The Bovine Victims of the Rwandan, Tibetan, and North American Genocides

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines three instances of mass bovine deaths that occurred alongside genocides targeting human groups. The events studied include the slaughter of Tutsi cattle during the Rwandan genocide, the mass death of yaks during the collectivization of Tibetan nomads, and the extensive hunting of buffalo (American bison) during the genocide against Indigenous Peoples of North America. The study's analysis utilizes the framework of anti-representationalism, a major pathway to achieving an ontological turn. The research indicates that these bovine animals serve various roles within the communities of genocide victims. They are more than just private property or natural resources; they function as key components of collectivity and as non-human social members. Each case study exemplifies a different aspect of the anti-representationalism paradigm, including things' agency, human-environment integration, and practice-generated ontologies. This study focuses on anti-anthropocentric perspectives and questions the Cartesian body-mind dualism, as well as the naturalist view that divides culture from nature. The analysis of the three case studies shows that non-human entities' agency, the environment's affordances, and the interactions between humans and non-humans can significantly influence human perceptions and behaviour, particularly in how collective categories, such as "people," are defined and understood. A deeper discussion based on the case comparison reveals that drawing an ontological line around the concept of persons is similar to defining ethnic identity, as both processes involve selecting specific indicators that highlight shared characteristics. This conclusion indicates that the Western collective categories rooted in naturalism may not be applicable to many non-Western societies, where people might choose attributes shared by both humans and non-humans as indicators for defining their collectives. In the context of genocide studies, this suggests that "genos" (collectivity) can have various implications and is not necessarily exclusive to humankind. Therefore, critical reflection on the naturalist bias in Western concepts of collectivity can be a vital strategy for decolonizing genocide studies.

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I never anticipated that this research would result in a dissertation with such an international comparative perspective. The Tibetan case study within this research began to take shape over a decade ago during my fieldwork in Sichuan, China. At that time, I discovered information about Tibetan resistance during the collectivization era and contemporary Tibetan protests, which I recognized as a valuable topic for exploration. However, conducting such research was extremely challenging due to China's political climate and its restrictive academic environment. Therefore, I am profoundly grateful to Dr. Woolford, the University of Manitoba, and the Department of Sociology and Criminology for providing an exceptional opportunity and environment to pursue this research. Ultimately, not only was the Tibetan case thoroughly examined, but the thesis' discussion also extended to cases from Africa, North America, and Central Asia.

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My wife and parents have consistently supported my academic pursuits, enabling me to dedicate sustained focus to my research. This privilege would not be possible without their unwavering support.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term "genocide," extended his research to colonialism during the last decade of his life. In his autobiography, he recounts an incident in the genocide of the Herero, a Bantu ethnic group in Southern Africa. On one day in 1896, some German colonists trapped a group of Hereros and their cattle in a forest. Then, German soldiers doused the trees with kerosene and ignited the forest, killing the entire Herero group along with all their cattle. However, in the report from the German consul in the region to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, only the deaths of cattle were mentioned. Lemkin uses this example to illustrate what he calls "the moral isolation of the genocidist," highlighting the indifference and cruelty of German officials toward the destruction of the Herero people (Frieze, 2013, p. 185). It is undeniable that the German colonists committed genocide against the Herero people, and it is crucial to care about the fate of the human victims of such atrocities. However, few people consider the underlying reasons why the Herero's cattle were also victimized during this genocide. Lemkin seems to not regard the destruction of cattle as genocide, nor did the German perpetrators consider the death of animals significant, given that their moral considerations did not extend even to the Herero people. Lemkin only provides very limited description of this event, and many questions remain unanswered: Why did the Hereros feel the need to take their cattle with them as they fled, ultimately leading to their demise alongside these animals? How did the Hereros relate to the cattle in their daily lives? What did the loss of cattle mean to them? These questions are thought-provoking and worth exploring, especially since the killing of animals is a recurring yet often overlooked phenomenon in genocides targeting human groups.

This study examines the mass killing of bovine animals in three instances of genocide, including the large-scale slaughter of cattle during the Rwandan genocide, the widespread death of yaks due to the Chinese Communist Party's collectivization campaigns among Tibetan nomads, and the extensive buffalo hunting that occurred during the genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Turtle Island (North America). Mass animal deaths in genocides challenge prominent sociological paradigms in genocide studies, which are characterized by predominantly anthropocentric views that solely focus on interactions that occur between humans.

In recent decades, sociologists have made significant contributions to the research of genocide, particularly in defining what genocide is (Shaw, 2010, p. 145). This stems from their tendency to use holistic frameworks to examine groups, which are often the main targets of genocides. For most sociologists, a group is not merely an assembly of individuals; instead, it is an entity defined by attributes that are larger than the sum of its members, such as a shared identity, lifestyle, or belief system. This sociological perspective of genocide studies is known as the post-liberal approach (Moses, 2002, pp. 19-28; Powell, 2007, pp. 527-547). This approach helps to explain why genocide is a special crime that primarily targets collectives rather than individuals.

Many sociologists have examined the uniqueness of genocide from various perspectives. While some emphasize identity as the essential element of collectivity, others argue that the collective identities of genocide victims are often fabricated and imposed by their perpetrators (Chalk & Jonassohn, 1990, p. 25). Theories focused on this aspect highlight the perpetrators' intentions as the primary cause of genocide, aligning with Max Weber's sociological paradigm that prioritizes the subjective meanings that guide actors (Shaw, 2010, p. 159). Additionally, many sociologists investigate the processes of genocidal events through the lens of social relations, reflecting the influence of Émile Durkheim on sociological methodologies. For example, Zygmunt

Bauman (1989) examines how Nazi Germany's bureaucratic system enabled officials to implement genocidal policies without undergoing significant moral pressure. Michael Mann (2005) explores how complex connections between democracy and nationalism can lead to murderous ethnic cleansing.

As sociological analysis plays an important role in genocide studies, many scholars in other fields, such as political science, also adopt similar methods to examine cases of genocide. For instance, Scott Straus (2006) explores how group pressure drove many Rwandan villagers to participate in the killings. Similarly, Lee Ann Fujii (2009) identifies immediate social ties as the primary factors that affected individuals' actions during the Rwandan genocide. Overall, sociological analysis tends to understand genocide through the lens of collective life and focuses on social relationships to uncover the mechanisms behind the dynamics of collective violence.

When discussing topics like collective identity and social relationships, many modern sociologists adopt constructivist perspectives. Constructivist sociologists typically focus on the interactions among social actors and view community and identity as culturally constructed categories (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). They emphasize how social consensuses, such as shared identities, regulations, and privileges, are established and institutionalized through interactions among individuals. However, mainstream constructivist frameworks in sociology often have an anthropocentric bias, assuming that interactions exclusively occur between humans. As a result, the interactions between humans and non-humans are largely overlooked. Likewise, traditional practice theory views agency and practice as characteristics exclusive to humans. This perspective leads some sociologists to understand genocidal violence solely as acts against human social and cultural relations; their studies therefore fail to consider the disruption of relational practice between humans and non-humans (Bourdieu, 1991; Powell, 2011).

In addition, much of the scholarship in genocide studies has focused on human collective categories such as nationality and ethnicity. These categories are often assumed to be culturally constructed (Anderson, 1983; Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, pp.423-452; Wimmer, 2008, pp.970-1022). This theoretical bias is linked to Cartesian ontologies, which separate human culture from the physical world known as "nature." Accordingly, social interaction is viewed as cultural behaviour and an action unique to humans. Cartesian body-mind dualism assumes that human minds possess the freedom to interpret the world and impose their ideas on it. As a result, culture is seen as a realm separate from the physical world and merely its representation. Most constructivist perspectives in sociology reflect this Cartesian framework because they regard collectivity as a product of individual subjective activities. In this sense, many sociologists' studies of genocides have been significantly influenced by Cartesian dualism, an epistemological bias that is also known as representationalism.

This study's academic focus aligns with the sociological research on genocide, emphasizing collectivity and social relationships. However, it draws on some anthropological theories to highlight the limitations of mainstream sociological frameworks. Sociology often borrows concepts and theories from other disciplines to illustrate its ideas. For instance, key sociological terms like "structure" and "stratification" originate from fields such as architecture and geology. When these frameworks are imported, sociology may inadvertently reproduce the logical flaws inherent in them. For example, while the concept of "structure" effectively highlights stable relationships within a society, it can also lead to an underappreciation of the dynamic processes at play within social institutions. To mitigate this potential bias, it is essential for sociology to draw on theoretical frameworks from various disciplines, including anthropology.

Sociology and anthropology are closely related fields, with many sociologists having

backgrounds in anthropology. For instance, Émile Durkheim's work on the sociology of religion was significantly based on some anthropologists' investigation of the Indigenous societies in Australia and North America (Durkheim, 1915). Pierre Bourdieu, who studied the Kabyle people of Algeria, was originally trained as an anthropologist (Calhoun, 2006, pp. 1403-1415). Likewise, Bruno Latour was also an anthropologist; he employed ethnographic methods to investigate life within scientific laboratories (Latour & Woolgar, 1986).

In recent years, there has been an epistemological shift in anthropology known as the "ontological turn." This movement offers insights that may help sociology move beyond the limitations imposed by Cartesian frameworks. This study primarily draws on recent anthropological scholarship related to anti-representationalism, a branch of the ontological-turn movement (Paleček & Risjord, 2013, pp. 3-23). The analysis demonstrates that the inherent agency of non-humans enables them to engage in interactive practices with humans, thereby influencing how people define collective identity and establish group boundaries. Furthermore, the study illustrates that specific patterns of interaction between humans and non-humans create unique ontologies, and highlights that the ontological properties of non-human agents can vary across different interactive environments. In certain contexts, some non-human animals become members of local societies, thereby expanding the boundaries of collectivity beyond just human members.

In interactions with humans, many non-human entities can display agency that influences how people perceive them. As a result, the meanings associated with non-humans are not always created solely by human interpretation; the inherent attributes of a non-human agent, such as its behaviour patterns and physical characteristics, often affect its ontological status in the environment and shape its relationships with humans. This attribute is known as "affordance" within the framework of anti-representationalism (Ingold, 2000, pp. 166-168). Through these case

studies, I try to present how relational practice allows non-human animals to generate ontological properties other than animality. For example, in the worlds of some Indigenous Peoples, bison are a nation parallel to human societies and not considered a natural resource. This is because Indigenous ontologies often extend the categories of personhood to include not only humans but also animals, plants, and many non-human entities. According to anti-representationalism, this is not Indigenous people's cultural construction; rather, it is the result of non-human objects' agency, the environment's affordance, and the relational practice between humans and non-humans.

A perspective grounded in ontological practice can enhance our understanding of the destruction that genocides inflict on local communities. This perspective broadens our comprehension of destruction to encompass non-humans, understanding them as more than mere resources for human survival. Since ontologies hinge on the interactive practice between humans and non-humans in a specific environment, the perceptions related to non-human agents may vary from group to group. In many cases, when perpetrators slaughter what they perceive to be "animals," they are actually destroying something else in the victims' world. In this sense, their acts of violence constitute not only physical harm but also epistemological violence imposed on the victims (Woolford, 2019, p. 272). A prevalent form of epistemological violence observed in the killing of animals during genocides is the assumption that these non-humans are simply part of nature, rather than integral participants in social and moral networks. This viewpoint is deeply rooted in the naturalist ontology of Western civilization (Descola, 2013, p. 121) and is also a widely accepted presumption among many scholars in genocide studies. Therefore, revealing the ontological and epistemological diversity in non-Western societies is essential not only for understanding the genuine suffering of the victims but also for addressing the Western bias present in genocide studies. In this sense, this study aims to contribute to the decolonization of genocide

studies.

The next section illustrates three important dimensions of anti-representationalism: the agency of things, the integration of humans and the environment, and practice-generated ontologies. Following this is an outline of the chapters, which includes brief descriptions of three case studies focusing on bovine death during genocides. Each case embodies one of the three dimensions of anti-representationalism. Finally, this introduction concludes with a discussion of research methodology and ethical considerations.

Anti-representationalism

This study's analysis primarily draws on the theories of anti-representationalism. The term "anti-representationalism" is developed by Martin Paleček and Mark Risjord, who use it to refer to the foundational principles of the ontological turn in contemporary anthropology. Their concept represents a theoretical effort to move beyond the representationalist framework that views cultures as systems of belief and separates the human mind from the physical world (Paleček & Risjord, 2013, pp. 3-23). Most anthropological paradigms in the twentieth century were representationalist, among which Geertz's "meaning system" perhaps is the most well-known. Anti-representationalism refuses the assumption that cultures give different meanings to the same physical world (each culture constitutes a unique representation of the world) and highlights the interactions between humans and non-humans; it also argues that different forms of practice may lead to distinct ontologies and therefore produce multiple "worlds". Paleček and Risjord (2013) classify several anthropologists' scholarship within this new trend; these studies all present strong ethnographic evidence that challenges the nature-culture dualism, the ontological foundation of representationalist paradigms (pp. 3-23).

Anti-representationalism has emerged as one of the major pathways for achieving the ontological turn in anthropology. However, it is important to note that this ontological turn is not confined to anthropology alone; recent decades have also seen a surge of philosophical explorations regarding relationships between people and objects. Scholars from philosophy and other disciplines approach the goals of an ontological turn through distinct pathways, conducting their research within different frameworks such as Anthropocene studies, new materialism, and post-humanism. These research pathways share several common strategies, such as removing humankind from the centres of cognition, discourse, and moral considerations and emphasizing the material agency that enables non-human entities to actively engage in processes of generating new matter and interacting with humans (Barad, 2003, pp. 801-831; Coole & Frost, 2010, pp. 1-43; Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000, pp. 17-18).

It is worth noting that several post-humanist perspectives have also been developed by some practice theorists in recent decades. Key scholars in this area include Hubert Dreyfus and Andrew Pickering. Dreyfus introduces a robust form of realism, arguing that the meaning of material objects exists within them before they are perceived by a subject (Schatzki, 2001, pp. 19-21). Likewise, Pickering's post-humanist framework highlights the concept of the "mangle," which refers to how spontaneously emerging phenomena can influence a subject's perspective (Pickering, 1995). These post-humanist practice theories overlap significantly with anti-representationalism. Practice theorists can make valuable contributions to post-humanist theoretical exploration, as philosophers like Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty have laid the theoretical and methodological groundwork for later scholars through their investigations into phenomenological issues related to the "subject-object" relationship. I will continue to discuss this topic in Chapters Four and Six.

According to Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen, the studies conducted by philosophers on ontological issues and the anti-representationalist efforts of anthropologists share similar interests, principles, and values. However, the philosophical work is primarily carried out as reflective research within the framework of Science and Technology Studies (STS) (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017, pp. 33-46). Bruno Latour's early research exemplifies this tradition. Through his ethnographic studies in laboratories, he challenges the conventional understanding of constructionism, which typically recognizes only human actors as having agency. Instead, he incorporates various objects (such as experimental equipment and charts) into the network of scientific practice (Latour, 1993; Latour & Woolgar, 1986). His Actor Network Theory (ANT) posits that both humans and objects function as mediators that can influence the properties of other participants within the network. Obviously, ANT is characterized by anti-representationalism, for the network consists of numerous chains of interconnections between human beings and non-human entities. This perspective on human-object interactions blurs the traditional ontological distinctions between culture and nature, representation and reality, as well as soul and body. In this sense, a world is essentially a composition of different sorts of entities and a configuration of practices (Latour, 2005). Other STS philosophers have addressed similar concepts using distinct yet related terms, including mangles (Pickering, 1995), entanglements (Barad, 2007), pleats (Bowker, 2009, pp. 123-138), assemblages (Law, 2004), and so on (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017, pp.33-46).

While most theories related to the ontological turn are primarily developed by philosophers, a few sociologists also develop theories to explore similar issues. One example is Latour's ANT that is discussed above. Additionally, Andrew Woolford seeks to understand the destruction caused by genocides through the lens of symbiogenesis, recognizing the meanings and effects of non-

human entities on humans. This perspective may encourage a re-evaluation of the damage that genocides inflict on the living spaces of victims (Woolford et al., 2021, pp. 44-67). Nonetheless, many modern sociologists still predominantly rely on anthropocentric paradigms in their studies.

The ontological-turn paradigms developed by STS philosophers have faced criticism for their Eurocentric frameworks. For example, Zoe Todd argues that Latour's interpretation of Gaia (ground/environment) is formulated without consulting any Indigenous knowledge that offers a rich and complex understanding of the environment and climate. Todd (2016) contends that Latour's disregard for Inuit concepts, such as "Sila," is disappointing and unacceptable. Todd's criticism highlights a prevalent problem in the theories proposed by those STS philosophers and scholars of practice theory: they often rely on examples from Western or "modern" societies and overlook the perspectives from non-Western cultures. In contrast, anti-representationalism, which serves as a major pathway toward an anthropological ontological turn, mainly draws on examples and perspectives from non-Western societies to develop its theoretical framework. This approach aligns with the goal of decolonization that this study aims to pursue. For this reason, I chose anti-representationalism as the primary framework for conducting case analysis, rather than STS philosophy or post-humanist practice theories.

Unlike philosophers who draw inspiration from scientific practices, many anthropologists base their anti-representationalist paradigm on ethnographic studies of non-Western societies. For example, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro introduces the concept of perspectivism to explain the Indigenous animism in South America, which reflects an Indigenous ontology that acknowledges the shared humanity across different species. According to the Indigenous belief, both humans and animals possessed humanity at the beginning of the world. However, as animals evolved and developed their specific body shapes, they gradually lost these human qualities. Despite this loss

of humanity, an animal's perception remains comparable to human cognition. For instance, to a jaguar, human blood might be perceived as wine, and many animals view their fur, teeth, and claws as decorative features of their bodies. Nonetheless, the distinct body forms of humans and other species provide them with different perspectives. Therefore, while various species share a common "culture" (epistemic logic), they ultimately inhabit different "worlds" (ontologies) (Viveiros de Castro, 2004). In the following chapters, particularly Chapters Four and Five, readers will find that while anthropologists' research plays an important role, their discussions significantly rely on the information provided by Indigenous participants and the perspectives presented by Indigenous scholars, such as Zoe Todd, Tasha Hubbard, and Winona LaDuke.

Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism reflects a significant academic focus of anthropologists who pursue an ontological turn. While philosophers primarily seek to understand the true nature of the world, anthropologists are often more focused on understanding and translating various ontologies. In this context, the question of a single ultimate ontology is set aside; the term "ontological turn" refers to a reflective effort to explore the diverse possibilities of human-non-human interactions and to comprehend the ontological properties of non-humans that fall outside the framework of Cartesian nature-culture dualism. Therefore, anthropology's ontological turn is fundamentally an epistemological turn, for it requires one to reflect on popular assumptions about the materiality and animality of non-humans (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017, p.5). Although anthropologists have advanced this reflective work along various pathways, we can still summarize a few general principles and apply them to our analysis. Based on Paleček and Risjord's discussion, I generalize three primary dimensions of anti-representationalism (Paleček & Risjord, 2013, pp. 3-23). I will discuss them in the following paragraphs.

Things' Agency

Anti-representationalism's first dimension involves recognizing the agency of things. The viewpoint that some non-human objects have agency or similar attributes is not new in anthropology. As early as 35 years ago, Arjun Appadurai (1986) had organized a handful of scholars to explore how commodities demonstrate the characteristics of the life cycle in their involvement with human societies. In the context of genocide studies, Alfred Gell's research focuses on the mines left by the Khmer Rouge and analyzes how human intention is projected onto objects. He argues that the mines buried in Cambodia act as "agents" because they embody Pol Pot's lethal intentions (Gell, 1998, pp. 20-33).

However, Holbraad and Pedersen criticize the last-generation materialist anthropologists like Appadurai and Gell for still thinking about non-human objects through a human-centered lens. They argue that the "agency" in these theorists' work ultimately stems from human agents. Appadurai's "social life of things" and Gell's "agency of artifacts" are merely anthropomorphic rhetoric for describing some traits of the things (Holbraad & Pederson, 2017, pp. 204-205). Conversely, Holbraad and Pederson advocate using an anti-anthropocentric approach to perceive objects' agency. Characterized by the perspective of "thinking through things", their research aims to discover things' spontaneous agency that originates from matter's inherent attributes (Holbraad & Pederson, 2017, pp. 209-214). An example of this can be seen in Holbraad's study of a divination ritual in Cuba, where diviners use a specific powder to manifest mana. In the local language, the term for this powder also translates to "power," synonymous with the physical manifestation of mana deities. Holbraad argues that the powder itself is what imparts a conceptual effect related to power. This is largely due to the powder's characteristic of motility. When thrown into the air, the powder dances and swirls. This motion embodies the power of mana and influences how people

perceive the powder (Holbraad, 2007, pp. 189-225). Therefore, this conceptual effect constitutes powder's agency.

In Risjord's view, the conceptual effect of things resonates with the theory of semantic externalism. This theory posits that an object's characteristics can influence how people perceive and describe it (Risjord, 2020, pp. 586–609). Thus, the concepts of affordance and agency of things are not new ideas; in fact, some classical linguists developed theories similar to today's semantic externalism over a century ago. For instance, Max Müller (1878) suggested that early concepts and words related to gods (the Infinite) originated from sensory experiences of awe-inspiring celestial phenomena, such as sunlight, clouds, and lightning. Similarly, Benjamin Lee Whorf (1964) observed that a community's vocabulary is heavily influenced by its environment (e. g., the Inuit words about snow). However, in comparison to anti-representationalism, semantic externalism is a more superficial theory. The linguistic perspective still maintains a separation between objects and the mind; it merely emphasizes the impact of the material environment on human representation. In contrast, anti-representationalism rejects the dualism that divides nature and culture. This distinction leads us to the second aspect of this paradigm.

