Although many later returned, numerous others remained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It is quite likely that the age distribution of those who fled skewed younger because they had fewer social and financial ties within Rwanda, and many of these individuals may have consequently evaded trials. It is difficult to estimate how many people evaded trials, however, as an unknown number of refugees were killed in the DRC after the genocide. The estimated number of Rwandan refugees who remained in the DRC ranged between 11,816 and 80,525 throughout the time that *gacaca* trials were ongoing (UNHCR, 2016). It would be a mistake to assume that all of these refugees participated in the genocide, and the *gacaca* courts held trials in absentia for those who were outside of Rwanda. Nevertheless, it remains likely that some of these individuals are not reflected in the database.

In addition, the age and gender distribution of the Rwandan population changed rapidly during the genocide. The demographics of potential *perpetrators* (generally Hutus), however, likely did not change considerably until after most genocidal crimes had been committed and much of the population fled Rwanda. We are also cognizant that some participants were members of the army and that others were recruited, which may have influenced the patterns we found. The recruitment of youth militias, such as the *Interahamwe*, would likely skew the distribution toward younger participants, however.

Importantly, we do not suggest that our theory can fully explain participation in genocide but that age-graded and gendered expectations were among the many factors that influenced violence. In line with this, we do not examine the intensity of participation. Given much research pointing toward younger perpetrators, it may well be the case that younger individuals committed comparatively *more* violent acts, and future research should thus examine age differences between high- and low-rate offenders. Similarly, there was variation in the types of behaviors represented *within* each of the three crime categories tried by the *gacaca* courts, although our data cannot speak to within-category age and gender distributions. Lastly, we could not access court data from the Rwandan national court system. These courts had jurisdiction over the cases deemed most serious in *gacaca* category 1, but the comparatively small number would likely have little impact on results reported here.

It would be premature to suggest that this line of research could inform efforts to prevent or control genocidal violence. Greater knowledge and understanding of the risk

factors associated with organizing, killing, and looting may nevertheless prove valuable in crafting interventions before, during, and after genocides occur. The age and gender distributions observed here suggest that a targeted set of interventions geared to young and middle-aged men may be especially useful in retarding or arresting genocidal violence.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's web site:

Figure A.1. Age of Rwandan *Gacaca* Defendants in 1994 (multiple cases collapsed)

Figure A.2. Age of Rwandan *Gacaca* Defendants by Category of Crime in 1994 (multiple cases collapsed)

Figure A.3. Gender of Rwandan *Gacaca* Defendants by Category of Crime in 1994 (multiple cases collapsed)

Figure B.1. Age of *Gacaca* Defendants in Cases With a Guilty Verdict Compared Against All Cases (not age-adjusted and age in 1994 is displayed)

Figure B.2. Age of *Gacaca* Defendants in Cases With Guilty Verdict by Category of Crime (not age-adjusted and age in 1994 is displayed)

Figure B.3. Gender of *Gacaca* Defendants in Cases With a Guilty Verdict by Category of Crime

Figure C.1. Age of Defendants in 41,583 *Gacaca* Cases in 1994 (out of 48,789 total cases) in Rutsiro District

Figure D.1. Gender of Rwandan *Gacaca* Defendants in the Full Dataset of *Gacaca* Trials With Data on Gender (1,678,835 Trials)

Figure E.1. Age Structure of Rwandan Population in 1991

Figure F.1. Age Distributions of *Gacaca* Category 1 Versus U.S. Rape and Embezzlement Arrests in 1994 (age-adjusted)

Figure G.1. Age Distributions for U.S. Comparison Crimes in 1994

Figure H.1. Gender-Specific Age–Crime Curves for *Gacaca* Organizing and Inciting (Category 1), Killing (Category 2), and Looting (Category 3)