Human-environment Integration

Anti-representationalism's second facet is highlighting the integration of humans and their environment (one can also say it is the collapse of "culture" and "nature," but under this paradigm, each of these two categories is under scrutiny). In the second half of the twentieth century, structuralism and interpretivism became prevailing paradigms in cultural studies. As a result, culture was often viewed as a mental construct, with many anthropologists considering symbols, beliefs, cosmologies, myths, and worldviews as mere representations. To challenge this idea, Tim

Ingold argues for the dissolution of the boundary between the mind and the material world. He posits that perceivers, including humans, primarily engage with their surroundings through their bodies rather than through certain pre-programmed cognitive patterns. The mind, he asserts, is a product of one's interaction with the environment, rather than an entity separate from it (Ingold, 2000, pp. 154-162). In other words, "culture" is not an independent spiritual category as representationalism would suggest. With the misconception of "culture" challenged, the concept of "nature," which is the other side of Cartesian dualism, comes under scrutiny as well. People often understand nature as an external entity, but they tend to overlook the fact that "nature" is merely a category created to balance out "culture." Philippe Descola, in his *Beyond Nature and Culture*, explores the origins of the concept of nature and finds that it was formulated in the seventeenth century when some mechanist philosophers promoted a worldview that viewed the universe as an autonomous system. The realm of nature was defined in opposition to human consciousness, leading to the establishment of culture as an independent domain separate from nature (Descola, 2013, pp. 68-71).

Influenced by James Gibson's ecological psychology, Ingold (2000) develops his theory of dwelling perspective (pp. 166-169). This perspective emphasizes the environment's affordances. As discussed earlier, affordance refers to the phenomenon that objects and events within a specific environment provide some cues for perceivers. These cues are messages about the possibilities of actions. The environment's dwellers react to the affordances according to the information they perceive, as well as the ways they approach those objects and events. These factors determine how perceivers take actions to interact with those objects and events. For example, the affordance presented by the edge of a cliff to walkers is "end of road" and "danger of falling." Upon seeing the edge, humans and walking animals instinctively stop moving forward. In contrast, for birds,

the edge of the cliff serves as a launching point for flight; they recognize it immediately as a platform to take off (Ingold, 2000, pp. 166-168). This example illustrates that different dwellers perceive an object's affordance through their bodies, but their possibilities for action are limited by what the object offers. In this way, dwellers learn how to properly interact with their environment. From this dwelling perspective, what we previously referred to as "culture" is more like a collection of skills and knowledge that arises from interaction with the environment. Thus, culture is essentially an extension of the environment through the bodies of its dwellers.

Practice-generated Ontologies

The third aspect of anti-representationalist theories focuses on practice-generated ontologies. Inspired by Ingold's dwelling perspective and the studies on the agency of things, Risjord concludes that there is not necessarily an independent medium of thought between human perceivers and the objects in their environment. Their interactions often create direct relationships (Risjord, 2020, pp. 586–609). This is why this approach to the ontological turn is called "anti-representationalism." Human activities that were previously classified as "cognition," "symbolization," and "representation" are now seen as participatory practices, embodied through immediate actions triggered by the affordances of the environment. For example, when walkers approach the edge of a cliff, they do not need to conceptualize a belief that the edge signifies the end of the road; instead, they react to the object with an immediate action, that is, they stop.

Using Holbraad's mana study as another example, the powder does not serve as a symbol of power, nor do local people "believe" powder can represent power. Rather, the powder *is* the power of mana. During the ceremony that involves the powder, the diviners are directly maneuvering the power, not symbolizing it with powder. There is no medium of belief or symbol

system between the diviners and the object.[1] In local ontology, power is never an abstract notion symbolized by certain objects; instead, power is a substance or entity generated in the human-object interaction. The powder is power, not the symbol of power. What this example demonstrates is that the mutual effects between humans and things can produce specific ontological properties. Risjord (2020) argues that we should borrow and revise Bourdieu's practice concept to understand how various local ontologies are produced. Here, "practice" refers to the interactions between both human and non-human agents.

Historically, some anthropologists have performed many studies to examine how different interactive contexts produce distinct ontologies. Descola, s structuralist, examines worldwide ethnographies and generalizes four major types of ontologies: naturalism, animism, totemism, and analogism.[2] The Western ontology, characterized by a dualism between nature and culture, falls under naturalism. This type of ontology holds that while humans and non-human animals share similar physical characteristics and physiological mechanisms, they possess different interiorities, such as mind, soul, and subjectivity. As a result, naturalism recognizes humans as a sort of animal but does not acknowledge that non-human animals have personhood (Descola, 2013, pp. 116-121). In contrast, animist ontologies assert that there is a similarity in interiorities between humans and non-humans, thereby acknowledging the personhood of non-humans.[3] According to Risjord's theory, this type of ontology arises from the close interactions between Indigenous Peoples and the

[1] Risjord argues that English speakers may struggle to comprehend a belief-less relationship. For example, the expression "Someone (A) believes something (B)" is a common structure in English. This pattern suggests that the speakers aim to defend their perspective on B and frames the A-B interaction as A's subjective interpretation. When we say, "the diviners believe powder is power," we are asserting our own view of the powder as a material substance and dismissing its ontological properties (such as motion, mana, or power) in the diviners' interactive context.

[2] As a student of Levi-Strauss, Descola (2014) adheres to the structuralist paradigm and disclaims his connection with the movement of ontological turn (pp. 271– 180).

[3] The chapter "The Perception of Genos" offers an in-depth analysis of Descola's study.

non-humans in their environments. In a word, ontologies are generated in relational practice.

In this thesis, I explore three major aspects of anti-representationalism through different cases involving the death of bovine animals during genocidal events. This study connects the destruction of human groups with the collective death of bovine animals, challenging the anthropocentric notions of collectivity. I aim to illustrate that humanity's ontological definitions vary significantly across different groups, suggesting that the boundaries of collectivity are fundamentally flexible depending on contextual interactions. This flexibility implies that the anthropocentric bias inherent in the concept of genocide warrants critical reflection. Scholars often presume that the victims of genocide are solely human communities, such as societies, cultures, and nations. However, applying this assumption to non-Western contexts can lead to epistemological violence (Woolford, 2019, p. 272), for naturalism and Cartesian body-mind dualism do not align with many non-Western ontologies regarding environments, non-humans, and collectivity. Therefore, a careful examination of local ontologies concerning non-humans and their concepts of collectivity can aid scholars in avoiding the imposition of epistemological violence on victim groups. Ultimately, this approach contributes to the decolonization of genocide studies.

The primary epistemological goal of this study is to challenge the Cartesian frameworks within sociology and its research of genocide. These frameworks assert that the meaning of the world and the properties of objects are determined solely by the human mind. They separate "culture" from "nature," which obscures our understanding of the interrelations between humans and non-humans. To address this issue, I apply several theories of anti-representationalism to examine the non-human animal victims of genocides. While scholars from various disciplines have made significant efforts to reflect on the anthropocentric paradigms in social sciences, I employ

the works of anthropologists to challenge the prevalent Cartesian frameworks in the sociological study of genocide. This choice is largely influenced by my personal familiarity with both sociology and anthropology.[4] In addition, many sociologists studying genocide understand the nature of collectivity and its destruction through the lens of collective lifestyles. Therefore, numerous anthropological theories on culture and tradition are particularly relevant and useful for a sociological examination of genocide and related atrocities. This also explains why this sociological study of three genocide cases engages significantly with anthropological works.

Chapter Arrangement

The thesis consists of three case studies on different bovine victims during genocides targeting human groups. They are presented across four chapters.

Chapter Two discusses the cattle slaughter that occurred during the Rwandan genocide in 1994. This genocide resulted in an estimated 1.1 million human deaths, with around 75% of the victims being Tutsi. The slaughter of cattle was a prominent yet often overlooked aspect of the genocide. Reports indicate that nearly 90% of the cows in the country were killed by Hutu armed men (Stairs, 2009). Many survivors recall that the killings in their villages began with the slaughter

[4] Several years ago, I received training in anthropology at Peking University, China. The anthropology program at this university has been influenced by the British and French academic traditions of the early twentieth century, which emphasized the connection between anthropology and sociology. The British tradition was closely associated with Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, who was influenced by Durkheim's sociology and helped develop the academic field known as social anthropology. Many anthropological programs in the universities of northern China were influenced by this British tradition. Fei Xiaotong, recognized as the founder of sociology and anthropology in post-Mao China, was a student of the Polish British anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski. However, many of his Chinese colleagues primarily view him as a sociologist. In the Chinese universities that are influenced by the social anthropology tradition, anthropology is typically housed within sociological departments and is often classified as a sub-discipline of sociology. In contrast, several major universities in southern China, such as Sun Yat-sen University, have adopted an American model for developing anthropology, distinguishing it from sociology. These institutions have established dedicated anthropology departments that only include physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and archaeological anthropology.

of cattle, followed by the butchering and consumption of the cows on the spot. In many Rwandan communities, these atrocities were committed by neighbors, acquaintances, and even relatives. Some survivors reported that Hutu neighbors came to their homes and took their cattle shortly after the massacre began. Militia groups, such as the Interahamwe, also specifically targeted Tutsi-owned cows. Legal documents reveal that militia leaders promised their soldiers rewards of cattle from the victims for their participation in the killings.[5]

The most culturally significant cattle breed in Rwanda is Ankole, which is an African bovine animal characterized by a pair of long and stout horns.[6] Cattle play important roles in the local lifestyle, especially for Tutsi in rural areas. Cows are not only their source of milk but also a form of currency, as people establish marriage and other social bonds through exchanging cows. The cattle culture is not limited to Rwanda; it is common throughout northeastern Africa. Unlike other cattle-breeding peoples, however, the Tutsi are bonded with cows more closely, as their ethnic identity is almost completely defined by the lifestyle of cattle husbandry. This chapter transitions from constructivist narratives to an exploration of how Ankole cattle's agency as energy container has provided the cattle-raising community with economic and political advantages, eventually leading to the division of group identities. This anti-anthropocentric perspective has largely been overlooked by most scholars studying the political landscape of pre-genocide Rwanda. By emphasizing the agency of cattle, this chapter illustrates the first dimension of anti-representationalism.

The third and fourth chapters examine the collectivization campaigns in the Tibetan regions of China. This case study is divided into two chapters due to its length. Since this topic may be

[5] The survivors' testimonies are mainly from the interview collections of Kigali Genocide Memorial, the Holocaust Museum, and the USC Shoah Foundation. The legal documents are mainly from the Judicial Archives of The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

[6] In recent decades, some European breeds, especially milk cows, were also introduced to this region.

unfamiliar to many Western readers, Chapter Three offers extensive historical context regarding collectivization in communist countries, including the movements in China. Chapter Four focuses on the analysis of the Tibetan case, highlighting issues such as the death of yaks.

Between 1956 and 1962, the newly established Chinese communist government implemented extensive social and economic reforms in the Tibetan regions of Kham and Amdo, aiming to collectivize local nomadic communities. The designers of this movement sought to swiftly dismantle traditional political and economic institutions in these societies to establish a unified socialist system. However, the collectivization of nomads faced fierce resistance from the local population. As a result, the Chinese government's counterinsurgency operations led to significant loss of Tibetan lives. Influenced by Mao's idealistic vision of the "Great Leap Forward," the collectivization efforts became increasingly radical in 1958. This radicalization ultimately contributed to a nationwide famine that lasted for three years and resulted in the deaths of over 36 million people (Yang, 2012, pp. 413-450). In Tibetan areas, the famine was largely due to the mass death of livestock, particularly yaks. Unlike ordinary cattle, yaks need to graze on different seasonal pastures that are usually located far apart, which requires herdsmen to lead a nomadic lifestyle. The collectivization campaigns forced nomadic Tibetans to join "people's communes" and shift to farming practices. Their livestock was confiscated and moved to state ranches (Becker, 1996, pp. 233-250). As the yaks could no longer roam and graze on the pastures, they became malnourished and died shortly after. Meanwhile, the agricultural experiments conducted during this period failed due to the harsh climate of the plateau. With food, meat, and milk running low, the reform ultimately resulted in widespread starvation, disease, and death among the collectivized Tibetan population (Wemheuer, 2014, pp. 170-174).

This case study examines the similar fate of nomads and yaks, trying to answer why a state

project targeting nomads resulted in significant animal deaths. I primarily draw on Ingold's theory of dwelling perspective to explain this tragedy. He highlights the interaction between humans and other dwellers in their environment, arguing that human culture is an extension of the environment. In the example of Kham and Amdo, the shared suffering of both nomads and yaks is linked to their common habits of mobility and seclusion. Their shared lifestyle stems from their reactions to the affordances of the same environment, such as grassland, where the nomads and yaks both reside. Human communities' entanglement with environmental elements complicates state projects that seek to establish simple and clear social and demographic structures that are favourable for easy governance. Therefore, environmental elements like animals are also viewed as adversaries by the authorities. This case exemplifies the second aspect of anti-representationalism: the integration of humans and the environment.

Chapter Five focuses on bison/buffalo hunting in nineteenth-century North America. Driven by market demands, American bison herds were extensively hunted and slaughtered throughout the entire century. In the eighteenth century, the bison population was estimated to be as high as 50 to 60 million, but it dramatically declined to near-extinction by the end of the nineteenth century due to widespread hunting (Taylor, 2011, pp. 3162–3195). Between 1870 and 1890, the merchants' greed for buffalo hides coincided with settler governments' goal to "civilize" Indigenous People; the hunting activities were used as a tactic to weaken Indigenous communities and force them to settle on reserves. The governments realized that bison were many Indigenous groups' essential subsistence source and held that the demise of bison herds would undermine their independence and disintegrate their forces (Smits, 1994, pp. 318-333). Armies operated actively to fulfill the goal of eradicating bison to force the Indigenous groups to abandon their seasonally migratory lifestyles (Hornaday, 2002, pp. 469-490; Rinella, 2008, p. 81). However, through the

lens of anti-representationalism, the destruction of bison should not simply be seen as damage to natural resources. As Tasha Hubbard stresses, Indigenous people's sorrow for the death of buffaloes is more than a regret over the loss of resources and properties, suggesting that their concepts of personhood include bison and other more-than-human persons (Hubbard, 2014, pp. 292-305).

This case study aims to expand on Hubbard's argument by exploring anti-representationalism's third aspect, which is practice-generated ontologies. I examine the interactions between Indigenous Peoples and buffalo before the onset of commercial hunting, highlighting how Indigenous communities recognized the humanity of bison and embodied this through their relational practices with these other-than-human persons. In the analysis sections, I connect anti-representationalism's focus on the relationship between practice and ontology to Christopher Powell's argument that genocide is the violent destruction of practical social relations (Powell, 2007; 2011, pp. 134-155). I interpret Hubbard's term "buffalo genocide" as the process through which the relational practices between Indigenous Peoples and bison were disrupted. One of the most significant consequences of this disruption was the dehumanization of bison. As settlers' naturalist ideas and hunting techniques spread to Indigenous communities, the personhood of buffalo was gradually denied and ignored.

Readers may notice some inconsistencies in structure and volume across the case study chapters outlined above. This variation is intentional, as I had different target audiences in mind for each chapter. The Rwandan genocide is a widely recognized event, and there is an abundance of studies available on the topic. Therefore, I believe that a brief section outlining the timeline and historical background is sufficient. Regarding the Tibetan case, I believe that the regions involved and the collectivization of local communities are relatively unfamiliar to most readers. This lack

of familiarity is due to the limited academic research on the subject and the fact that related studies remain a taboo in China. Therefore, I decided to provide as much material and data about this event as possible, which resulted in an extensive chapter. To make the content more manageable, I decided to split it into two separate chapters: Chapters Three and Four. In the first section of Chapter Three, I explain in detail why I organized this case study in this manner. Unlike the two previous case studies that begin with historical descriptions, the chapter on bison opens with a discussion on genocide and colonialism. This approach is necessary because the concept of colonial genocide is not universally accepted within academia. Some academics, including many Canadian scholars, dispute the classification of Indigenous people's experiences as genocide (Hopper, 2021; Lewy, 2004, pp. 55-63). Their reluctance to acknowledge colonial genocide may lead them to view the term "buffalo genocide" with skepticism. Therefore, it is important to establish a clear connection between genocide and settler colonialism to provide a solid theoretical foundation for the ensuing discussion.

The order of case-study chapters is organized according to three aspects of anti-representationalism. As discussed earlier, the first aspect is the agency of things, which is the most basic and easiest to understand. Therefore, the Rwandan case related to this aspect is presented first. The second aspect is human-environment integration, which encompasses environment's affordances and the application of dwelling perspective; this aspect is somewhat more complex. Finally, the third aspect, practice-generated ontology, builds on the first two, leading to the placement of the chapter on bison at the end. The theoretical connections among the three cases within the framework of anti-representationalism are discussed in Chapter Six.

In Chapter Six, I provide a comparison of the three cases, integrating anti-representationalism's three major aspects into a cohesive framework. This framework emphasizes

the affordances of the environment and the agency of non-humans, highlighting the ontological properties of non-humans that emerge from interactions. Humans comprehend these ontological properties through perceiving the environment's affordances and non-humans' agency, which leads the perceivers to classify the objects they encounter and the participants in their interactions into different categories, including the collective of persons. Drawing from Descola's examination of various Indigenous definitions of humanity, I argue that the process of establishing a category of persons parallels defining the boundaries of an ethnic group, for both processes involve selecting indicators that mark shared attributes. Because of their extensive interactions with the non-humans in their environment, many Indigenous groups are able to perceive the social and moral characteristics that they share with animals and plants. They use these shared characteristics as indicators to define collectivity, resulting in various categories of personhood that include both humans and non-humans. In contrast, Western concepts of collectivity (genos), often tied to naturalist ontologies, tend to be human-exclusive. This limitation prevents scholars from fully grasping the dynamics of integration and disintegration within many non-Western collectivities. This presents a significant challenge for genocide studies, particularly in relation to environmental damage and the deaths of animals within Indigenous Peoples' worlds. Therefore, this chapter's examination of naturalism is helpful for revealing the epistemological biases inherent in Western ontologies and for decolonizing genocide studies.

Lastly, this thesis concludes with a brief chapter summarizing the study's reasoning and main arguments.

Research Methods and Ethical Issues

This study employs methodologies from historical sociology and historical anthropology to

analyze materials related to the three cases. The primary approach used in this study is the analysis of relational models. Typically, historical sociologists utilize sociological concepts and frameworks such as “structure,” “relation,” and “network” to interpret historical data. They may either outline the long-term trajectory of a social issue or concentrate on particular incidents in order to uncover the stable relationships, structures, and systems underlying these processes (Aminzade, 1992, pp. 456-480; Burke, 2005, pp. 27-34; Skocpol, 1984, pp. 356-391). Historical anthropology shares several characteristics with historical sociology, particularly in its interest in historical contexts, but its methods are largely influenced by structuralism and interpretivism. Historical anthropology approaches focus on the structures and patterns within the minds of historical actors. However, this focus does not imply that anthropologists overlook interpersonal relationships. Rather, they argue that social institutions, such as kinship, religion, economy, and political systems, share a common cultural logic (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Coello de la Rosa & Mateo Dieste, 2020, pp. 54-84; Sahlins, 1976).

As mentioned above, the primary historical method employed in this study is the analysis of relational models, focusing on the enduring relationships between important actors within specific historical contexts. These relationships can be societal or ideological. However, within the anti-anthropocentric framework of this study, the examination of relational models is broadened to include not only human actors but also non-human ones. For example, when reviewing the research materials, I pay particular attention to the social relationships between humans and cattle. This includes a focus on key cattle-related institutions as well as the ideological connections between humans and bovine animals, such as the recognition of cattle’s humanity. Analyzing these relationships allows me to develop theories about the dynamics of human-cattle interactions. Ultimately, these theories enhance our understanding of the genocides that resulted in the mass

death of both humans and bovine animals.

This study adopts anti-representationalism as its primary theoretical framework, which allows for the use of historical approaches that are not confined by the divide between culture and nature. While many concepts from sociology and anthropology are utilized in this study, they are expanded to explore the interactions between humans and non-humans. In other words, the study investigates broader structural relationships within different environments. For the three cases examined, I focus on the inherent characteristics that give cattle the agency to influence their interactions with humans, how people's lifestyle develops to react to the affordances of the environment, and how relational practices determine non-humans' ontological properties. By applying anti-representationalism to the historical cases, the research attempts to reveal what these genocides destroyed, in addition to humans, through killing a large number of bovine animals. To achieve this, the study draws on historical documents and ethnographic information to reconstruct the human-cattle interactions before the mass death of the animals. Additionally, it examines oral histories, including testimonies from survivors, to gain a detailed understanding of the relational practices between people and cattle.

The data and materials for this study come from a variety of sources. The case related to Rwanda primarily relies on the testimonies that I collected for Dr. Andrew Woolford's project on symbiogenetic destruction in genocide. These testimonies are provided by the survivors who participated in oral history projects about the Rwandan genocide, as well as the witnesses who testified at the International Criminal Tribunal. These projects' outcomes include USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive (the Collection of USC Shoah Foundation, the Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection, and the Genocide Archive of Rwanda collections), UN's Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations, Cases of

the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and the Living Archives of Rwandan Exiles and Genocide Survivors in Canada (Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling and the Association des Parents et Amis des Victimes du genocide des Tutsis au Rwanda). The project examined 261 testimony videos and 71 volumes of court documents from the databases above. The lengths of the videos vary, ranging from approximately half an hour to a couple of hours. The individuals providing testimony include genocide survivors and witnesses from diverse age groups, encompassing both youths and seniors, as well as both male and female participants. While few interviewers specifically asked about cattle, many participants offered detailed descriptions related to cattle in their accounts. For instance, among the 164 Rwanda-related testimony videos in the Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, I identified 28 transcripts that contain significant information about cattle. The frequent mention of cattle in these testimonies highlights the importance of these animals in the lives of local people.

The research on Tibetan nomads and yaks utilizes records from local gazetteers and other official documents. China has a tradition of creating detailed local gazetteers like county chronicles. This tradition, which dates back to imperial times, was expanded by the communist government to include ethnic regions that were previously outside the Chinese Empire's control. Although these gazetteers often present biased information intended for propaganda, they contain important records and descriptions related to local history, political systems, and social customs. In addition to these gazetteers, I also reviewed two other collections. The first is the "Reports of the Social and Historical Survey of Ethnic Minorities," which was created between the 1950s and 1960s. These reports were produced by government-supported survey teams influenced by Marxist doctrines as they investigated minority communities. Despite their strong communist ideology, the reports offer valuable insights into local lifestyles prior to the collectivization campaigns. The

second collection is *Wenshi Ziliao* (Historical Accounts of Past Events). These periodicals contain personal memoirs and oral histories from individuals who experienced significant events, making them valuable sources for studying social changes. The research collected data from 33 local gazetteers published by the prefectural and county governments of Qinghai, Sichuan, and Gansu, 15 survey reports on various ethnic communities, and 75 volumes of *Wenshi Ziliao*. More details about these sources can be found in Chapter Three. Additionally, there are several memoirs and academic publications that focus on the collectivization in the Tibetan areas known as Kham and Amdo (Becker, 1996; Bianco, 2021, pp. 173-191; Li, 2022; Nulo, 2014; Weiner, 2020; Wemheuer, 2014). These publications are also important for the study.

In regard to bison hunting in 19th-century North America, various American and Canadian historians have applied general historical methods to explore this topic (Braun, 2007, pp. 192–210; Brink, 2008; Dary, 1989; Flores, 2001; Hutton, 2009, pp. 174–200; Isenberg, 2000; Krech, 1999; Magoc, 2006). Furthermore, some scholars in Indigenous studies have presented the perspectives of Indigenous people regarding the near-extinction experience of buffalo herds (Calloway, 1996; Duran, 2006; Hubbard, 2014, pp. 292-305; LaDuke, 1999; Justice, 2010, pp. 61-76). While both types of scholarship on bison hunting are referenced in this study, the second category receives more careful examination, as it provides crucial insights into the interactions between buffalo and Indigenous Peoples. It is important to note that my dissertation research started during the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited my ability to use travel-based methods. However, once the pandemic was over, I visited the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in Alberta in 2024. This experience enabled me to collect valuable information and insights related to Indigenous hunting techniques, some of which became key materials for my research and writing.

Most documents were read twice. The first reading helped me re-establish the processes of

the genocidal cases in question, including their causes, sequences of incidents, and consequences. From this initial reading, I identified several important themes and keywords for each case study, such as "cattle's agency" and "bison's dehumanization." Some of the themes focus on the relationships between humans and bovine animals. During the second reading, I organized the information collected from the texts according to these themes and developed conclusions related to key issues.

For instance, many historians overlook bison's dehumanization because of their anthropocentric perspectives. However, their accounts of bison-related events contain details that reveal how the humanity of bison was gradually and systematically ignored. Therefore, one of the main tasks of the second reading was to collect and reorganize the information that historians mentioned but undervalued. Additionally, while this study did not directly interview genocide survivors about their relationships with the specific bovine animals discussed, the frequent and significant mention of cattle in witness testimonies and other documents highlights the important roles that these animals play in the lives of genocide victims. This kind of information was thoroughly reviewed during the second reading. In this step, I placed similar types of information under the same themes, which facilitated further analysis and the development of conclusions. This process involves shifting from an anthropocentric to an anti-anthropocentric perspective and allows for an examination using relational models that include bovine victims.

Due to the nature of the materials and research methods used, this study is primarily qualitative. In genocide studies that rely on witness testimonies, a significant ethical challenge is the potential for causing secondary harm to interviewees. Many participants in these investigations are victims and survivors of genocide, and their recollections may evoke painful memories, leading to re-traumatization. This study does not face that challenge, as most of the data is derived from

secondary sources. Nonetheless, I still would like to express my gratitude to all the individuals who provided testimony. Their accounts offer valuable insights from the perspectives of genocide victims, even though sharing their experiences could have been re-traumatizing. These perspectives and the information they offer form a crucial foundation for examining the violence and suffering that is often overlooked by those studying genocide through a Western lens.

This study represents an ethical endeavor aimed at uncovering the true relational practices of victim groups in their daily lives, as well as the ontologies and moral principles that shape their experiences. This understanding contributes to a more accurate assessment of the destruction that the victims have endured. Additionally, the study seeks to critically examine the Eurocentric epistemologies often employed by Western academics when analyzing the experiences of non-Western groups. By doing so, it aims to enhance the validity of genocide studies concerning these cases. Ultimately, this approach fosters a pursuit of justice that is rooted in specific ontologies rather than a solely Western worldview and moral framework.

In this chapter, I have introduced the primary themes, goals, and theoretical frameworks of this study, which examines the mass bovine deaths during genocides aimed at human groups. The most important theoretical framework for this study is anti-representationalism, which is illustrated through three main aspects discussed in this chapter. I have also provided an outline of the thesis, including brief descriptions of the three case studies, each of which exemplifies a different aspect of the anti-representationalism framework. Furthermore, this introduction addresses the main methodology of the study and important ethical considerations. As mentioned above, the three case studies are organized across the following four chapters. The next chapter will focus on the first case study: the killings of cattle during the Rwandan genocide.

Chapter Two: Cattle-Killing in the Rwandan Genocide

This chapter examines cattle's role in Rwanda's political dynamic and the meanings of the cattle-killing atrocity in the Rwandan genocide. The study starts with two descriptive sections about the genocide's background and the violence against the victims' cattle, followed by a historical study on Rwanda's cattle-related social systems, which ushers the discussion into an analysis of the bonds between cattle and the victim group. The second half of the analysis adopts an anti-anthropocentric view, revealing local cattle's unique agency that shaped human groups and their political development. The discussion in the final section underscores the argument that groupness is an assemblage of human members and non-human elements that carry agency; the destruction of non-human elements may thus significantly undermine the group's relational foundations.

Historical Background

The Rwandan genocide in the last century was one of the bloodiest humanitarian tragedies in post-World War II history. It is estimated that nearly one million people were massacred between April and July 1994. The primary target of the atrocity was the Tutsi of Rwanda, a minority group; other victims were Hutu and Twa people who helped or sympathized with Tutsi.[7] While the massacres were mainly led and performed by Hutu militias, such as *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi*, a significant number of Hutu civilians also took part in the killing, looting, and raping that lasted for

[7] Approximately 10,000 Twa People were killed during the genocide. The Twa are forest residents and an indigenous group of the Great Lakes region. For a long time, they were discriminated against by both the Hutu and Tutsi governments of Rwanda. The Hutu regimes inflicted land grasp and ethnic cleansing in the Twa communities. Many people were killed before and during the genocide (Thomson, 2009, pp. 313-320).

three months. Due to the wide participation of civilian perpetrators, most victims were murdered or wounded by cold weapons and farming tools, ranging from machetes to hoes. Many people were killed by their neighbours and fellow villagers. Nationwide, the violent acts did not come to an end until the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi-led military organization originating in Uganda, invaded and took the country in early July.

Though triggered by the assassination of Hutu president Juvénal Habyarimana in 1994, the Tutsi genocide was the result of a series of crises since the country emerged from Belgian colonial rule in the early 1960s. The rivalry between Hutu and Tutsi was evident in the colonial age largely because the European colonialists favoured the ethnic minority Tutsi as their agents to rule the country even though the population was 85% Hutu.[8] In the 1950s, the Belgians began to ease their discriminatory policies against Hutu and set a timeline for the independence of their African colonies, which encouraged some Hutu intellectuals and politicians to launch a nationwide movement to overturn Tutsi privileges and secure Hutu dominance in the upcoming regime. The movement resulted in the first wave of violent conflicts between the two groups, leaving thousands of Tutsis dead. As Rwanda achieved independence in 1962, the pro-Hutu party Parmehutu became the dominant power in the new nationalist government, with its leading members, such as President Gregoire Kayibanda, were all southern Hutus. The 1960s witnessed near continuous ethnic cleansing against Tutsi Rwandans. In that period, the most common violence was arson, as the perpetrators' primary goal was to force Tutsis to leave the country. In 1963, the Tutsi refugees tried to launch a counterattack but failed, which led to a fiercer retaliation targeting the Tutsis at

[8] Before European colonization, the region that is now Rwanda was undergoing significant military and economic expansion led by the Tutsi king. During this time, many local authorities were replaced by Tutsi aristocrats. In the southern and western parts of the country, most Hutu communities were governed by Tutsi chiefs. The German colonizers exploited this existing power structure by appointing Tutsi aristocrats as their agents of governance, which facilitated their colonial rule. The following sections will provide more information about this historical context.

home. Consequently, nearly 10,000 Tutsi Rwandans were killed between 1963 and 1964 (Magnarella, 2005, p. 810).

Many historians see Kayibanda's administration as a dictatorship in that his ruling style resembled that of the former Tutsi kings. His regime was also obsessed with anti-Tutsi extremism, which was often aggravated by the incidents in neighbouring countries, such as the 1972 crackdown of the Burundian Hutu rebellion. Burundi is also a country composed of Hutu and Tutsi, but it was under the rule of a Tutsi military regime in that period. The Burundian armies massacred nearly 100,000 Hutus and forced another 200,000 to flee to Rwanda. In return, Kayibanda's government launched an equivalent campaign, killing hundreds of Tutsis and making another 100,000 refugees (Magnarella, 2005, p. 810). In 1973, Rwanda's first Hutu regime ended in a military coup led by Major-General Habyarimana, a northern Hutu, who soon declared himself the president of the Second Republic of Rwanda. Habyarimana's administration was also a dictatorship, but it chose to ease the repression against Tutsi, which brought the country nearly two decades of peace. However, the situation deteriorated again in 1990, as the RPF invaded and started the Rwandan civil war. The war revived anti-Tutsi hatred and gave some Hutu nationalist organizations and militias opportunities to expand their influence. As a result, around 2000 Tutsi Rwandans were murdered between 1990 and 1992 (Verwimp, 2013, p. 119). On April 6, 1994, Habyarimana's plane was shot down near the Kigali airport; the president and all passengers were killed. The crash lighted the fuse of the Rwandan genocide.

The genocide in many rural communities was led by local political elites. Most residents did not intend to take part in the violence against their Tutsi neighbours in the beginning but later participated in the atrocities due to the pressure from some Hutu hardliners in their neighbourhoods

(Strauss, 2006: 122-139). The hardliners were mainly CDR and MRND's community leaders,[9] former soldiers, army reservists, and *Interahamwe* members. They held a radical dichotomic ideology and believed that all Hutus must unite to fight the entire Tutsi group as an enemy that needed to be completely annihilated. Under such a circumstance, the refusal to participate often led one to be regarded as an accomplice of Tutsi and thus also receive deadly punishment.

Through a comparative study that included a quantitative approach[10] and extensive interviews, Scott Straus (2006) finds that a significant number of respondents chose to join the perpetrators because of fear of reprisals, especially from superiors (p. 139). His study shows that the fiercest violence happened in the communities where the hardliner elites overpowered the local officials like burgomasters and conseillers. Straus's finding concurs with Lee Ann Fujii's research, as she also notes that many ordinary people participated in the genocide not because of ethnic hatred but rather social pressure from members of their neighbourhoods and communities (Fujii, 2009: 185). The pressure was delivered through temptation, intimidation, and orders. This micro-level dynamic is important for our next section on cattle killing since the massacre of Tutsi often started with slaughtering their cattle. As Straus (2006) mentions, cattle-killing was frequently an early act of violence, which also served as a test of Hutu loyalty (p. 86). Those who decided to join the perpetrators usually stole and killed their Tutsi neighbours' cows first. Thus, one may notice two waves of cattle-killing behaviours; the soldiers conducted the first wave, and individual civilian villagers performed the second wave.

[9] CDR stands for the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic; MRND stands for National Revolutionary Movement for Development.

[10] As respondents often use different wordings for the same question, Straus needed to codify their answers and classify them into a few categories, enabling him to calculate the percentage of each type of response.

Cattle-Killing in the Genocide

During the genocide in Rwanda, the slaughter of cattle was a prominent but often overlooked phenomenon. It is reported that nearly 90% of the country's cows were killed during the three-month massacre (Stairs, 2009; Verpoorten, 2007). The loss was so extensive that the post-genocide government initiated an aid project, providing at least one cow to each poor family to support their recovery (Isaie et al., 2018, p. 80). The most common breed of cattle in Rwanda is the Ankole, an African bovine known for its long and sturdy horns. Ankole cows hold cultural significance for most Tutsi people, as cattle rearing was their primary livelihood before Rwanda gained independence. During the republic era, many rural Tutsis owned a large number of cattle, though their cattle husbandry industry was already in decline. Some wealthier Hutu households also kept cows, but their traditional lifestyle focused more on farming. Recognizing this difference in lifestyles, the Belgian colonial regime used cattle ownership as a criterion to distinguish between Tutsi and Hutu ethnicities. Those who owned more than ten cows were classified as Tutsi, while those with fewer were categorized as Hutu (Magnarella, 2005, p. 808). During the genocide, Ankole cows were specifically targeted by the killers due to their association with the Tutsi. Typically, the cows were slaughtered first, followed by the murder of their owners. In his *Into the Quick of Life*, French journalist Jean Hatzfeld (2005) records this killing pattern and writes:

> ……as of the first days of the genocide in the Bugesera, the *Interahamwe* slaughtered their victims' cattle. To eat them, to abolish them. Today, many Hutus reveal scenes where the murderers cut the animal's throats before their owners' eyes first, to humiliate them, and before killing the owners themselves. Accounts are also sprinkled with allusions to gargantuan barbecues on the evenings following the large-scale massacres. (pp. 40-41)

Rose Burizihiza, a survivor who participated in the Shoah oral-history project, also recalls that the massacre in her community started from killing Tutsis' cattle:

> We were neighbours with a hill called Buvumo, and we saw chaos from there. Minister Kambanda John was born there. Because we were neighbours, we saw smoke coming from there as they burnt. People who had covered their faces burning things down. In Ibuvubu, they started burning down houses and killing cows in the open while people were screaming. They weren't even patient; they started killing cows.[11]

Likewise, another survivor's testimony records the same pattern: "The killers slaughtered the cows of Tutsis from Gikongoro first, and this was the reason why the genocide started late in Nyanza."[12] A witness who testified at The International Criminal Tribunal told the audience that he overheard the killers' conversation, and it was about the plan to eat the cows before killing the Tutsi owner. "They were saying among themselves. They were saying that they were to start off by eating the cattle, the cows, and then they should kill him after because they haven't been given authority to kill him."[13]

The tribunal's legal documents also reveal that cattle killing was often organized and motivated by the orders of militia leaders. For example, a witness's testimony describes how the

[11] Burizihiza, Rose. Interview 52057. Segment 66-67. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 27th Aug. 2011 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 17th Nov. 2020.
[12] Xavier's testimony. Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations Survivor Testimonies. (https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/assets/pdf/survivor-testimonies/6%20-%20Xavier%202009.pdf)
[13] Witness "JJ". Judicial Archives of The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Indictment Against Jean Paul Akayesu, 23 Oct, 1997. (https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/audio.shtml)

Interahamwe commanders encouraged the soldiers to slaughter Tutsis and their cattle. The indictment writes:

> On 7 April 1994, in Rwankuba, Jean-Baptiste Gatete instigated the *Interahamwe* with a megaphone, telling them to gather other *Interahamwe* and to start the 'work' of killing the Tutsi. Jean-Baptiste Gatete promised the *Interahamwe* a reward of cattle when the Tutsi extermination was completed…… The Accused had promised to reward them. He had told them, "The day is coming when you will sleep with their daughters and wives, and you are going to eat their cows".[14]

Another trial judgement records a similar order delivered in another commander's speech: "As from today, you should be aware that all the communes have finished, and I believe that you are aware that you should start eating the cattle of the Tutsis who are in this area, and you should burn down their houses."[15] The witness who gave this testimony told the court that the population was given machetes and sent to kill Tutsis and cows soon after the speech.

As a result, many Tutsis' cows were slaughtered on the spot. The militia killed the cattle and consumed the meat; one witness mentioned that he saw Hutu soldiers using vehicles to transport the meat of the cows. "On 9 April, the witness saw Bourgmestre Mwange meet *Interahamwe* on the road. They took a cow and went in the direction of the Cerai School. Later, he saw people bringing meat back from there. That day, assailants continued to look for survivors in the woods, but they did not find the witness. He believed that the cow was part of the 'reward'

[14] Judicial Archives of The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Indictment 10 May 2005. ICTR-00-61. (https://ucr.irmct.org/scasedocs/case/ICTR-00-61#eng)
[15] Judicial Archives of The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Trial Judgement 12 Sep 2006. ICTR-00-55.(https://ucr.irmct.org/scasedocs/case/ICTR-00-55#eng)

which Gatete had promised the assailants."[16] This scene was confirmed by other witnesses' testimonies: "The vehicle that was left behind, loaded meat from a cow that had been killed. When asked by the prosecutor during examination-in-chief if the accused was still there when the cow was killed and the meat loaded, witness GAF responded: 'well, I had told you as soon as he uttered those words, he went back into the vehicle and left at the same time as the Pajero and the Hilux pickup.'"[17] These testimonies also echo the cattle-killing pattern described by Hatzfeld.

As previously mentioned, many ordinary Hutu villagers joined the militias and participated in the violence against the Tutsi. Most began their involvement in the genocide by looting the homes of their Tutsi neighbors. As an important marker of wealth in local culture, cattle were the primary target for plunder. While some looters simply took the cattle and kept them in their barns, many villagers slaughtered the cows and consumed the meat, much like the soldiers did. However, unlike the military's organized violence, these acts were often sporadic and carried out by individual perpetrators.[18]

Many survivors' testimonies mention the robberies carried out by neighbours. For example, a witness called Reverien tells, "The following day, Hutu neighbours came to steal our possessions, our cows and take our money. Across the hills, people were being killed. On Sunday the 10th, the killings reached our home area. We heard a whistle signalling the start of the killings. We

[16] Judicial Archives of The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Indictment 10 May 2005. ICTR-00-61. (https://ucr.irmct.org/scasedocs/case/ICTR-00-61#eng)
[17] Judicial Archives of The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Trial Judgement 20 Dec 2012. ICTR-99-54A. (https://ucr.irmct.org/scasedocs/case/ICTR-00-61#eng)
[18] Although Rwanda is a small country, the violence against Tutsi during the genocide revealed significant regional differences. While there may also be distinctive patterns related to cattle-killing, the available evidence is not yet sufficient to draw concrete conclusions. It is likely that these geographic differences existed. The next section will explore the regional variations in cattle-related institutions during the era of the Rwandan Kingdom.

immediately ran towards the bush, and we stayed there until night."[19] Likewise, survivor Evelyn Bankundiye of Nyarwotsi Village, Gikongoro tells the interviewer of Visual History Archive: "What I remember is that some of those who were our friends became cruel to us. All I can say is that those who were our friends, they betrayed us. And those we share milk with are the ones who plundered cows that gave us milk."[20] In the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, witnesses under the code names "J", "JJ", and "OO" all testified that Tutsis' cattle were taken and slaughtered by their Hutu neighbours. Below is a dialogue between witness OO and the judge.

> OO: People could go to their neighbours' homes and they took their livestock.
>
> (Did you actually see this happening?)
>
> OO: Yes.
>
> (Were they doing anything particular to the livestock?)
>
> OO: They killed them. They took the livestock and killed them and took the meat of them.
>
> (The people who lost their livestock…do you know whether they were Hutu or Tutsi?)
>
> OO: They were Tutsis.
>
> (Who was taking the livestock if you know?)

[19] Reverien's testimony. Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations Survivor Testimonies. (https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/assets/pdf/survivor-testimonies/10%20-%20Reverien%202009.pdf)

[20] Bankundiye, Evelyn. Interview 52014. Segment 9. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 12th May. 2008 (The Collection of USC Shoah Foundation). Accessed 7th Jan. 2021.

OO: They were people living close to us.

(The people who were taking…do you know they were Hutu or Tutsi?)

OO: They were Hutus.

(Upon this scene, how do you feel?)

OO: We were afraid.

(Why were you afraid?)

OO: This is because we saw the livestock being taken away and killed whereas the livestock, cows more precisely, had done nothing.[21]

There is a culturally significant phenomenon in which both perpetrators and victims express a concern for cows. Whether the narrator is a survivor or a former perpetrator, it is likely that their testimony includes references to cattle. Many accounts of the atrocities committed by perpetrators often begin with the killing of cows, and most witnesses recount vivid descriptions of dead cattle. "All around me were screams, here and there, a massive slaughter of people and cows and I didn't move."[22] While some respondents' cattle-related memories are about cattle-rearing activities in the pre-genocide period, many interviewees recall the experience of witnessing cattle death during the genocide. "We had witnessed their homes being set on fire, their property looted, and their cattle slaughtered."[23] This brief description given by Hutu rescuer Augustin Karemera represents many similar scenes that are recurrent in other witnesses' testimonies, such as the following one.

[21] Witness "OO". Judicial Archives of The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Indictment Against Jean Paul Akayesu, 27 Oct. 1997. (https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/audio.shtml)
[22] Mukarwego's testimony. October 24, 2010.The Living Archives of Rwandan Exiles and Genocide Survivors in Canada. (https://livingarchivesvivantes.org/athanasie-muakawergo/)
[23] A testimony of Augustin Karemera. Genocide Archive of Rwanda. (https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=IBUKA00018&gsearch=)

"I came to hide here, and vehicles arrived after I left. Houses are being destroyed openly. At home, they have slaughtered cattle, including mine."[24]

In some people's eyes, the decimation of cattle and the death of human victims are comparable to each other. One can often hear the survivors saying, "People were slaughtered like cattle."[25] Marcel Rutagarama, a testimony giver who attended the Shoah project, describes the dreadful scene that he saw in the genocide, "I looked at all the dead bodies…I kept looking around…They looked like as cows lying in the yard…but they were human bodies this time."[26] Theoneste Karenzi is another informant for the Shoah oral history project; he tells the interviewer: "Sometimes I see cattle being transported for slaughter and that pains me. They are separated from those for breeding. I don't know if the concerned authorities can change that. They should give it some thought. We were treated the same as the cattle; the way those for keeping and those for slaughter are treated."[27]

The perpetrators understood that cattle were associated with the Tutsi, which is why they used cows to identify their Tutsi owners. Yves Kamuronsi discusses this point in his oral history. The killers sought meat, leading them to search for households with cows. They killed the cows and then the homeowners. Kamuronsi describes the horrible scene with a trembling voice. He recalls the cattle's screams when they were butchered alive as well as people's cries when they begged for mercy; the two sounds were mixed and overlapped with each other, and so were the

[24] Ndamyuwera, Jean Sothere. Interview 52081. Segment 16. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 5th Oct. 2011 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 11th Dec. 2020.
[25] Muhinda, Emmanuel. Interview 52066. Segment 73. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 8th Sep. 2011 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 4th Dec. 2020.
[26] Rutagarama, Marcel. Interview 52044. Segment 50. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 19th Apr. 2011 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 21st Dec. 2020.
[27] Karenzi, Theoneste. Interview 52048. Segment 57. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 29th Apr. 2011 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 27th Nov. 2020.

bodies of cows and humans.[28] Phoebe Kabaradine, another interviewee for the oral-history project, talks about her escape through the Gishwati forest and mentions local people's *Kabuti*, a long coat that they wear to keep warm when pasturing the cows. Kabaradine heard the conversation of some perpetrators, who showed off their "victory," saying that those they killed were all in that cattle herder's coat. In other words, the *Kabuti* coats became an indicator of Tutsi identity, bringing death to its wearers.[29]

As the killers tracked cattle, the cows sometimes distracted them and indirectly saved people who hid nearby, a situation that Alphonse Kabalisa experienced. "The killers had been frightened off and had moved away. They had taken the cows and looted everything. They had gone and sat on a hill. They were so greedy that if they saw a cow they would go and get it, although, not the soldier or high-ranked *Interahamwe*. They took our cows because we had cows there, they took our cows and just left. That is one of the things that saved most of the remaining few survivors."[30] This situation is confirmed by Hutu rescuer Augustin Karemera, who recollects: "We watched them slaughter cattle, their beans plantations were harvested…the banana plantation too…… regarding to destruction of property, whenever they found a Tutsi hiding in a home, if they found the cows, they would take them. Those who would be having cattle would lose it, even though that cattle would have saved the person found in hiding."[31] Most Tutsi cattle owners were

[28] Kamuronsi, Yves. Interview 52039. Segment 147. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 13th Jan. 2011 (The Collection of USC Shoah Foundation). Accessed 14th Jan. 2021.
[29] Kabaradine, Phoebe. Interview 52075. Segment 37. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 29th Sep. 2011 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 25th Nov. 2020.
[30] Kabalisa, Alphonse. Interview 52058. Segment 11. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 18th Aug. 2011 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 23rd Nov. 2020.
[31] A testimony of Augustin Karemera. Genocide Archive of Rwanda. (https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=IBUKA00018&gsearch=)

not that lucky; as described in the previous paragraphs, many people were killed after their cows were slaughtered or looted.

Cattle are an essential part of Tutsi identity, and the connection between Tutsis and their cows goes beyond mere symbolism. The relationship between cattle and humans is significant, as these animals hold more than just economic value. For many Tutsis, cattle represent "a part of life," embodying their meaning of existence. This is evident in the stories of those who chose not to abandon their cows, instead deciding to protect them, even at the cost of their own lives.[32]

Several witnesses report that their Tutsi relatives refused to leave the cattle and ended up being murdered. For example, Emmanuel Muhinda's elder brother died because he wanted to protect the cattle.[33] Julienne Umugwaneza's brother and three uncles were all killed for saving cows. She recalls,

> People who had cattle had refused to leave them behind. When we ran away, they went to hide their cattle with my grandfather's friends……My brother and my three uncles were among those who led the cattle. Those uncles were Gatete, Mugenganya and Kabahaya. Those are the people who led the cattle. There was also Gahonzire. As they took the cattle to those locations, we moved and left them behind. They were killed back home.[34]

[32] I will discuss the connection between the human body and cattle in more detail in the following sections. In this part, we primarily focus on examples related to genocide.
[33] Muhinda, Emmanuel. Interview 52066. Segment 32. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 8th Sep. 2011 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 4th Dec. 2020.
[34] Umugwaneza, Julienne. Interview 52097. Segment 22. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1st Jan. 2009 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 22nd Dec. 2020.

Annonciata Banyangiriki is a Hutu woman who married a Tutsi; she was impressed by some Tutsis' obsession with cattle and told a story about a relative who died for his cows:

> We went to my father-in-law's brother's house. His name was Augustin Icyoribera. We asked him to join us so that we could flee. The Tutsis were crazy about their cattle, so he said that he was not going to leave his cattle behind and flee. He was an older man and he had two sons who were married. They were also killed and their names were Claude Mutanguha and Innocent Rudasingwa. They stayed at their house and they were murdered shortly after that.[35]

Rescuer Karemera tells a similar story; old people wanted the rescuers to save the cows first and refused to abandon the cattle, "…and her parents told me: 'please stay with our cows, if we live, we will share them, and if we die, take care of them!' But I could see that people had started hacking cows for meat! Then I told them: 'They can come and hack them! Let me instead save one person!' I chose to stay with a person, and then they took cows with them, which died with them!"[36]

A History of the Cattle-related Systems

This section explores the history of the relationship between cattle and humans in Rwanda. The focus of this historical study is primarily on the political and economic relations surrounding cattle in the pre-genocide era. It aims to uncover how the political status of cattle evolved and to understand the reasons why cattle were affected during the genocidal events targeting humans.

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[35] Banyangiriki, Annonciata. Interview 55598. Segment 19. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 25th Nov. 2014 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 13th Nov. 2020.
[36] A testimony of Augustin Karemera. Genocide Archive of Rwanda. (https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=IBUKA00018&gsearch=)

While cattle are the most important livestock in Rwanda, the cattle industry had been shrinking since independence, which is mainly because Tutsi, who were primarily cattle keepers, were marginalized in the new state dominated by Hutu politicians. During the violent persecution campaigns against the Tutsi in the 1960s, many individuals fled Rwanda with their cattle, while their lands were subsequently seized by Hutu elites and repurposed for agriculture. Culturally, Hutus prioritize farming. Although some Hutus also keep cows, cattle are largely viewed as just another part of farm life. In her *Killing Neighbors*, Fujii (2009) mentions an informant, who comments that "what distinguished Hutu or Tutsi, it would be that Tutsi really like cows. Hutu like to do other activities, including cows" (p. 112). Between independence and the genocide, the majority of cattle in the country were owned by rural Tutsis.

Traditionally, grazing was the most common method of rearing cattle. However, this practice was gradually replaced by feeding cattle in cowsheds during the pre-genocide decades due to land shortages and rapid agricultural development. In terms of economic value, cattle primarily provide people with milk. Compared with European breeds, Ankole cattle's milk yield is very low (roughly one litre per milking), but Rwandans have been relying on them as a main source of protein for centuries (Isaie et al., 2018, p. 80).[37] Tutsi cattle owners rarely eat their cows. Historically, they only slaughtered cattle for food as a last resort in famines (Verpoorten, 2007, p. 5). Likewise, they would only sell their cows in emergencies. For example, to escape the persecution of the Kayibanda regime, many Tutsis sold their cattle for money to flee to neighbouring countries.[38] For both Tutsi and Hutu communities, cattle hold significant social value.

[37] In recent decades, some European breeds, especially milk cows, were also introduced to this region (Ezeanya-Esiobu et al., 2021, pp. 7-8; Management Entity, 2022, pp. 3-4).

[38] Kayumba, Isidore. Interview 55195. Segment 7. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 19th Jan. 2015 (Kigali Genocide Memorial Collection). Accessed 1st Dec. 2020.

People give and receive cows to build and maintain social connections, such as friendships, family bonds, and marital ties. Many examples of this social capital will be discussed in the following sections.

Cattle and Tutsi have unique bonds. Tutsi people's affection for their cows is often depicted as an obsession. To a degree, this is not hyperbole. Cattle owners usually spend a very long time taking care of their cows every day. Owners and herders can remember each cow's name and pedigree (Isaie et al., 2018, p. 81). Local culture restrains women from milking the cows, though men and women are both allowed to herd and feed cattle. Historically, an average rural Tutsi household would keep dozens of cattle, with some families owning hundreds. However, since the rise of the Hutu regime, cattle rearing has declined. Many Tutsi families adapted to political and economic changes by engaging in both farming and livestock rearing before the genocide, which led to more women entering agriculture. This consequently transformed cattle rearing into a role primarily held by men (Mutimura and Everson, 2012). Many male survivors recall their childhoods spent caring for cows. Given the Tutsi's long-standing affection for cattle, it is not an exaggeration to say that the slaughter of these animals during the genocide was not only brutal for the cows but also inhumane to the human victims involved. One survivor describes her little brother's experience of hiding and witnessing his cows being killed:

> My little brother even now, he has not completely freed himself from what he saw and lived, because when they came to butcher the cows, he was there feeding them with banana tree pieces. When they got into action, he was hiding nearby on a terrace, and his friend advised him to move away for fear that after having finished the cows, they would come to kill him too! So when they butchered our cows, the

poor kid was there, he followed the whole process without making noise! He had always refused to abandon the cows, and today he remembers all those events![39]

To understand why many Hutu perpetrators were so hostile and cruel to Tutsi cows, one must dig deeper into both historical and cultural dimensions to comprehend how Ankole cows functioned in Rwanda's political dynamic, rather than simply seeing cattle as a symbol of Tutsi identity. The following discussion will start with a historical study, which will usher us into the epistemological probe regarding Rwandan cattle's agency in daily interactions.

Rwandan folklore typically asserts that cattle were introduced to the Great Lakes region by Tutsi immigrants from northeastern Africa, while the Hutu are considered the indigenous people who have historically farmed in this area. However, linguistic evidence indicates that interactions between agricultural and cattle-breeding societies date back to the sixth century BC. By the ninth century CE, local languages had developed numerous words and terms related to cattle, most of which have Bantu roots, suggesting that they were not borrowed from foreign cultures (Reid, 2000, pp. 35-38). These findings challenge the notion that cattle and the associated customs were introduced by pastoral populations who invaded more recently. Archaeological discoveries of settlements dating from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries show that cattle breeding was prevalent during this time, and evidence suggests that pastoral and agricultural activities coexisted in the same households (Reid, 2000). Recent archaeological research reveals that pastoralism in Africa, particularly cattle breeding, began in the Sahara region approximately 8,000 years ago, during a time when the Sahara was moist and green. As desertification progressed around 4,500 years ago, cattle breeding started to spread into other regions of Africa (Smith, 2021). By 3,500 years ago,

[39] Mukamutara's testimony. May 22, 2009. The Living Archives of Rwandan Exiles and Genocide Survivors in Canada. (https://livingarchivesvivantes.org/immaculee-mukamutara/)

cattle husbandry had become well-established in East Africa, especially in the Rift Valley area surrounding the Great Lakes (Galaty, 2021; Robertshaw, 2021; Smith, 2021). In addition, another recent study that analyzes archaeological remains, including human bones and pottery shards from various sites in East Africa, has found evidence that local populations were consuming milk and dairy products as early as 3,500 years ago. Interestingly, these groups had not yet developed the genetic adaptation for lactose persistence that is commonly seen in the region's modern pastoralist populations (Bleasdale et al., 2021).

These studies indicate that the narratives regarding the different origins of the Tutsi and Hutu are more recent inventions. Mahmood Mamdani believes that continuous immigration of pastoral groups did take place, but it was far from a mass invasion; he proposes a more moderate version of the migration hypothesis and argues that the immigration was most likely a slow infiltration. Mamdani (2001) references evidence from historian Jan Vansina, highlighting that pastoral and agricultural populations in most Rwandan regions coexisted peacefully before the expansion of the central state, which aligns with the conclusions drawn from archaeological findings (p. 48).

The earliest historical documents about the Great Lakes region date back to the nineteenth century, a time when the kingdom dominated by the Abanyiginya clan was rapidly expanding into neighboring areas. This centralized state emerged from an alliance of several pastoralist chiefdoms that ruled the savanna between Lake Victoria and Lake Kivu, which is the geographical centre of modern-day Rwanda. Since cattle breeding was this kingdom's major mode of subsistence, the institutions related to cattle were also brought to the new territories that the central court occupied. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed this kingdom's most aggressive expansion, which mainly happened in the southern regions and owed much to the reform implemented by

Mwami Kigeri Rwabugiri, the Rwandan monarch of that time (Mamdani, 2001, p. 50). Rwabugiri's administration utilized a three-tier system, consisting of provinces, districts, and hills. The provinces were led by army chiefs, who embodied this kingdom's military-expansionist nature. Provinces were subdivided into several districts, each overseen by a land chief responsible for agricultural production and tributes, and a cattle chief overseeing pastures and livestock. At the lowest administrative level were the hills, managed by hill chiefs, who were the grassroots officials directly interacting with villagers.

During the Rwabugiri reign, the political control across the nation operated through three interconnected components: cattle, land, and labour. The significance of cattle-related institutions was especially notable in regions where the central court had established its influence, such as central and southern Rwanda. While land control primarily focused on extracting profits from agriculture, it was also linked to cattle, as individuals often needed to pay for the right to graze their cows on pastures owned by political elites. Thus, control over land became a means to indirectly control cattle. Labour exploitation primarily affected those who did not own cattle and, therefore, could not pay with cows. These individuals were forced to offer their labour in exchange for political and economic privileges. Additionally, forced labour was connected to cattle ownership, as those unable to afford a cow had to sell their labour to acquire one, if they wanted to improve their economic status. In the early twentieth century, this kind of exploitation gradually evolved into a compulsion exclusive to all non-Tutsi peasants.

For those involved in cattle raising or aspiring to own cows, the most significant political and economic institution was the clientship system known as *ubuhake*. This system allowed individuals of lower status to seek protection from more powerful individuals by forming a patron-client relationship between the two parties. To establish this relationship, the powerful one should

give a cow and grant the usufruct rights of the cow to the inferior, making himself a patron and the latter his client. The patron was responsible for safeguarding the client's properties, such as land and livestock, from theft and other threats. In return, the clients were expected to offer services, such as agricultural labor, to the patron. Jacques Maquet was one of the first to study this clientship system through a functionalist lens. He argued that *ubuhake* acted as a glue in traditional Rwandan society, bonding various social classes into a reciprocal relationship (Maquet, 1961, p. 150). This clientship system not only fostered economic cooperation between pastoral and farming communities but also helped to ease political tensions among different social strata, as anyone could become a client of a superior and, therefore, share some privileges from the latter. Maquet (1961) believes that the system reinforced social hierarchies and contributed to traditional Rwanda's political stability and social cohesion (p. 117).

Maquet's conclusion has come under criticism from political economic scholars, as they accuse the functionalists of failing to see the exploitative nature hidden below *ubuhake*'s reciprocal mechanism. For example, Helen Codere argues that the clientship custom primarily benefited the Tutsi feudal system, allowing the powerful landlords and political elites who were in the minority to dominate the Hutu masses by controlling their properties and labour. Codere (1962) stresses that the clientship was essentially economic repression against Hutus; and that it did not produce cohesion but conflicts (pp. 45-85). This perspective is further supported by the increasingly intense Hutu revolts in the early twentieth century, which ultimately culminated in a nationwide revolution that ended the Tutsi reign.

Rene Lemarchand points out that the conclusions of Maquet and Codere do not contradict each other; instead, their distinctions illustrate regional differences in state expansion and institutionalization. Maquet mainly describes the situation in the central region, where the power

of the Rwandan kings was well consolidated, and the ruling system was strong and stable. The *ubuhake* custom was a crucial aspect of this system, enabling elites to create an effective governing mechanism. This mechanism linked power, rights, and privileges with cattle and pasture ownership, turning the economic strength of Tutsi aristocrats into political capital. This region's army chiefs, land chiefs, and cattle chiefs were held by Tutsis for generations, which allowed the system to keep running without any significant challenges. In many southern communities, however, the clientship and three-layer administrative institutions were not traditional but were introduced by Rwabugiri's state expansion campaign. The central court's strategy was using appointed Tutsi chiefs to replace local hereditary headmen, thereby consolidating the land-cattle-and-labour institutions favourable to the Tutsi regime. Though most southern Hutus were militarily subjugated to Tutsi lords, some local people were still politically loyal and economically affiliated to their traditional community leaders, which hindered the *ubuhake* system from prevailing as it did in the central region. In the country's northern part, where resistant forces were stronger, the feudalization of the indigenous population was considerably slowed down. As a matter of fact, the clientship institution was barely established in this region until Germany controlled Rwanda's administration at the end of the 19th century (Lemarchand, 1966, pp. 592-610).

In *The Cohesion of Oppression*, Catharine Newbury (1988) examines several clientship customs that were practiced in Kinyaga, a southwestern region of Rwanda. Before the introduction of *ubuhake* in the late Rwabugiri reign, Kinyaga's cattle owners practiced a clientship system known as *umuheto*, which Newbury considers a precursor to *ubuhake*. *Umuheto* involved the transfer of cattle; the client should give a cow to the patron at regular intervals, thereby obtaining the latter's protection over both parties' cattle herds. In terms of the direction of the flow of cattle, *umuheto* is reversed from *ubuhake* in that patrons were the cattle givers in the latter custom.

Another difference between the two clientship systems is that *umuheto* clients were always based in familial lineages, whereas *ubuhake* was a contract between individuals (Newbury, 1988, pp. 76-78). In Kinyaga, few Hutus joined cattle clientship; as farmers, they often obtained lands through land-clientship institutions. Landlords were often members of powerful lineages and political authorities, such as king-appointed chiefs. Tutsi and Hutu were both allowed to live and work on *Igikingi* land and become the owners' clients, if they could provide the patrons with some services, such as cattle care, construction, and farming. "Igikingi" refers to the land suitable for cattle grazing; it often contained some farming fields as well. This kind of land was usually granted by the king and held by cattle owners. *Ubuhake* was introduced to these southern communities by the chiefs appointed by Rwabugiri. These chiefs, acting as clients of the king, used the clientship institutions to develop their own clients, thereby gaining effective control over the populations within their administrations (Newbury, 1988, pp. 80-87).

During the late Rwabugiri reign and the era of German colonial rule, Kinyaga's *ubuhake* system quickly developed and gradually replaced the old clientship customs like *umuheto*, thanks to the decline of the local cattle-owning lineages and the increasing insecurity felt among cattle owners. Some cattle owners' traditional *Igikingi* lands were reallocated to new chiefs and partially transformed into farming fields. Additionally, a severe outbreak of rinderpest in the last decade of the nineteenth century led to the complete loss of livestock for some individuals. These political changes and natural disasters created a heightened demand for cattle and grazing land, strengthening the power of the Tutsi elites who dominated cattle and land ownership (Newbury 1988). In this unprecedented situation, individuals wishing to graze cattle had to seek the patronage of pasture owners. Those without cattle but desiring to obtain one could only receive a cow from

a cattle owner by becoming that owner's client, which entailed a regular payment of labour and cattle to the patron.

Newbury argues that by the time Belgium took over Rwanda's administration after World War I, the system of *ubuhake* had transformed from a voluntary custom into a coercive institution. Tutsi chiefs had come to control most of the pastures and farmland in the country. For those who wanted to graze cattle, it was nearly impossible to avoid entering into a clientship arrangement. Hutu peasants, who often had no cattle, were also required to engage in land clientship and participate in various forms of forced labour to serve the Tutsi landlords. This entire clientship practice became integrated into the state's power structure, effectively functioning as a mechanism of control (Newbury, 1988, pp. 118-120). Under the pressure from both domestic and international forces, *ubuhake* was officially abolished in 1954. However, this abolishment did not end the systemic exploitation of the Hutu masses, as land remained in the hands of Tutsi chiefs. By the 1960s, decades of ethnic and economic oppression led to a nationwide revolution that ultimately ended the Tutsi rule.

Tutsi and Power

The history of cattle clientship reveals some important connections between cattle and Tutsi. In Rwanda, cows served as a source of power for those who owned them. Politically and economically, cattle ownership benefited the human groups who raised cows for a living, which in turn affected the way that people defined those groups. Mamdani argues that Tutsi and Hutu are not naturally developed ethnic groups; rather, the two collective identities were the products of political polarization. Before the German and Belgian regimes took control, "Tutsi" referred to

individuals who owned cattle and held power, while "Hutu" denoted the mass of unprivileged peasants. "To be a Tutsi was thus to be in power, near power, or simply to be identified with power——just as to be Hutu was more and more to be a subject" (Mamdani, 2001, p. 57). Rwabugiri's state expansion intensified the distinction between the two groups, as the cattle-owning class began to solidify its status as the ruling class. This trend of political polarization was further entrenched by the Belgian colonial regime, which selected Tutsi elites to serve as the agents of state governance. In 1926, the notorious identity cards were issued to all Rwandans, assigning them permanent ethnic identities and officially categorizing them as "Tutsi" and "Hutu." Based on the dynamics of these identities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mamdani (2001) concludes that Tutsi and Hutu are essentially created political groups that share the same language and many cultural customs (pp. 56-57).

Though Mamdani's theory is original, he is not the first one to question the portrayal of the two groups as distinct ethnicities. Some earlier ethnographers described Tutsi and Hutu as two castes rather than ethnic groups, as their distinction was primarily vocational. Most Tutsis were cattle keepers, and most Hutus were farmers. Though exogamous marriage was allowed, the lineages rarely mixed due to practices of patrilineal inheritance. This system meant that specific professions, among other rights, could only be passed down within the lineages, resembling the caste system of South Asia. However, the caste theory is flawed, as it assumes that the boundary between the two groups is permanently fixed. In reality, several researchers have documented instances in which individuals have shifted their identities between the groups. For example, Fujii interviewed two elderly informants, Sophie and Bernard, who were born into Tutsi families but identified as Hutu after their parents lost most of their cattle. She concludes that a Rwandan's ethnicity depends on his or her socioeconomic status rather than descent (Fujii, 2009, pp. 115-118).

Likewise, Eugenie Mukeshimana (2012), a Rwandan employee at Rutgers University's Center for the Study of Genocide, also reports that Tutsi and Hutu are not ethnic groups but "social classes" because an individual can advance to the Tutsi class by acquiring enough cattle, while they may descend to the Hutu class if they lose their cattle (p. 123).

Mamdani (2001), however, points out that the "social classes" viewpoint and the caste theory have a common problem in that they both assume Tutsi are an economically homogeneous group, overlooking the disparities in wealth among individual Tutsis (p. 47). While the country was governed by Tutsi elites, there were also some "petits Tutsis" whose economic status resembled that of Hutu peasants (Eltringham, 2006, p. 433). This implies that the nature of Tutsi identity experienced a lot of changes in the past centuries and sometimes an individual's mobility between Tutsi and Hutu groups was not always associated to his or her financial status. The discrepancy between the information gathered from interviews and the historical facts emphasized by Mamdani may suggest some regional differences similar to the uneven development of clientship systems. For instance, Newbury notes that the boundaries between these two collective identities did not become rigid until the central court's influence extended to the southwestern region. Prior to that, an individual's social identity was often determined by lineage or neighborhood. This means that in Kinyaga, those who lost wealth could still maintain their Tutsi identity (Newbury, 1988, p. 11).

Most historical data about pre-colonial Rwanda is not based on written records, which presents significant challenges for scholars aiming to portray a clear image of nineteenth-century Rwandan society. Nonetheless, the limited information available provides important clues indicating that the identification of the Tutsi and Hutu populations did not adhere to a consistent criterion prior to Rwabugiri's state expansion. Newbury and Mamdani further argue that these

rigid collective categories were not inherent to Rwandan society but rather imposed by external political forces. Newbury's study was conducted before the genocide. In her book, the Hutu is primarily described as a victim group of political and economic oppression, and the Tutsi-dominated central kingdom was the initiator of this oppression. As Mamdani's study was published after the "victims [had] become killers," he provides a broader historical context and offers deeper insights into Rwanda's national tragedy. He attributes the political polarization of the two identities to both the Rwandan state and the Belgian colonial regime.

I believe Newbury and Mamdani were both well-intentioned when constructing their theories about Rwanda's ethnic conflicts, as they sought to identify powerful outsiders to blame while attempting to preserve an innocent image of a nation afflicted by tragedy. While their conclusions regarding the influence of external political powers are not incorrect, their explanations are incomplete when considering the role of cattle in the Rwandan political landscape. This is evident in the Tutsi's distinct pastoral lifestyle and the widespread slaughter of cows during the genocide against Tutsi. The situation of polarization that Mamdani describes needed to evolve from certain existing power imbalances, and Mamdani did not fully investigate the political dynamics prior to the colonial era. Specific power imbalances and conflicts are necessary conditions for further polarization. This situation began to emerge during the establishment of the Tutsi kingdom. It created an environment that allowed later European colonists to exploit existing social divisions and conflicts, undermining local solidarity and implementing indirect rule. This, in turn, intensified the existing divisions and conflicts to a scale of polarization. As previously discussed, cattle played an important role in the development of Tutsi power, contributing to the formation of these power imbalances. However, Mamdani overlooks this prerequisite for political polarization. Historians like Newbury, who studied Rwabugiri's state expansion, addressed this

issue. However, their anthropocentric perspectives led them to view cattle merely as tools for Rwabugiri's rule, without considering the inherent qualities of cattle that allowed them to play significant roles in human politics.

For readers who are still struggling to understand this political mechanism, I would like to illustrate it with a well-known example from China: the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. This was a peasant movement that arose in opposition to the colonial powers of the West. The targets of the movement included not only Western diplomats and military personnel but also missionaries and clergy. The activities of missionaries in rural China played a significant role in sparking this anti-Western movement, as they became involved in local social conflicts. Feuds were common in Chinese rural communities, often resulting from disputes over farming resources and marriages. Some conflicts between villages and families persisted for generations. When missionaries and churches began to establish congregations, they typically recruited believers through existing family and neighborhood networks. This often led to entire villages coming under the protection of the churches, complicating the already existing conflicts between communities. The churches formed alliances with certain villages, which caused rival communities to view all Christians as adversaries, ultimately fostering an anti-Western sentiment (Esherick, 1987; Di, 2011). The involvement of churches in local conflicts certainly contributed to the peasant uprising; however, the pre-existing tensions also served as a necessary condition for the escalation of these conflicts. Likewise, when examining the political dynamics in Rwanda, it is important to consider the social divisions that existed prior to their polarization during the colonial period.

More specifically, Newbury and Mamdani both focus on how the policies of the Rwandan kingdom and the Belgian regime institutionalized Tutsi and Hutu identities, but they overlook the social divisions prior to these institutionalizations. Due to anthropocentric perspectives, they also

fail to consider the internal dynamics of the pastoral group that shaped their uniqueness and set them apart from the agricultural population. By "internal dynamics," I am referring to a lasting influence inherent in the cattle-power relationship.[40] This internal force is tied to the Ankole cattle and the pastoralist lifestyle, which provided some clans with economic advantages that later translated into political privileges. In a word, this internal force led to the earliest power imbalance and social division.

An anthropocentric view tends to focus primarily on human political dynamics, often neglecting the roles of non-human entities in human politics. As a result, it cannot fully account for the violence against animals during the genocide. In the following discussion, we will adopt anti-anthropocentric perspectives to better understand the violence inflicted on Ankole cows.

Under Mamdani's theoretical framework of political polarization, the act of cattle killing can be viewed as an attack on political symbols. Hutu killers slaughtered the cows because cattle are an embodiment of the Tutsi identity that mostly exists as a concept. While this offers some insight into the motives behind the cattle killings, it does not explain why cattle ownership was originally regarded as a key characteristic of Tutsi identity. It is widely acknowledged that the political identity associated with cattle ownership was one of the outcomes of Rwabugiri's reforms, which intensified the polarization between Tutsi and Hutu. What remains unexplained, however, is why cattle ownership was chosen as the boundary of the two ethnic groups as well as an important indicator of Tutsi identity. Mamdani has found a clue, as he realizes that the foundation of the politicized Tutsi identity lies in the connections with power. Cattle are a source of power. The central kingdom's rise was fueled by pastoralism, and those who owned many cows were

[40] I will provide more details on this issue in the section about Ankole cattle's agency.

granted the power to rule the newly occupied regions. In Rwandan history, the development of the collective identities of "Tutsi" and "Hutu" was dynamic, yet the connection between cattle and power remained a constant factor. In other words, there was a stable relationship between cattle and power; the nature of Tutsi identity depended on how this human group integrated themselves into the cattle-power relationship.

In the beginning, the appellation "Tutsi" seemed to be merely a name of occupation, a tag given to those who raised cattle for a living. Cattle served as a crucial source of sustenance, providing economic strength to their owners and making them wealthier compared to those who had few cattle. As the wealth gap widened, the cattle-rich minority and the cattle-poor majority developed into distinct social classes. Class is never a purely economic category, for financial muscle enables one to manipulate others and therefore produce political relations among people. In this sense, cattle were directly associated with power. *Ubuhake* is the most relevant example of this connection. By transferring cows as usufruct, the patron could control the client's property and exploit his labour. When Rwabugiri occupied a new community, he either ordered his men to seize local pastures and cattle or appointed the locals who owned many cows as his ruling agents, which allowed him to widely implement clientship systems. In this process, what he consolidated was more than a connection between people and power; he was tying his people to the existing bond between cattle and power. At this point, "Tutsi" had transformed from a vocational and economic identity into a political status, for owning cattle was equal to possessing power. If one overly concentrates on this identity's vocational and hierarchical dimensions, he or she could misunderstand it as a caste. Tutsi and Hutu eventually developed into ethnic groups largely because the European colonists inherited Rwabugiri's political legacy and institutionalized Tutsi's political status. When the boundary of two groups is permanently demarcated, it is usually justified by a

variety of "historical proofs" like myths of origin, recollection of lineage, and ritual representation, which ultimately adds ethnicity to the collective identities.

The Agency of Ankole Cattle

So far, we have been using political economic scholars' perspectives to understand the status of cattle in Rwanda. While we have explored the relationship between cattle and power, it is important not to overlook the broader meanings and values that Ankole cows carry. In Rwanda, the history of exchanging cows to establish social connections is much longer than the history of using cattle to rule. People give and receive cows on various occasions, such as payments, marriages, and the formation of friendships. Many individuals share testimonies about how their parents built friendships through cattle exchanges many years ago. For instance, during the genocide, witnesses and their families received help from those friends to whom they had given cows. Newbury documents several non-clientship cattle transfer customs in Rwanda, one of which is called *kugwatiriza*, a practice involving repaying loans with calves. The borrower gives the creditor a bull calf in exchange for a cow. If the cow gives birth to a bull calf, it goes to the creditor; if it produces a heifer, the borrower can choose to keep it and return the original cow to the creditor (Newbury, 1988, p. 231). Cattle exchanges were not exclusive to Tutsis; many Hutus also engaged in the practice to forge covenants with friends. Although the cattle receiver is generally expected to return some of the newly born heifers to the giver, they are allowed to keep the remaining calves for future reproduction (Newbury, 1988, p. 231).

Given that cattle's primary material value lies in milk production, what the borrowers expect to obtain is essentially lasting access to a source of nutrition. Therefore, the act of sharing

cattle can also be seen as a way to share nourishment and energy. Ankole cattle's energy-providing role is not incompatible with our previous conclusion that cattle are a medium of power, because power belongs to the broad category of force, which includes vitality, strength, and political control. In a word, cows are a container of force as well as a vehicle of power. From an epistemological standpoint, adopting an anti-anthropocentric perspective requires recognizing non-humans as active agents that drive social interaction and change. As containers of force, cattle engage in the daily interactions of human actors and facilitate energy exchanges. As vehicles of power, they enable the owners to build financial strength and political influence. Given their economic and political potential, Ankole cattle naturally became desirable possessions for ambitious individuals.

Ankole cattle are more than an animal species; they serve as force containers in human society. However, this non-animality property is not given by human culture; rather, it is generated by the cows' physical features. In "New Guinean Models in the East African Highland," Richard Vokes (2013) examines how cattle act as non-human agents within interpersonal networks in the Great Lakes region societies. He argues that a cow's agency originates in the bovine body that contains huge amounts of blood and water, the same substances found in the human body. Cattle also produce a variety of secretions, such as milk, semen, and saliva. Local people understand that human body fluids carry vitality and energy; thus, they infer that bovine bodies must contain even greater power, especially since cattle are the largest livestock in the area (Vokes, 2009, p. 16; 2013, pp. 105-109). Cattle exchange is popular in local communities because bovine bodies serve as "a significant and powerful vehicle for the transmission of vital substances." (Vokes, 2013, p. 106) The cattle givers view the cows as an extension of their own bodies. They aim to share the vitality present in both human and bovine bodies with the cattle receivers. By using cattle as vehicles, they can facilitate the transfer of this energy in larger quantities.

Vokes' conclusion is based on three sources. The first is the popular understanding in the Great Lakes area of the concept of "the partible person," which is examined in depth by Ugandan medical anthropologist Stella Neema (Vokes, 2013, pp. 98-100). She studies local couples' practices related to impregnation and observes that this is understood as a combination of male and female body parts. The female contributes blood (*eshagama y'omukazi*), while the male provides sperm, or "water of a man" (*amaizi g'omushaija*) (Neema, 1994, p. 66).[41] To ensure the unborn child's health, the mother is advised to drink cold milk to increase her blood, and the husband needs to provide additional sperm to his pregnant wife through regular sexual contact during pregnancy. After the baby is born, the mother continues to transfer blood, which is considered part of her body, to the infant through breastfeeding, as milk is believed to be a transformation of blood (Neema, 1994, pp. 141-146).

Vokes also gained insight into the importance of body fluids to the local people through his fieldwork informants. He recounts a notable instance when he asked a local man to help him take photos of a cow butchering for a wedding. Interestingly, the helper took many pictures of the animal's blood. These photos do not simply capture some blood in the scene. Instead, they completely focus on the blood, "nothing more than a close-up shot of only the blood itself." (Vokes, 2013, p. 106) When asked about his reasons, the helper explained that he wanted to demonstrate how much blood the cow produces, emphasizing that this was a deliberate choice (Vokes, 2013, p. 106). Through the lens of the camera, this man presented a local perspective in a very literal way.

[41] This concept is similar to the traditional Chinese medicine theory regarding pregnancy.

Lastly, Vokes attributes his theory to the earlier work of Christopher Taylor (1999), a medical anthropologist who experienced the beginning stage of the genocide in person and later interviewed many survivors (pp.1-33). Taylor (1988) was the first to suggest that fluids hold extraordinary value and significance within Rwanda's traditional knowledge system. This belief is grounded in the notion that liquids are the most important vehicles of vitality. Several phenomena support this idea: a mother nursing her baby with milk, a husband impregnating his wife with semen, beer providing strength, and rain nourishing the land (Taylor, 1988, pp. 1343-1348). Likewise, young Rwandan men exchange blood to establish brotherhood, and marriages are often symbolized by the giving of cows to the bride's family.

Taylor (1988) argues that an emphasis on fluidity is present in Rwanda's ancient mythologies, where the stories justify kingship by illustrating the Tutsi ancestors' ability to control the process of "flow" (pp. 1344-1345). However, similar to Neema, much of his evidence regarding the significance of fluidity comes from observations and interviews with modern Rwandans. This includes interpretations of various local customs related to childbearing, breastfeeding, and traditional therapies. For example, Taylor observed a Hutu woman named Verediana visiting a traditional healer. Verediana experienced prolonged vaginal bleeding and multiple miscarriages. When describing her conditions, she used several metaphors related to disorderly flow. She believed that her miscarriages occurred because her husband stopped having sex with her during her pregnancy, which she thought cut off the flow of sperm to the unborn child. In the end, the healer concluded that Verediana's condition was caused by a spirit and provided her with herbal medicine to address the issue of excessive menstruation (disorderly flow of blood) (Taylor, 1988, pp. 1346-1347).

A study on traditional veterinary medicine in Rwanda highlights the important role that liquid treatments play in addressing cattle diseases among local pastoralists and veterinarians (Ezeanya-Esiobu et al., 2021, pp. 1-23). This indicates that traditional knowledge related to fluids is deeply intertwined with the practice of cattle breeding. The study identifies twelve types of bovine diseases and their corresponding symptoms, many of which incorporate the management and use of fluids in their treatment. These therapeutic methods include administering plant-based syrups orally, performing bloodletting, and applying hot butter compresses. One method for treating bovine alopecia (*akanyaga*) even involves collecting bodily fluids produced after human sexual intercourse and applying them to the affected areas on the cow's body (Ezeanya-Esiobu et al., 2021, pp. 10-11). According to the study, the most common pharmaceutical method used by Rwandan traditional veterinarians involves pounding herbs into juice and then diluting it with water; 84% of the time, these medicines are administered orally to animals (Ezeanya-Esiobu et al., 2021, p. 8).

I believe that Vokes and Taylor's studies highlight some significant aspects of non-Western knowledge systems, as the appreciation for fluidity is a common theme in various cultures. For example, while Rwandan culture emphasizes the flow of liquids, the Chinese believe that the flow of air is essential for health.[42] Key traditional Chinese medical concepts include *qi* (air or energy), *qi-xue* (air-blood), and *Jingluo* (pathways and channels in the body). Traditional exercises such as Tai Chi and yoga are designed to promote the flow of air, facilitate the movement of energy, and enhance breath control. Acupuncture is believed to be an important treatment to improve the flow of *qi-xue*. In addition to Rwandans and Chinese, South Asians also believe that ghee(oil) can help

[42] Rwanda and China share many similarities. For instance, the Chinese Empire was once ruled by an ethnic minority, the Manchus, which bears a resemblance to the Tutsi kingdom. Therefore, as I read the works of Vokes and Taylor, I experienced a sense of familiarity.

strengthen digestive and respiratory systems. Despite their ancient origins and lack of "scientific support," these fluid-energy-related philosophies continue to impact the actions of modern individuals, highlighting their sociological significance. One can easily see this influence by visiting a popular yoga center, a bustling acupuncture clinic, or a park in Vancouver where Chinese seniors practice Tai Chi every morning.

Back to the issues of Rwanda, bovine bodies produce milk, one of the most nutritious foods, and carry a large number of body fluids; this quality is valued by Rwanda's traditional physiology. As a result, cows are considered to have unique ontological properties within the energy-exchanging networks that include both human and non-human agents. However, from the perspective of anti-representationalism,[43] it is the agency of liquids that enables them to create extraordinary meanings within human culture. This agency refers to their ability to flow, which generates a spontaneous movement that leads people to believe that fluids possess energy. Similarly, cattle, as large carriers of body fluids, also exhibit their own form of agency. The sheer size of bovine bodies influences people's perceptions, leading them to view cattle as the largest containers of force, strength, and power in their world.

Non-human agents not only impact how humans perceive their surrounding but also shape the political activities within the societies of the Great Lakes region. Liquid diets, such as milk, are highly valued, and as a result, the professions that produce liquid foods are regarded as privileged, respectable, and clean (Taylor, 1988, pp. 1344-1345). This dynamic created a caste-like hierarchy between pastoral and agricultural groups in ancient Rwanda. Economically speaking, since cattle-breeding populations dominate the production of the most valuable goods in society,

[43] I have elaborated on the main standpoints of anti-representationalism in "Introduction" and the chapter "The Perception of Genos."

it is naturally easier for them to accumulate economic capital and transform it into a means of political manipulation. This capability is intrinsically linked to the ontological property of cattle as containers of energy. However, in terms of morality, the cattle themselves are not to blame for the class differentiation and oppression present in human society. They become entangled in human political conflicts simply because their unique physical characteristics align with the human interests in substances rich in liquid, much like how gold's luster elicits people's greed.

The anti-representationalist perspective sheds new light on the political-economics-centered theories developed by Newbury and Mamdani. While both scholars describe how a cattle-breeding group gradually seized power, they do not fully explain *why* the group could achieve such a privileged status. By understanding cattle's unique agency, we can better understand the political manipulation that occurred through their use. As Vokes (2013) mentioned, *ubuhake* can be understood as a malicious exploitation of cattle's agency, because all cows transferred from patrons to clients are infertile, whereby the patrons can extend their power over the disadvantaged individuals while simultaneously preventing these individuals from building their own strength (p. 109). The relationship that Mamdani outlines between the Tutsi and power essentially mirrors the connection between cattle and power. Some Tutsi elites gained influence not due to their proximity to political power, but rather due to their closeness to cattle.

Rethinking Cattle Killing in the Genocide

During the genocide, Hutu killers slaughtered Tutsi cows for various reasons. The overarching condition that led to this atrocity was the deep-seated hatred and disdain that the Hutu masses had developed towards the cattle. This attitude was not surprising, considering the longstanding

imbalanced power relations enabled by cattle ownership that had persisted for generations. As Hatzfeld (2005) puts it:

> Farmers at heart, Hutus consider cattle rearing an unjustifiable luxury in an overpopulated country of arid slopes. They disdain cattle even more so given that, before the Republic, they symbolized all the power of the Tutsi kings, who did not hesitate, during festivities, to parade for days on end vast herds of cattle, horns embellished with grease, like others parade their armies. (p. 40)

While some points in Hatzfeld's observation may be debatable, he accurately captures a prevailing public sentiment from the pre-genocide period. However, contrary to Hatzfeld, it is important to note that cattle should not simply be viewed as a symbol of power. Rather, cattle were dragged into the power networks of the human world and became a means of exercising power. Cattle acted as containers and vehicles of energy and vitality, forming a crucial cultural and political foundation that supported the old Tutsi regime.

The decline of the cultural and economic significance of cattle began long before the genocide. During the final stage of Belgian colonial rule, the government abolished all clientship institutions related to cattle and implemented a plan to prioritize agriculture, particularly the development of cash crops such as coffee beans. This new economic strategy aimed to address Rwanda's severe shortage of arable land, which was a pragmatic decision given the country's small size and high population density. The policies established by the Belgians were carried on by the Hutu regimes after independence. As the liberation of the Rwandan people was led by Hutu politicians, the independence of the state was deemed a victory for peasants, which the Hutu authorities were anxious to safeguard. Consequently, they made large efforts to transform the country into an agricultural nation. Under Kayibanda's rule, this goal was partially achieved as a

by-product of his regime's violent ethnic cleansing against Tutsi. Thousands of Tutsis were forced to flee to other countries; they also took their cattle away, leaving many grazing lands behind for the Hutu authorities to seize (Mukimbiri, 2005, p. 830). During the decline of the cattle population, the years of the First Republic saw a notable increase in farmland. By the time Habyarimana came to power, traditional pastoralism had nearly disappeared. Most of the remaining cattle were kept in ranches and cowsheds, with only a small number allowed to graze in limited pastures.

Although Habyarimana's regime was relatively peaceful in terms of policies impacting Tutsi, Philip Verwimp (2013) argues that this president's pro-agriculture ideology played an important role in the violence against Tutsi cattle owners during the genocide. Habyarimana believed that the new Rwanda should be a peasant state, with increased agricultural production as the key to addressing the country's demographic challenges. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that all peasants were committed to farming and that every piece of land in the country was utilized for agricultural purposes. Habyarimana's administration encouraged peasants to migrate between rural regions to occupy more land for cultivation, which gradually depleted the remaining grazing lands reserved for cattle. Verwimp (2013) concludes that the entire reign of the Second Republic can be described as a social engineering that integrated the country's population and resources into an agrarian order (p. 121). In this blueprint for a strong peasant state, there was no place for a pastoral population. Tutsis were classified as feudalists and bourgeois; their traditional cattle-rearing methods were regarded as an inefficient way to use the land (Verwimp, 2013, p. 42). In other words, the pastoral population was like the garden weed that depletes the nutrients in the soil; they therefore must be eradicated for the implementation of the great plan of agricultural extensification. Verwimp believes that a series of massacres targeting pastoral communities between 1990 and 1992 was the rehearsal of the later large-scale genocide against

the entire Tutsi population, for all of the incidents shared the same pattern. Tutsi pastoralists were described as groups hatching sinister plans to overthrow the peasant state, and young Hutus indoctrinated by Habyarimana's agricultural ideology were instigated to wipe out the communities. According to Verwimp (2013), the government's true intent behind the violence was to seize those people's pastures and transform them into farming land (pp. 121-123).

Scholars of genocide studies notice that the violence against Tutsi was significantly fueled by the propaganda broadcasts that spread anti-Tutsi ideologies. The political narratives in the propaganda painted the Tutsi people as pests that invaded the country and tried to destroy it from the inside. The word "inyenzi" (cockroaches) was frequently used to describe the Tutsis who immigrated to Rwanda after the revolution and those who came with the RPF troops. The obsolete anthropological theory (the Hamitic hypothesis) that traces the origin of the Tutsi to the mythical Hamite race was also adopted by Hutu politicians, who redefined the concept of Hamite (ancient Tutsi) and portrayed them as foreign colonizers (Eltringham, 2006, pp. 434-435).[44] Habyarimana's agricultural ideology further implied that Tutsis were not only invaders but also thieves, for they made no contribution to agricultural production but continuously consumed the country's land resources through their pastoral lifestyle. Cattle were regarded as Tutsis' most threatening weapon to destroy the peasant state. For example, in his examination of Rwandan popular music from the pre-genocide period, Jason McCoy finds that cattle are mentioned in the lyrics and serve as a metaphor for the Tutsi invasion. In the song "Bene Sebahinzi" (Brothers and Sisters of the Farmer), the lyrics read: "If I could have a daring child and another with fast feet, so that I can send them to Muhinzi(farmer), he who saved the farmers by chasing away the cattle breeders of Mwima and Muschirarungu (Tutsi royal family's hills) who prevented Gashaka from farming." According to

[44] It is worth noting that Newbury also classifies Tutsi kingdom's expansion as colonialism.

McCoy (2009), the lines of the following lyric describe a dream in which all the sorghum plants are eaten by cows; he interprets that this scene implies the Hutu's harvest is being stolen by the Tutsi (pp. 90-91). Reportedly, the radio propaganda produced significant influence, and the effect was reflected by many atrocities in the genocide, ranging from killing Tutsis with farm tools to slaughtering and eating the victims' cattle (Baisley, 2014, pp. 46-47).

Verwimp's studies on the Rwandan genocide are characterized by a perspective of economic rationality. He argues that, among various Tutsi properties, the asset that Hutu perpetrators coveted the most was land. The desire for land motivated the Hutu peasants to participate in the violence and made many of them killers (Verwimp, 2005, p. 319). Though focusing on the conflicts of agricultural resources, this theory is not irrelevant to the atrocities against cattle, as it explains why most cows were killed on the spot, rather than being seized and taken to Hutu households.[45] In other words, the evidence shows that the massacres of cattle were not motivated by economic gain, but rather by irrational motives, similar to a crime of passion. While many cows were consumed shortly after being slaughtered, the primary goal of the killers was not to obtain meat. If that had been the case, they would have retained most of the cattle for breeding purposes.

Taylor (1999) points out that the role of crime of passion and the emotional factors of perpetrators are frequently overlooked in studies of the Rwandan genocide (pp. 29-33). This aspect should not be ignored, as these emotional actions, although they may seem irrational, are often influenced by cultural scripts, such as the "Hamitic hypothesis" mentioned earlier.[46] Many inciting

[45] According to the survivor testimonies, cattle looting did happen in some communities, but it was on a smaller scale compared to cattle-killing.

[46] The hatred toward Tutsi was justified by the narratives about the Hamite, a fabricated racial group that invaded the Hutu land.

political discourses, collective violence, and techniques of cruelty that occurred in the genocide embodied Rwandan popular concepts regarding fluidity and the human body as a conduit (Taylor, 1999, pp. 128-136).[47] For example, during the anti-Hutu campaigns in Burundi and the Rwandan genocide against Tusti, the most brutal form of death penalty was the practice of impalement. The victims were impaled from the anus or vagina to the mouth with a wooden pole or a spear, leading the conduits in their bodies to be obstructed. In the 1994 genocide, similar atrocities included emasculation of Tutsi men and breast ablation of Tutsi women, which were thought to be measures to terminate the ability to reproduce and transfer body fluids. Perpetrators also forced Tutsi victims to commit incest with their children before killing them, which was thought to cause blood and semen to flow backward (Taylor, 1999, pp. 137-141). As Michel Foucault (1995) notes, bodies frequently become targets of political violence. The tortures inflicted upon these bodies reveal the perpetrators' perceptions of the ontological properties of both the bodies and their owners. Consequently, while acts of torture and other atrocities may seem emotional, they are actually driven by ideological frameworks, such as ontologies, moral beliefs, and symbolic relations. It is worth noting that similar phenomena were also observed in the Cambodian genocide, as the Khmer Rouge employed traditional Cambodian concepts like "sângsoek"(pay back enemy) to incite people's hatred toward "class enemies" and to obliterate their "faces" (honour) by decapitation (Hinton, 2004, pp. 66-93).

From an anti-anthropocentric perspective, the bodies as the targets of political violence include not only human bodies, but also bovine bodies. The cows were killed largely because of their associations with Tutsi. For many Hutu killers, cattle are an extension of the Tutsi group; the

[47] Taylor (1999) stresses that he wants to highlight one of the dimensions of the Rwandan genocide, which was largely underestimated by previous scholars; he has no intention to propose a simplistic theory that the process of the genocide was solely determined by cultural and symbolic factors (p. 102).

historical narratives in the propaganda told them that Tutsi occupied, dominated, and disintegrated this peasant country by the power drawn from cattle ownership, which gave the Hutu perpetrators a reason to kill the animals. Killing cattle was neither one of their main intents nor a preplanned goal; rather, it was the hostility toward Tutsi, the greed for their assets, and the fear of losing privileges that drove many Hutu peasants and militia soldiers to commit the crimes against the innocent cattle owners, which ultimately brought disaster to the victims' cows.

The anti-Tutsi ideology was organized with an anthropocentric logic, for the primary target was the victim group's human members; the cows were merely deemed to be the former's weapons, means, and symbols. However, it is reasonable to infer that some cattle killers had sinister motives aimed at destroying the vitality and energy that the Tutsi derived from cattle, given the broader influence of traditional Rwandan culture. Although Taylor explains the underlying reasoning behind the violence against bodies, his argument still operates within a representationalist framework. He argues that this violence was perpetrated due to specific symbolic relationships, suggesting that the attackers targeted their victims' bodies because these bodies symbolize energy containers and conduits (Taylor, 1999, p. 111-112). From an anti-representationalist perspective, I want to highlight that the perpetrators' intentions were not merely to vandalize symbols but to inflict real harm on the victims' vitality and energy. Once we recognize the agency of cattle and their ontological role as energy containers, it becomes clear that the victimization of cattle stemmed from these human killers' perception of cattle as possessing agency and certain non-animality ontological properties. In other words, the murderers were also aware that cattle are the vehicles of power and containers of energy.

Taylor's focus on representationalism highlights the influence of Cartesian philosophy. In contrast, anti-representationalism is common in many non-Western cultures. A good example can

be found in China's geomantic concept of "fengshui" (wind-water). According to this philosophy, the shape of the landscape and the arrangement of objects, such as rocks, rivers, and the doors and windows of buildings, can generate specific energy or power that affects the fortune of nearby residents. Consequently, when people wish to undermine their adversaries, they often consult geomancers to disrupt fengshui by damaging particular rocks or altering the flow of water. It is important to note that during this practice, people are not merely vandalizing symbols of power and energy; rather, their intention is to directly attack the power and energy themselves. When the Hutu killers murdered those Tutsi cattle, they might carry a similar intention.

I want to emphasize that the discussion above reveals only one dimension of the cattle-related violence. During the genocide, the victimization of cattle was caused by a variety of factors. As the previous paragraphs illustrate, historical narratives surrounding Tutsi privileges, the anti-Tutsi propaganda from Hutu regimes, and Habyarimana's agricultural ideology all played significant roles in inciting hatred toward cattle. However, these broader frameworks provide little insight into the individual motivations of the perpetrators. Beyond the economically rational motive to loot private property, it remains unclear what emotions and underlying ontological logic drove the Hutu killers to harm the cattle. Therefore, this section of the discussion prioritizes an anti-anthropocentric perspective, aiming to uncover how the agency of cattle within human society provoked emotions and motivations related to political conflicts, ultimately leading many individual perpetrators to inflict violence upon these animals.

From the perspective of anti-representationalism, we can reflect not only on the intentions of the perpetrators but also on the nature of the victim group. As discussed earlier, the term "Tutsi" was not fixed; it evolved over time. In contrast, the relationship between cattle and power, force, and energy remained consistent. This stable connection is influenced by the agency of cattle, which

aligns with the Rwandan culture that values liquid's fluidity. Those who are close to cattle will gain power and strength in human political life. In other words, the advantages of political influence were inherent in the cattle-rearing lifestyle; those who owned cattle were destined to become privileged groups in the Great Lakes region.

The institutionalization of the name "Tutsi" was a very late invention in the pastoralist regime's expansion. In comparison to the characteristics associated with cattle, the name itself holds little significance for the identity of the Tutsi people. Whether this name was borrowed from existing groups or created recently, it simply serves as a label for a community that had already developed their collective features prior to adopting the name. Although identity construction is a cultural practice that involves selecting group boundaries and indicators, this selection is not entirely arbitrary; it must adhere to existing relationships, features, and patterns. In the Great Lakes region, cattle have historically been a key element for the privileged political groups and have been associated with them long before they were called Tutsi. Therefore, I cannot fully agree with Mamdani's argument that Tutsi was artificially constructed as a political status. This politically privileged group had always existed; their power was derived from cattle husbandry. As they rose to political prominence and expanded their influence, they continued to ally with others who also had advantages related to cattle. Their power was inseparable from the agency of cows. Tutsi was indeed a political status, but this attribute is not a cultural construction; rather, it arises from the group's lasting relationship with cattle.

Under the new circumstance where modern agriculture gradually replaced traditional pastoralism and state propaganda instigated fear and hatred against the groups associated with the old pastoral social order, cows were doomed to become the victims of political violence. Anti-representationalism challenges anthropocentrism and allows us to examine cattle's role in

Rwandan political history and to reflect on Tutsi's groupness, which brings us to a broader conclusion regarding the relations between humans and non-human beings. The Rwandan case demonstrates that "Tutsiness", Tutsi's groupness, is an assemblage of both human social members and non-human elements, and the latter is more than some symbols of collective identity. The agency of non-humans may play a crucial role in driving group development and shaping groups' lifestyles and political powers. Therefore, the violence against Tutsi cattle should not be seen merely as property damage or vandalism against symbols. Instead, this atrocity directly harmed the victim group's essence, which is the most important element that binds its human and non-human components together in a social and cultural context.

This case study highlights the phenomenon of cattle-killing during the Rwandan genocide. Based on evidence from survivor testimonies and court records, I have illustrated the atrocity of killing Tutsi cattle and its consequences for the victims and Rwandan society. I have also examined several important cattle-related institutions that developed before Rwanda's independence, revealing the historical connections between cattle ownership and political control. The discussion then shifts to an anti-anthropocentric perspective that emphasizes the unique agency of Ankole cattle. These animals serve as vehicles of power and containers of energy for local communities. Cattle provided significant financial and political advantages to cattle-raising groups, allowing them to exert control over land and labour, which in turn created a privileged class. In this way, the agency of Ankole cattle contributed to the division of group identities. The mass slaughter of cattle during the Rwandan genocide was influenced by several factors, particularly Habyarimana's extreme anti-pastoralist ideology and propaganda. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that the historical association between Ankole cattle, power, and Tutsi privilege played a significant

role in inciting hatred toward Tutsi and their cattle. By emphasizing the agency of cattle, this chapter illustrates the first dimension of anti-representationalism.

Chapter Three: Seeing Like a Yak (Part I): Historical Background

An Outline of the Study

The communist regimes of the twentieth century caused significant humanitarian crises and man-made disasters, resulting in millions of deaths among the populations that they governed. One of the most notorious events was the Cambodian genocide, during which two million people perished in the killing fields and security prisons of the Khmer Rouge. In addition to torture and executions, starvation was often a major factor in the mass deaths in these communist countries. In the early 1930s, the Soviet Union's first five-year plan led to severe famines in Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Likewise, China's Great Leap Forward from 1958 to 1960 resulted in a devastating famine that lasted three years. The Great Chinese Famine is estimated to have caused the deaths of more than 30 million people, making it the deadliest famine in human history (Becker, 1996, p. 438; Yang, 2012, pp. 413-450). While the majority of the victims were Han Chinese living in the eastern regions, the Tibetan population and other ethnic groups in the western provinces, particularly Qinghai, were also severely affected. Thousands of people starved to death (Bianco, 2021, pp. 175-191). Furthermore, for many Tibetan communities, the famine marked the final blow to their existence. Prior to the Great Leap Forward, these Tibetans had already been targeted by a violent movement aimed at dismantling their traditional political systems and lifestyles.

This study examines the collectivization campaigns imposed by the Chinese government on Tibetan regions between 1956 and 1962, with a particular focus on communities that raised yaks and other livestock for their livelihoods. The collectivization of livestock deprived pastoralists of stable means of subsistence, and their resistance to the campaign resulted in the

confiscation of additional animals and significant loss of human life. Several massacres of civilians occurred amid the conflicts. Due to poor management, a large number of collectivized livestock also died in state and military ranches, leading to widespread famine in various Tibetan areas. The famine experienced in these animal-breeding regions mirrored the great famine that occurred in nomadic Kazakhstan 30 years earlier.

These famines illustrate not only the disastrous consequences of poorly planned social engineering but also the failure of communist states to integrate ethnic minorities into unified socialist systems. Both Russia and China were empires that occupied vast territories, encompassing numerous ethnic groups and significant cultural diversity. For imperial rulers, integration was not a priority. As long as the conquered ethnic groups maintained political and military submission to the emperors, the dominant nations typically tolerated their cultural and religious independence; at times, they even granted these groups political autonomy. However, when these old empires transitioned into modern states, the need for integrating multi-ethnic societies became urgent, particularly in centralized and totalitarian regimes. Effective governance in a modern state often requires firm control over all regions within its territory, which can conflict with the interests of local ethnic groups that previously enjoyed considerable autonomy. This situation frequently escalates into violence. Even though some empires collapsed into pieces and the new governments did not have to face the challenge of integration, ethnic conflicts still broke out and led to mass death. The Armenian Genocide that took place in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was a typical example. To establish an ideal nation-state in Turkey, the Young Turks implemented a policy of exclusion, aiming to eliminate and expel the Armenians and other non-Muslim populations within their territory. In contrast, Russia and China chose a path of inclusion, as both sought to retain the previously oppressed ethnic groups within their new

republics, aiming to assimilate them. Thus, integration became a primary objective for both countries.

In this study, I focus on the collectivization campaigns in China's Tibetan regions, delving into the violent processes and disastrous consequences of state efforts to assimilate peripheral ethnic groups. I analyze these events within the framework of internal colonization, using both cases as examples of this phenomenon. Since the campaigns failed to achieve lasting and stable integration, I discuss the reasons for their lack of success. Furthermore, I examine the genocidal effects that these failed state projects had on local nomadic communities and their environments, particularly the severe mortality rates among livestock. While my main focus is on the reform in the nomadic Tibetan regions, I also provide an appendix[48] on the great famine in Kazakhstan, which may help readers better understand the characteristics of the collectivization movements in communist countries.

The study titled "Seeing Like a Yak" is divided into two consecutive chapters: "Historical Background" and "Why a State's Internal Colonization Fails." This structure was designed with the understanding that the collectivization campaigns in China and other communist countries are unfamiliar topics for many Western readers. Therefore, I provide extensive information to help readers grasp the context and processes surrounding these events, which is covered in Part I (Chapter Three). This chapter primarily introduces the process of collectivization, as well as the ideologies behind the movement. The three sections that follow also provide a detailed description of the Tibetan communities that this study examines, as well as the campaigns launched by the

[48] Appendix 1.

Chinese government to eliminate traditional social and political institutions and nomadic lifestyles. In this part, there is relatively less content about yaks compared to Part II.

The second part of the study (Chapter Four) examines the violent processes involved in the collectivization campaigns and the disastrous outcomes that followed. It explores the suffering of Tibetan nomads and yaks from a perspective that connects them with the environment. The next chapter also includes significant discussion about the relationships between famine and genocide, internal colonization, and the interactions of non-state societies with more than human agents and their environments. I consider these campaigns to be an internal colonial project that ultimately failed to assimilate ethnic minorities. Instead, they resulted in severe genocidal effects, including massive deaths, environmental damage, and widespread famine. In Part II's final two sections, my analysis focuses on the role that the environment played in the conflicts between the state and nomadic communities. I draw primarily from James Scott's studies on nonstate societies and Tim Ingold's theory regarding the dwelling perspective to explain the tragedies inflicted on the nomads and their livestock by the communist regimes (Ingold, 2000; Scott, 1998, 2009). People in nomadic societies, particularly those living in highland areas, tend to evade state control and maintain highly mobile lifestyles. This mobility requires unique environmental conditions, such as vast pastures, rugged terrains, and specific livestock capable of long-distance migration. The intertwinement of lifestyle and environment clashes with the state's preference for clarity and simplicity, leading to the failure of state projects aimed at forcibly integrating these peripheral groups. This contradiction also sheds light on the significant mortality among animals during the internal colonization that targeted human nomads.

In Appendix 1, I provide a brief overview of the Kazakh Famine. Scholars have made significant progress in researching this topic, and there are many similarities between the famines in Kazakhstan and the Tibetan Plateau. Notably, both famines occurred in nomadic societies rather than agrarian ones. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union (USSR), many government archives became accessible for academic studies. This development allowed scholars focusing on Ukrainian and Kazakh studies to gather extensive information about the USSR's policy-making processes and to develop new insights regarding the two famines that resulted from Stalin's first five-year plan. While research on the Ukrainian Famine is well-known among academics studying state atrocities, human rights, and genocide, the exploration of the Kazakh Famine is still in its early stages, with only a few academic publications dedicated to it (Cameron, 2018; Kindler, 2018; Pianciola, 2001, pp. 237-251; Pianciola, 2004, pp. 137-191; Sabol 2017).

Nonetheless, the existing studies on the Kazakh Famine provide valuable contributions to this and the next chapters' discussion, especially considering that most Chinese archival documents produced after 1949 remain inaccessible for research purposes. This limits our ability to fully understand the collectivization campaigns in China's ethnic regions. The Kazakh Famine and the famine in Tibetan areas were similar in that both were caused by the collectivization of nomadic groups by communist regimes. Given the parallels between the two events, a detailed examination of the Kazakh Famine can enhance readers' understanding of the collectivization in communist countries, including the underlying ideologies, as well as the common strategies and phases. This understanding may also lay the groundwork for comparing famines across different societies.

As mentioned earlier, the primary challenge in studying China's collectivization campaigns in its Tibetan regions, as well as the armed conflicts that arose from this reform, is the lack of primary materials. Archival access to government documents from the collectivization period is

unavailable in mainland China. Most scholars must rely on official publications such as local chronicles or gazetteers. China's elite class has a tradition of producing local gazetteers, which dates back to the imperial age. The communist government inherited this tradition and expanded it to include most ethnic areas that previous regimes could not directly control. However, since these publications are government-endorsed and authored by local authorities, the information they present and the perspectives they convey are often biased and serve propaganda purposes of the state. For instance, the collectivization movement and the counterinsurgency campaigns that caused significant harm to ethnic communities are portrayed as economic successes and military triumphs. In the relevant chapters of local gazetteers, these events are celebrated as revolutionary achievements of the communist regime.

Chinese American historian Jianglin Li was the first to systematically examine the conflicts between the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of communist China and Tibetan insurgents during the collectivization period. Her study mainly relied on China's official publications, such as local gazetteers and the memoirs of military personnel.[49] Li (2012; 2022) provides detailed timelines and descriptions of the battles in different provinces in *When the Iron Bird Flies*. This book has become one of the most important sources for the research related to China's Democratic Reform.[50]

[49] As I was drafting this chapter, I received the sad news that Jianglin Li passed away from cancer on Christmas Eve of 2024. Since Li's works are full of her personal admiration for Tibetan culture and the Dalai Lama, her studies can hardly be classified as serious scholarship. Nevertheless, her books provide valuable information about China's collectivization movement, the conflicts between Tibetan communities and PLA troops, and the Dalai Lama's exile. Much of the information presented is primary data and appears for the first time in her writings, making her works important sources for examining the history of the Chinese collectivization movement.

[50] The Chinese government uses the terminology "Democratic Reform" to refer to the collectivization in ethnic areas because its goal was to "make people the masters of their own destiny," which implies that the movement's primary targets were the "upper class" within the minority societies, such as headmen and religious leaders. In Han Chinese regions, the collectivization in rural areas was called "Land Reform", suggesting that the movement's central task was eliminating landlords and re-distributing farming lands.

Benno Weiner's recent publication, *The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier*, which is based on his PhD dissertation, represents another significant contribution to the study of China's collectivization movement in Tibetan areas. Weiner concentrates on the Democratic Reform in Zêkog (*rtse khog*), a small county in the province of Qinghai, where he conducted fieldwork. His study highlights the importance of the United Front, a negotiatory strategy that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) frequently employs to transform potential opponents into allies. Weiner (2020) argues that the United Front served as the central guideline for local cadres dealing with ethnic affairs until 1958, when it was replaced by more impatient and radical directives demanding swift completion of collectivization. In a related work, Felix Wemheuer's *Famine Politics in Maoist China and the Soviet Union* compares the Great Chinese Famine and the Ukrainian Famine. The book's third part addresses the famine in Tibetan regions, which was one of the tragic consequences of the invasion of the PLA and the collectivization campaigns launched by the communist government (Wemheuer, 2014). Likewise, Lucien Bianco's "The 1958-62 Chinese Famine and Its Impact on Ethnic Minorities" also focuses on the Chinese famine within this country's ethnic areas, classifying it as an essential aspect of China's internal colonialism (Bianco, 2021).

Similar to the studies mentioned above, my examination primarily relies on information from official publications. In addition to the local gazetteers that many scholars use as primary data sources, I gathered information from two additional collections of publications. The first collection is the "Reports of the Social and Historical Survey of Ethnic Minorities." From the early 1950s to the late 1960s, the Chinese government organized several survey teams made up of ethnologists and linguists, sending them to investigate minority communities. These surveys were heavily influenced by Marxist doctrines, with investigators required to adopt the Soviet Union's

definitions of ethnicity and related criteria to identify each ethnic group. The survey teams also employed Marxist economics, particularly class theory, to analyze interpersonal relationships and economic activities within these ethnic societies. Depending on when the investigations were conducted, these surveys either prepared for the Democratic Reform or helped evaluate its outcomes. Although these social and historical survey reports reflect a strong communist ideology, they still provide valuable insights into the lifestyles of local people before the reform. As a result, they are useful sources for my study. Local gazetteers and the reports from the Social and Historical Survey are typically compiled by editing committees rather than individual authors. To avoid redundant citations, I will use abbreviations for these titles and provide a legend in Appendix 2.

The second special collection is *Wenshi Ziliao* (Historical Accounts of Past Events); these journal-like publications are edited and issued by local Political Consultative Conferences (PCC). In China's political system, the PCC functions similarly to the upper house in Western parliamentary systems, comprising successful businessmen, former high-level officials, writers, artists, and local celebrities as its members.[51] The editors of *Wenshi Ziliao* organize interviews with witnesses of significant historical events or commission articles from them, publishing these journals periodically. The stories within *Wenshi Ziliao* are either narrated by individuals who personally experienced important historical events or authored by their descendants. These periodicals serve as collections of personal memoirs and oral histories, providing valuable sources for studying past events and social changes, especially in an environment where official archival documents are inaccessible.

[51] Unlike the representatives of the People's Congress (the Chinese version of the House of Commons), members of the PCC are nominated rather than elected. In practice, the elections for the People's Congress are often manipulated. Under the CCP-controlled political system, both the PCC and the People's Congress function as "rubber stamps." However, in theory, the National People's Congress has more legislative power than the PCC.

In addition to the secondary sources mentioned above, this study also relies on some primary data. From 2012 to 2013, I conducted fieldwork in Songpan, a county located in Sichuan Province. This county is part of the Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, an administrative region consisting of 12 counties. During the imperial period, the county seat of Songpan served as the largest garrison town in the area, with its jurisdiction extending over today's Ngawa Prefecture and parts of neighboring provinces. Since this large region is the home of numerous Tibetan communities and other ethnic groups, it experienced severe impact and loss during the Democratic Reform. Due to the political climate in China; however, I was unable to investigate the violence during the collectivization period or the deaths caused by famine. Therefore, my fieldwork could only focus on some general ethnographic themes, such as religious rituals and folklore. Despite these restrictions, I successfully collected many local documents and oral history related to this region's political systems and military conflicts before the communist era, representing an outlook of the local lifestyle before the reform. Some of this data will be used in the study presented in this part, while the analysis in this research is new.

Other than the challenges posed by research materials, another significant issue is the romanization of Tibetan words, which can be done in three different ways. The Wylie transliteration system, created by Turrell V. Wylie in 1959, utilizes 26 Latin letters and their combinations to represent Tibetan letters and the spelling of Tibetan words. This method is widely accepted in international Tibetan studies. As Wylie transliteration mainly focuses on spelling rather than accurately reflecting Tibetan pronunciation, China has developed its own system known as Tibetan pinyin. The term "pinyin" literally means "spelling sound" and is the official system for transcribing the sounds of Chinese characters into the Latin alphabet. China applies a similar method to Tibetan words and develops Tibetan pinyin. It is said that this system prioritizes

representing Tibetan words' pronunciation instead of the spelling. Now, most Chinese government agencies and documents use Tibetan pinyin when romanizing Tibetan terms. The third method of romanization employs Chinese pinyin to represent Tibetan words. Many older Chinese documents use Chinese characters to convey the sounds of Tibetan place names and personal names without providing the original Tibetan spellings. As a result, these words are often romanized based solely on their Chinese pronunciations.[52]

In this study, I primarily use Tibetan pinyin to present the names of places and famous historical figures to maintain consistency with the Chinese literature on which this research relies. When Wylie transliteration is available for these names, I will provide it in brackets. For less well-known locations and individuals, if the Tibetan spelling is not available, I will use Chinese pinyin for transcription.

History and Geography of the Tibetan Regions in Question

China's transformation from an empire to a communist state followed a trajectory similar to that of Russia, but it included a chaotic intermediate period between the imperial and communist regimes. After the Qing Dynasty, ruled by the Manchus, was overthrown in the 1911 revolution, China became a republic dominated by a weak Nationalist government (Kuomintang) [53] and numerous local warlords fighting for control. The peripheral ethnic regions that had been subjected to the Chinese Empire took different political paths. The Chinese government sought to integrate

[52] Take the Ngawa Prefecture mentioned earlier as example, "Ngawa" is Tibetan pinyin; the original Tibetan word's Wylie transliteration is "rnga ba"; its Chinese pinyin is "Aba".
[53] "Kuomintang" translates to the Chinese Nationalist Party. It began as a political organization focused on overthrowing the Qing Empire and the rule of the Manchu. This party later established the Republic of China, a parliamentary state primarily led by Han Chinese.

Xinjiang into the new republic by aligning with several powerful local warlords as its ruling agents. In contrast, Outer Mongolia sought assistance from the Soviet Union and successfully shed Chinese control, becoming an independent communist country in 1924.[54] Inner Mongolia, however, remained a province of China. Since Tibet's submission to the Chinese Empire was largely ceremonial, the 13th Dalai Lama (1876-1933) declared Tibet's independence at the onset of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. For the next 40 years, Lhasa's theocratic government maintained substantial independence from China, although Tibet's statehood received little international recognition during that period. The Republic of China also refused to acknowledge Tibet's independence.

After 1928, China's Nationalist government gradually gained control over territories occupied by the Han Chinese and effectively suppressed the rising communist armed forces. However, this political and military success was interrupted by Japan's invasion in 1937. After World War II, the Soviet Union re-armed the Chinese communist troops, enabling them to attack the armies of the Republic of China from their bases in Manchuria. This marked the beginning of a full-scale civil war. The communists along with their "Liberation Army" won the war and forced the Nationalist government to retreat to Taiwan. In October 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was officially established on the mainland. The communist government then ordered its armies to advance into the ethnic regions and take control of the western frontiers, leading to military campaigns that soon reached Tibet. After a few weak attempts at resistance, Lhasa surrendered. By 1951, Tibet was once again brought under China's control.

[54] After World War II, under Soviet pressure, China officially recognized Mongolia's independence.

The Tibetan civilization significantly influenced the cultures of East and South Asia. From 618 to 842 AD, the Tibetan Kingdom emerged as a formidable military power and a prosperous center of religions, with its territory extending into central China. In 763, the Tibetan army invaded China and captured Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. Although the Tibetan Kingdom collapsed in the mid-ninth century, it left behind numerous Tibetan-speaking populations in the provinces between Tibet and central China, including Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Yunnan.

Figure 1: Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Yunnan in China

Figure 2: Tibet, Kham, and Amdo (Li, 2022, map 2)

Today, the Tibetan cultural landscape is divided into three major geographic regions: Ü-Tsang (central Tibet), Kham, and Amdo. When most people refer to Tibet today, they are typically speaking about the region of Ü-Tsang, which roughly corresponds to the area of the Tibet Autonomous Region governed by the People's Republic of China. Kham encompasses the Tibetan areas of western Sichuan, including the Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, as well as some Tibetan communities in Yunnan and southern Qinghai.[55] Amdo primarily consists of the Tibetan regions in Qinghai and Gansu, along with some Tibetan communities in northern Sichuan. Currently, there are six Tibetan autonomous

[55] The Ngawa Prefecture includes a Ngawa County, and the Garzê Prefecture includes a Garzê County. Unless otherwise noted, the "Ngawa" and "Garzê" in this text refer to the prefectures rather than the counties.

prefectures in Qinghai, and one in Gansu (see the table below).[56] Ü-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo each have distinct Tibetan dialects, and there are significant differences in customs and lifestyles among these regions. Before the fourteenth Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959, the theocratic government based in Lhasa was only able to govern Ü-Tsang (Wemheuer, 2014, p. 196). The Tibetan communities in Kham and Amdo were politically autonomous, and neither Tibet nor China could effectively control them at that time.

Province	**Tibetan autonomous prefecture**
Sichuan	Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
	Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture
Qinghai	Yulshul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
	Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
	Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
	Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
	Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
	Haixi Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
Gansu	Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

Table 1: The Tibetan autonomous prefectures in Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu

[56] Qinghai's Yulshul Prefecture includes a Yulshul County. Unless otherwise noted, the "Yulshul" in this text refers to the prefecture rather than the county.

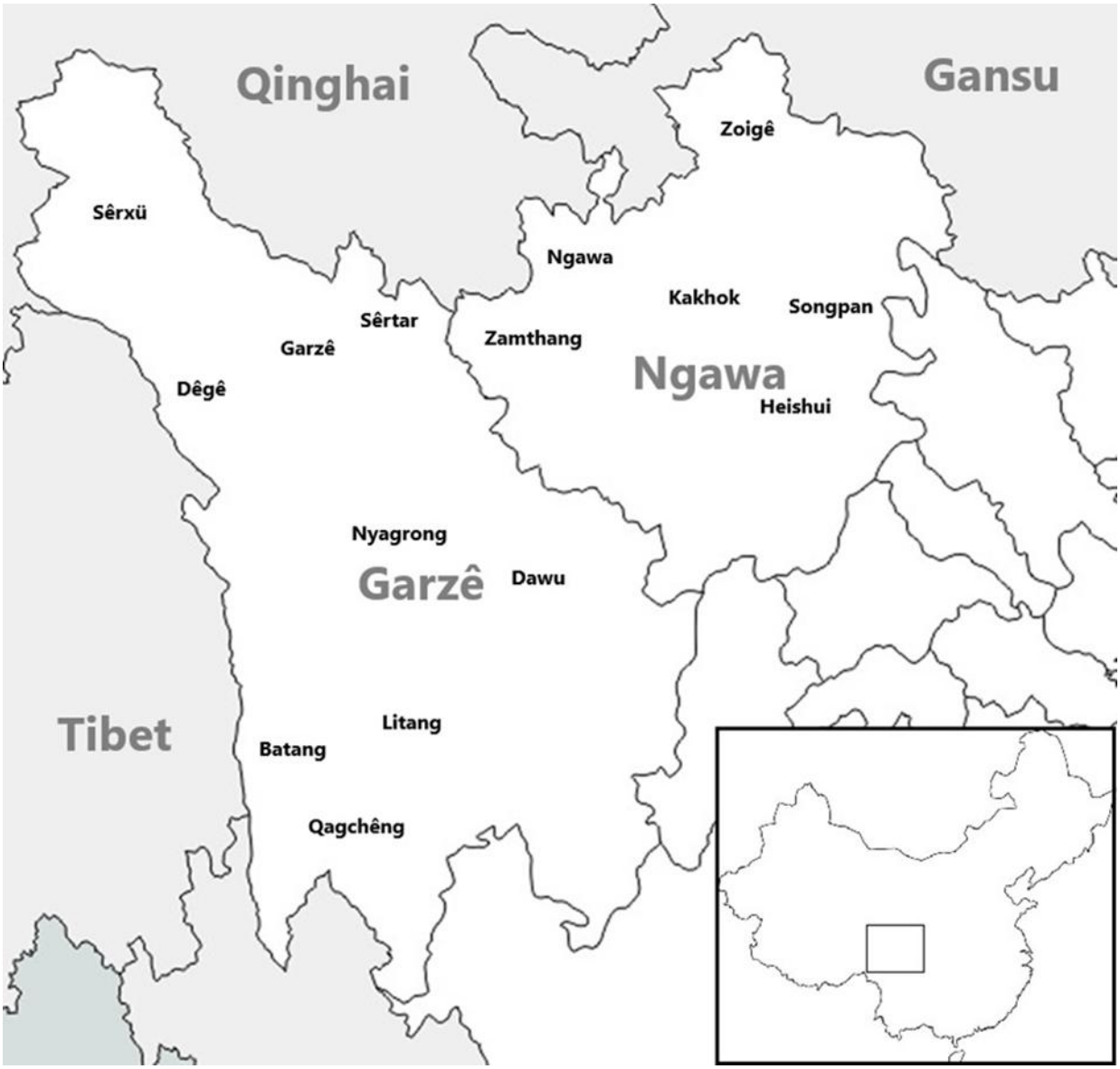

Figure 3: Ngawa Prefecture and Garzê Prefecture in Sichuan Province, with the counties mentioned in the text

This study will primarily focus on the Democratic Reform in Kham and Amdo, as these areas experienced the effects of collectivization much earlier than Tibet under the Dalai Lama.[57] The reform process was marked by significant violence. Due to Kham and Amdo's tradition of

[57] I will discuss the historical reasons in the following sections.

political independence, local populations organized large-scale revolts to resist the communist reforms, resulting in fierce fighting and a high death toll in many communities. Most Amdo Tibetans were nomadic, raising yaks, horses, and sheep, while many communities in Kham also practiced semi-pastoralism. Consequently, the loss of livestock became the primary cause of the famine that followed the collectivization campaign, which was particularly severe in the nomadic regions of Qinghai.

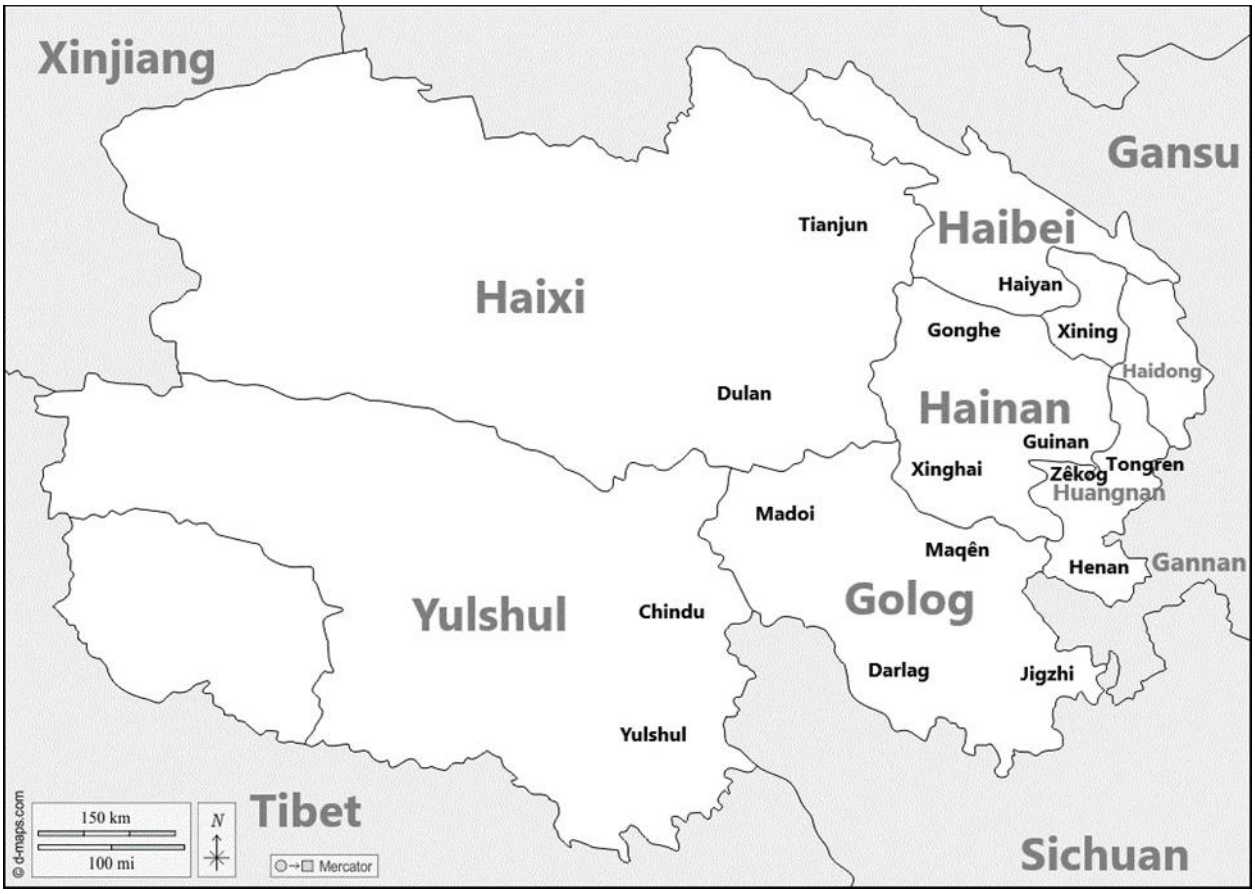

Figure 4: The autonomous prefectures of Qinghai Province, with the counties mentioned in the text

Qinghai and western Sichuan are both located on the periphery of the Tibetan Plateau, but their landscapes differ significantly. The western part of Sichuan is characterized by its rugged

mountains, with numerous rivers flowing through the highlands, carving out deep gorges between the peaks. In contrast, much of Qinghai consists of vast grasslands interspersed with swamps and hills. A similar landscape can be found in the border region of Gansu, where the Yellow River creates extensive wetlands and deltas across the rugged terrain. The average altitude in the Kham and Amdo regions exceeds 4,000 meters above sea level, and most Tibetan communities are situated on slopes and highlands at altitudes between 2,500 and 4,000 meters (SCMZ, 2000, p. 181).

Before the Democratic Reform, Tibetans in Qinghai and northern Sichuan primarily relied on animal husbandry for their livelihoods. The highlands and slopes above 4,000 meters are characterized by grass and forests, where local herdsmen graze their livestock. In Ngawa's northern border, Pass Huangsheng, located 30 kilometers north of Songpan, serves as the geographic divide between mountainous regions and grassland. From this mountain pass to the heart of Qinghai, the entire landscape is covered with grass and wetlands. Some pasturelands in this area extend up to 500 square kilometers (SCMZ, 2000, p. 188); most local Amdo communities were nomadic. Additionally, some villages along the rivers practiced semi-agriculture, primarily cultivating highland barley.

Within Pass Huangsheng, the Tibetan villages situated on the mountain slopes mainly engaged in agriculture on terraced fields while raising a small number of livestock (ABSL, 1985, pp. 24-31). However, during my fieldwork, I observed that the grain-for-green policy severely hindered the agricultural development in Songpan. As a result, many Tibetans shifted to large-scale animal husbandry, practicing pastoral nomadism on the high-altitude slopes, with some households owning more than 200 yaks. In the valleys below 3,500 meters, the climate is relatively milder, allowing for some small-scale agriculture, but it is limited to certain crops such as wheat,

potatoes, and highland barley. At elevations of 2,500 metres or lower, crops like corn, rice, and beans thrive in the humid gorges. In Garzê, many Kham villages in the mountainous areas practice semi-agriculture; the local people engage in farming while also raising a significant amount of livestock. In the southern counties of the prefecture, such as Batang (*'ba' thang*), most Tibetan communities are entirely agricultural, and large livestock like yaks and cattle have become rare (SCMZ, 2000, p. 189).

Since this thesis's subject is the victimization of bovine animals, the examination of the Democratic Reform will primarily address the violence and conflicts experienced by nomadic and semi-nomadic communities. However, some important events in the agricultural regions of Kham and Amdo will also be discussed, as these areas were battlegrounds for many military campaigns.

Kham and Amdo's Traditional Social Institutions

As mentioned earlier, the traditional societies in Kham and Amdo were politically independent of both Tibet and China, a status partly due to the unique geography of these regions. The mountainous terrain and vast grasslands made many communities difficult to access, which helped protect villagers and nomads from invasions by powerful civilizations. Before the arrival of communist armies, the small societies dispersed across the numerous mountains, valleys, and grasslands did not see themselves as a unified community or nation. These groups not only avoided direct control by larger states but also maintained their political independence and established clear borders between one another, despite occasional annexations and separations.

It is important to note that Kham and Amdo are both multi-ethnic regions. In recent times, many people in these areas have been identified simply as Tibetans. Between 1950 and 1980, the

Chinese government undertook a national project aimed at identifying ethnic groups through a series of linguistic and cultural surveys. This effort resulted in the classification of hundreds of self-reported ethnic identities into 56 officially recognized ethnic groups, including Tibetan and Han Chinese (Wemheuer, 2014, p. 163).[58] Many groups in Kham and Amdo were indigenous peoples of the highlands rather than Tibetans. They absorbed aspects of Tibetan culture and language during the time when the Tibetan Kingdom governed the region. Even after the kingdom collapsed and retreated to central Tibet, Tibetan culture continued to influence the area due to its geographic proximity, leading to many indigenous groups' Tibetanization. For instance, several Tibetan-speaking communities in western Sichuan are known for practicing customs that differ from typical Tibetan culture, indicating that they may be Tibetanized indigenous peoples. Additionally, some Tibetan communities in eastern Qinghai are actually Tibetanized Mongolians.

In old Chinese literature, a politically independent community in Kham and Amdo, typically consisting of dozens to hundreds of villages, is described as a *buluo* (tribe). These communities were governed by hereditary leaders. The Chinese term for these leaders is *tu-si* (or *tu-guan*), which literally means "native governor." Tibetans refer to them as *rgyal-po*, meaning "king." Some Western scholars prefer the term "chiefdom" to describe these communities, arguing that "tribe" carries a discriminatory connotation (Weiner, 2020, pp. xviii-xix). I am skeptical of this Western approach to translation for several reasons. Firstly, the word "chiefdom" is a typical English term that has no exact equivalent in either Chinese or Tibetan. Secondly, terms like "chief" and "chieftain" can also carry offensive implications in certain contexts. For example, many jokes

[58] For example, there was a mysterious ethnic group called "Boluozi" or "Luo-luo" in the western valleys of Songpan. According to several informants during my fieldwork, neither the Tibetans nor the Chinese considered Boluozi to be Tibetans, and Boluozi themselves did not identify as Tibetans either. However, this group was classified as Tibetan during the national ethnic identification project. As a result, Boluozi communities gradually assimilated into Tibetan society, and many individuals have since forgotten their original identities.

about “Indian chiefs” exist in the popular culture of the American West. Furthermore, describing these communities as chiefdoms can be misleading because *tu-si* (*rgyal-po*) resembles a lord from European feudalism more than a chief of an Indigenous tribe in North America. *Rgyal-po/tu-si* received nominal commissions from Chinese emperors, though these were largely ceremonial, and imperial authorities exerted little control over their governance. In Tibetan languages, the territory of a specific *rgyal-po* is traditionally referred to as the land, valley, or pasture belonging to that *rgyal-po*. In the following discussion, I will use the term “community,” a neutral word, to refer to a *rgyal-po/tu-si's* territory.[59]

Though the power and status of *rgyal-po/tu-si* developed independently, the royal commission could reinforce the legitimacy of these local rulers when they faced challenges from rivals. In addition, the commission introduced bureaucratic titles into the *rgyal-po/tu-si* system to reflect the varying sizes of the communities. Some *rgyal-po/tu-si* were appointed as *Qianhu* (thousand-household governors), while others were designated as *Baihu* (hundred-household governors). These titles became common in local politics in Amdo. The bureaucracy of a *rgyal-po/tu-si* administration could include several levels, with common subordinates like vice *tu-si*, village headmen, and translators (QHSL, 1985, p. 5). Additionally, senior villagers, known as “elders,” often played vital roles in advising and assisting *rgyal-po/tu-si’s* rule (ABSL, 1985, pp. 10, 148-149). It is noteworthy that the institutions related to *rgyal-po/tu-si* were quite diverse. Some political systems in Garzê were more complex than those in Qinghai and Ngawa, largely due to Garzê’s proximity to Tibet and the influence it received from Lhasa. In theory, all *rgyal-po/tu-si* communities were required to pay tribute or grain tax to the Chinese royal court to

[59] In contrast to “territory,” “community” emphasizes a group’s societal features such as collective identity, local organizations, and political structures.

demonstrate loyalty. However, implementing this policy in remote areas proved to be very challenging. Since the tribute payments were often minimal and symbolic, this practice did not undermine the communities' political independence.

A *rgyal-po/tu-si* served as the military commander of his community. When mobilized, each household must contribute a few men to form an army, with its members responsible for providing their own weapons and horses. Conflicts between communities often arose due to robbery and unresolved disputes (HNPG, 1999, p. 982; QHSL, 1985, pp. 108-109; SCMZ, 2000, p. 228). Some groups, such as the Golog in Qinghai, had a tradition of raiding passing travelers and neighboring communities, leading to inevitable conflicts. (QHSL, 1985, p. 74). *Rgyal-po/tu-si* rebellions were not uncommon during the periods of the Chinese Empire and the Republic of China. These revolts often stemmed from resistance to taxation. For instance, in the late Qing Dynasty, the town of Songpan was burned down twice by surrounding ethnic groups who were angered by increasing taxes (Xia, 2014, pp. 106-128). After the collapse of the empire, the armed forces of Kham and Amdo communities continued to engage in combat against various external military powers, including government troops, warlords, and the Red Army, the precursor to the People's Liberation Army.

The territory of a *rgyal-po/tu-si* was not fixed, and the ruler's status could change. The community leaders needed to be vigilant against powerful neighbours who desired their land and were looking for opportunities to invade. They also had to be wary of ambitious rivals within their own administrations, as it was not uncommon for a *rgyal-po/tu-si* to lose power to relatives or former subordinates (Xia, 2014, pp. 205-221). In northern Ngawa, the Mei emerged as the dominant local "tribe" by annexing neighboring villages from other communities. During the period of the Republic of China, they continued to expand their territory by forming alliances with

Qinghai's Muslim warlords and influential Tibetan monasteries (ABSL, 1985, pp. 148-151; Xia, 2014, pp. 222). It was common for *rgyal-po/tu-si* to establish alliances with each other and with local authorities. According to local archival documents from Songpan, several *rgyal-po/tu-si* utilized this strategy to gain military support when their security was threatened by adversaries (Xia, 2014, pp. 205-210). In Sêrtar (gser rda), a county in northern Garzê, alliances were particularly well-developed. All communities were integrated into a large "tribal alliance" composed of three major "tribes" and various smaller groups affiliated with them (GZSL, 2009, p. 25). A similar pattern was also observed among the Tibetan communities in Gansu, where powerful monasteries dominated these alliances (Ma & Wan, 1994). After the fall of the Qing Dynasty, as warlords and other local authorities began to encroach on *rgyal-po/tu-si* territories, some smaller communities chose to ally with local governments and officials for protection. This strategy bolstered their strength but diminished their independence (Xia, 2014, pp. 205-210).

Many historical authorities in both China and Tibet sought direct control over the territories of *rgyal-po/tu-si*. In the early 20th century, China's imperial army disempowered several *rgyal-po/tu-si* in western Garzê following a counterinsurgency campaign (GZSL, 2009, p. 11). During the Republic of China period, the local government of Sichuan attempted to continue this effort by replacing heirless native governors with government-appointed officials, achieving only limited success in a few Ngawa communities near Han Chinese regions. In Qinghai, the provincial government was dominated by the Muslim warlord Ma Bufang, whose influence gradually extended to the grasslands and the province's southern border, resulting in numerous conflicts with local nomadic groups. Many communities persecuted by the warlord sought alliances with Tibet (QHSL, 1985, p. 78; QHMG, 2001, pp. 460-477; HNPG, 1999, pp. 1016-1022). In 1918, the theocratic government of the Dalai Lama dispatched armies to the region of Kham, capturing Dêgê

(*sde dge*) and several counties in western Garzê. Lhasa's control over this area was not disrupted by the Chinese army until 1932. During the Tibetan occupation, the local *rgyal-po/tu-si*, who had previously been ousted by the Qing army, regained their power (GZMG, 1999, p. 107). Before the establishment of the communist regime, most *rgyal-po/tu-si* communities maintained their autonomy.

The surveyors of the communist government often exaggerated the opposition between *rgyal-po/tu-si* and their villagers to justify the reform (QHSL, 1985, pp. 22-23; SCMZ, 2000, pp. 230-231). However, my investigation and many local documents indicate that most civilians did not experience a heavy financial burden and enjoyed considerable political freedom. While community land nominally belonged to *rgyal-po/tu-si* and could not be sold to outsiders, the community leaders were obligated to distribute the land to each household for farming or grazing. Civilians were expected to pay tribute to their *rgyal-po/tu-si* each year. The amount of tribute varied from community to community but was generally manageable. For instance, the households in Mei were required to pay five kilograms of barley plus one sheep or half a sheep, whereas some *tu-si* near Songpan only required a small amount of fodder as an annual tribute (Xia, 2014, p. 166; ZNHD, 1963, p. 79). Labour services were another significant obligation for civilians. *A rgyal-po/tu-si* had the privilege of asking villagers to farm his crops or build houses for him. The communist cadres often accused *rgyal-po/tu-si* of exploiting their villagers through these "corvée" duties (Wang et al., 1987, p. 131; YSPO, 1985, pp. 42-65). However, the villagers had the right to negotiate with their *rgyal-po/tu-si* or even refuse unreasonable requests. Local documents from Songpan show that unusual labour demands from *rgyal-po/tu-si* often led to protests among the villagers. One famous story recounts how a monk persuaded the *rgyal-po/tu-si* of the Atong (*a*

stong) community[60] to convert to Buddhism and build a new pagoda. This project, which required significant labour and funding, ultimately resulted in a riot, during which the frustrated villagers killed their *rgyal-po/tu-si* (Xia, 2014, pp. 165-166).

In nomadic regions, although *rgyal-po/tu-si* nominally owned the pastures, all households had the right to use them. As a result, even communist surveyors had to acknowledge that the local economic relationships were characterized by what they termed "ostensible" communal ownership (GZSL, 2009, pp. 211-212, 238-239; QHSL, 1985, p. 10). The cold-season pastures were often allocated to each household and marked by clear boundaries, while the warm-season pastures were typically used communally (DGCG, 1995, p. 110; GZSL, 2009, pp. 247-250; YLCL, 1963, p. 18). Unlike agricultural areas, employment and livestock renting were common in nomadic communities, as more people were needed to care for the livestock. Consequently, those who assisted in grazing *rgyal-po/tu-si's* cattle and sheep were often compensated for their work (GZSL, 2009, pp. 23, 249).

As community leaders, *rgyal-po/tu-si* had many responsibilities. In addition to protecting the community's properties, livestock, and territory, *rgyal-po/tu-si* were also tasked with arbitrating disputes among villagers. When disputes involved neighboring communities, *rgyal-po/tu-si* had to participate in negotiations in person (Xie and Zeng, 1985, p. 158). One of my interviewees in Songpan is the son of a deceased *rgyal-po/tu-si*. He mentioned that his father rarely intervened in the daily lives of the villagers; however, when livestock was stolen, his father would lead the villagers in a chase to recover it (Xia, 2014, p. 169). Another interviewee is the son-in-law of the *rgyal-po/tu-si* of Tazhin (*ta zhin*),[61] the largest local "tribe" during the 1930s and 1940s.

[60] Today's Dazhai area.
[61] Today's Daxing Township.

He shared that his father-in-law once envied the lives of ordinary people and complained that being a *rgyal-po/tu-si* was overwhelming and demanding (Xia, 2014, p. 209).

Monasteries have played an important role in local life and cannot be overlooked. Tibetan Buddhism encompasses several schools that have developed unevenly in the regions of Kham and Amdo. Additionally, Bön, the indigenous shamanic belief of Tibet, has thrived in certain areas of Ngawa, particularly in Songpan. Over the centuries, Bön has absorbed many elements from Buddhism, and its monasteries and clergy have become quite similar to those of Buddhist schools. The Gelug school, established in the fifteenth century, is the most recent yet the most prosperous branch of Tibetan Buddhism. Before the Democratic Reform, Gelug dominated many of Tibet's monasteries and held significant power within the theocratic regime. Following its emergence, the Gelug school quickly spread to Kham and Amdo. By the mid-nineteenth century, several influential Gelug monasteries began to reshape the geopolitics of the *rgyal-po/tu-si* societies in Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu. Other major schools of Tibetan Buddhism include Sakya, Rnying-ma, and Ga'gyü.

By establishing stable relationships with nearby villages, monasteries expand their parishes. These religious connections are evident through various practices. For instance, each household is required to send at least one boy to the community's monastery to become a monk, and villagers are expected to make regular donations to the monasteries. In return, the monasteries and monks offer a range of services to the community, including blessing rituals, divination, and medical care. In traditional Kham and Amdo, most lay people were illiterate, while only the clergy could read. Since the monks learned to read and write by studying religious texts, the monasteries served as institutions of public education. Typically, the monasteries were under the control of local *rgyal-po/tu-si*. For example, in the Songpan area that I studied, there were thirteen monasteries before

the communist regime, and none of their parishes extended beyond the *rgyal-po/tu-si* territory where each monastery was located. The two most powerful *rgyal-po/tu-si* communities, Tazhin and Tromjé (*khrom rje*),[62] each had three monasteries representing different religious faiths. In these communities, the *rgyal-po/tu-si* families and the villagers might adhere to different religions and Buddhist schools. The competition between Bön and three distinct Buddhist schools (Gelug, Sakya, and Rnying-ma) greatly enhanced the authority of the *rgyal-po/tu-si* in Songpan.

In most regions of Kham and Amdo, Tibetan Buddhism was the dominant religion, with its powerful monasteries often intervening in political affairs. Some lamas and monks from *rgyal-po/tu-si* families inherited the thrones, becoming leaders in both politics and religion, thereby establishing a quasi-theocracy in their communities. Goinqên, the renowned Sakya monastery in Dêgê County, was owned by a local *rgyal-po/tu-si* family. Typically, the oldest son of each generation was sent to the monastery for training to become the abbot, while the second oldest son usually inherited the political throne. If a *rgyal-po/tu-si* had no siblings, he would serve as the monastery's abbot himself (LGKP, 1963, p. 69). In communities where the *rgyal-po/tu-si* were weak or lacked heirs, local monasteries often seized the opportunity to gain power, which was not an uncommon occurrence in the nomadic regions. In northern Ngawa's Zoigê County (*mdzod dge rdzong*), for example, there was a nomadic community in which the *rgyal-po/tu-si* was in conflict with the Labrang Monastery.[63] The nearby Sogtsang Monastery took advantage of this conflict and

[62] Today's Mouni Valley.

[63] The Labrang Monastery in Gansu was the most influential religious institution in the grasslands. It began to intervene in the local political affairs of Ngawa as early as the mid-19th century. By the end of the 19th century, some Chinese officials in Songpan were surprised to find that many grassland communities had been included in the parish of this Gelug monastery. Once a community was under its control, the monastery often removed the hereditary *rgyal-po/tu-si* and replaced them with its trusted appointees as rulers. These monastery-appointed leaders are referred to as "fake *tu-si*" in Chinese documents (Xia, 2014, p. 163). From the late Qing Dynasty to the period of the Republic of China, the Labrang Monastery significantly reshaped the local political landscape of southern Gansu, leading to the integration of many nomadic communities into large "tribal alliances" dominated by the monastery (Ma and Wan, 1994).

ultimately became the community's owner (ABSL, 1985, p. 101). Similarly, in the Têwo Valley of Zoigê County, local communities came under the control of the Kirti Monastery before the communist regime (ABSL, 1985, pp. 101, 114).

The Arrival of the Communist Rule and Its Collectivization Campaigns

In October 1949, as the Chinese communists won the civil war and established a new government in Beijing, the PLA advanced into Gansu and Qinghai, swiftly defeating Ma Bufang's forces. By early 1950, all cities and towns in Qinghai, Sichuan, and Gansu had fallen to the PLA (QHMG, 2001, pp. 487-489). However, the newly established local authorities of the CCP did not fully pacify these three provinces until 1953. Many remnants of the defeated Nationalist armies found refuge in the remote grasslands and mountainous areas of Sichuan, creating guerrilla-like groups that allied with several powerful *rgyal-po/tu-si*. These forces posed a continued threat to the new regime. In response, the PLA launched several campaigns to eliminate these "rebels." One significant operation occurred in Heishui County, Ngawa, where a Nationalist troop, having received air-dropped weapons from Taiwan, attempted to establish a military base in the territory of Su Yonghe, a powerful *rgyal-po/tu-si* in Sichuan. Another similar campaign took place in the grasslands of Zoigê, where remnants of the warlord army rearmed themselves with supplies air-dropped from Taiwan and sought protection from Palgon Tinley Rapten (*dpal mgon vphrin las*), the *rgyal-po/tu-si* of Mei (ABPO, 1999, pp. 77-82; SCMG, 1999, pp. 289-291). Additionally, some nomadic communities resisted cooperation with the communist government and revolted under the leadership of local *rgyal-po/tu-si* (HNPG, 1999, pp. 1022-1029). All these insurgencies were suppressed by the PLA between 1952 and 1953.

After taking full control of the nomadic regions of Kham and Amdo, the communist authorities did not immediately alter the traditional institutions of local communities. Instead, they restructured the administrative districts by establishing ethnic autonomous prefectures and creating new counties. The traditional leaders, such as the *rgyal-po/tu-si* and abbots in Tibetan communities, were assigned new administrative roles, including magistrates, vice-magistrates, and PCC members. For instance, the female *rgyal-po/tu-si* of Dêgê and several of her subordinates were appointed as commission members of the newly formed ethnic autonomous region,[64] while the community's most influential headman, who had previously clashed with the Dêgê *rgyal-po/tu-si*, became the vice chairman of the regional government (Zhou, 1989, pp. 17-20). Even those who had collaborated with Nationalist guerrillas or participated in uprisings faced no punishment; rather, they were treated amicably and given prominent titles in the new government system (Weiner, 2020, p. 44). Additionally, the communist officials also organized trips for Tibetan *rgyal-po/tu-si* to major Chinese cities to showcase the power and strength of the communist state. Some even had the opportunity to meet Mao in Beijing (Xiang et al., 1982, p. 3). Palgon Tinley Rapten, who was eventually persuaded to surrender to the PLA, even visited the frontlines of the Korean War to boost the morale of Chinese soldiers.

Between 1953 and 1956, the local communist governments attempted to implement their communist ideology in matters related to ethnic affairs, but they were limited to non-coercive methods. As a result, the government officials appealed to landlords and pasture owners to lower rents and interest rates on loans. In nomadic areas, the government encouraged livestock owners to increase wages for their employees. To help alleviate the financial burden on poorer nomads,

[64] Garzê was part of the province of Xikang, which means "western Kham." In 1952, Xikang became an ethnic autonomous region and was integrated into Tibet and Sichuan in 1955.

some county governments in Qinghai and Gansu arranged loans for livestock purchases and reduced livestock taxes to between 2% and 8% of annual household incomes (GNAG, 1993, p. 102; HAPO, 1984, pp. 38-39). Although many government documents recorded several instances of dispute resolution, they offered little detail about the arbitrary processes involved (HAPO, 1984, p. 36; Weiner, 2020, p. 91). Disputes over pastures and longstanding animosities between communities were common in nomadic regions, with some conflicts persisting for decades. However, many of these issues were abruptly addressed following the establishment of the new regime. It seems that the local governments merely suppressed these conflicts rather than resolving them completely.

All of the policies mentioned above embodied the guiding principles of the United Front, a negotiation strategy that CCP cadres widely utilized to gain the trust of non-Han ethnic groups (Weiner, 2020, pp. 17-20). Weiner (2020) argues that the United Front was a crucial element in the early efforts of the Chinese communist regime to integrate ethnic frontiers into the state-building project, reflecting Mao's modernist ideals (pp. 206-207). To support this viewpoint, he provides evidence such as official statements that promise not to change the political and economic status of pastoral elites. Additionally, there are instructions advising local officials to dismiss Han chauvinism and attributing setbacks in work to the cadres' lack of understanding of local social customs (Weiner, 2020, pp. 75-76, 101-102).

I appreciate Weiner's in-depth examination of the significance of the United Front, as it is a topic that many scholars have overlooked in discussions about China's ethnic policies. However, I believe that the rhetoric found in government documents leads him to overestimate its value.[65]

[65] From a long-term perspective, none of the major United Front campaigns have been successful. The regions where China attempted to use United Front tactics to woo local elites either became more estranged (Hong Kong and Taiwan) or eventually had to be controlled through coercion (Tibet and Xinjiang).

China's official discourse often serves as propaganda, and party leaders rarely disclose their true intentions within these documents. Just because the United Front was presented as a guideline for ethnic work does not necessarily mean that Mao and other party leaders genuinely took the idea of peaceful and gradual transformation seriously. Mao's political viewpoints and skills were notoriously fickle. In the 1930s, when the communist forces were relatively weak, the party advocated for ethnic minorities' right to self-determination. However, this was later replaced by a plan for ethnic autonomy (Wemheuer, 2014, pp. 162-163). Once autonomous regions were established, people came to realize that the so-called "autonomy" existed only in name. Additionally, most Chinese intellectuals would not forget that in 1956, Mao encouraged people to express their opinions freely but soon initiated the Anti-Rightist Campaign, which targeted and purged the intelligentsia. Later, Mao acknowledged that his earlier encouragement was merely an "overt scheme" designed to "lure class enemies out of the cage" (Mao, 1957). Given these dramatic shifts in political discourse, it would be naïve to believe that the United Front was anything other than another "Machiavellian scheme" (Weiner, 2020, p. 206). The early 1950s were challenging for the newly established communist state, which was preoccupied with the military campaigns in Korea, the threats from Taiwan, and the economic recovery in the eastern provinces. Maintaining the status quo on an ethnic frontier would have significantly eased the political and military pressure on the young regime.

The soft approaches based on the guiding principles of the United Front lasted for only three years. In the summer of 1955, Mao persuaded his colleagues at the party's leadership to request that rural areas accelerate the process of collectivization. A few months later, the effects of this radical policy reached the ethnic regions. On February 25, 1956, the party leadership issued "The Order of Implementing Agricultural Socialist Reform in the Ethnic Minority Areas," which

initiated widespread collectivization campaigns in the Tibetan areas outside Tibet (Li, 2012, p. 28; Wemheuer, 2014, pp. 166-170). After the communist armies conquered Tibet in 1951, Lhasa and Beijing signed a peace treaty in which the Chinese government promised to maintain the social and political systems in Tibet without significant changes for decades. However, the Tibetan communities in Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan were not under the jurisdiction of Lhasa's theocratic government, meaning the treaty did not protect these areas. As a result, Kham and Amdo soon became the primary focus of the collectivization campaigns following the reform directives. Weiner notes that in early 1955, party leaders in Qinghai emphasized that collectivization should be based on four prerequisites: ethnic unity, mature economic cooperation, stable social order, and a strong cadre force of ethnic minorities. However, by 1956, the prerequisites of ethnic unity and economic development were no longer mentioned in their reports, indicating a significant shift in their policy guidelines (Weiner, 2020, pp. 133-134).

In theory, the reform should be implemented gradually in at least three phases: starting with elementary mutual-aid teams, moving to advanced cooperative groups, and finally establishing large-scale people's communes (Demick, 2020, p. 58). The cooperative teams and groups are considered semi-socialist organizations designed to help the lower-middle class adapt to the socialist mode of production. Participation in these groups is intended to be voluntary, with members working together and sharing tools and materials. Each year, the participants are supposed to receive dividends based on their labor contributions and their shares in the collectively owned means of production (DGCG, 1995, p. 114). Likewise, joint state-private ownership serves as a semi-socialist approach for reforming the affluent class. In nomadic areas, wealthy herd owners are required to sell their livestock to joint-ownership ranches, while still being permitted to keep a portion of their livestock for personal business use (Zhang & Gao, 2007, p. 53). Once

the necessary conditions are met, these semi-socialist organizations will transition into people's communes, where full collectivization will be implemented.

This idealistic plan did not have a chance to be implemented as intended. In 1956, the process of collectivization in Kham and Amdo was still slow and cautious. In Qinghai's Dulan County (Haixi Prefecture), local leaders faced frustration due to the pastoralists' distrust and lack of cooperation; all six mutual-aid teams established in 1956 disbanded within a year (Luo, 1998, p. 114). According to Weiner (2020), by early 1957, some local party leaders still hesitated to quickly advance the reform (pp. 149-160). However, this caution was soon overshadowed by the fervor of the Great Leap Forward Movement that Mao launched in 1958. [66] The intense atmosphere turned the collectivization of nomadic communities into a radical campaign marked by coercion and violence (Weiner, 2020, pp. 166-167). The participation in cooperative groups became mandatory. Jianglin Li notes that communist cadres often superficially negotiated with local *tu-si* and other ethnic elites but ultimately forced them to sign a "Petition for Democratic Reform" (Li, 2012, p. 98). Naktsang Nulo's memoir *My Tibetan Childhood: When Ice Shattered Stone* provides detailed description of his experience during the Democratic Reform. He recounts meetings with two female shepherds from Wujud (*bu rgyud*). They said that after the Chinese forces exerted control over their nomadic communities, all nomads were compelled to join the collectivization process (Nulo, 2014, p. 172). In reality, the cooperative groups were not significantly different from communes. Once the nomads participated in these cooperatives, they were required to surrender their livestock and work collectively towards socialist goals that they often did not understand. Furthermore, the official documents rarely specified the true numbers regarding

[66] By this movement, Mao aimed to transform China from an agrarian society into an industrialized one within a very short timeframe.

annual dividends, leading one to suspect that the amounts were either negligible or too small to motivate any expectations.

True cooperation between livestock owners and state-run ranches never materialized. The joint-ownership ranches set livestock redemption prices too low, leading many herd owners to submit false reports about their livestock numbers in an attempt to protect their animals from being seized by the state (Zhang & Gao, 2007, p. 53). These tentative policies were only in place for less than two years, from 1956 to 1958. Following the Great Leap Forward and the widespread rebellions in Kham and Amdo, the collectivization campaigns were abruptly declared complete. All state-private jointly owned means of production were converted to state ownership (ABPG, 1994, p. 1082; Chen, 2002a, p. 59). As many wealthy nomads chose to revolt, their livestock were confiscated rather than purchased by the state. After 1958, all joint-ownership ranches transitioned to either state or military ownership. For instance, in Hainan Prefecture's Gonghe County, 27,000 cattle and sheep at the Heimahe Ranch were confiscated from affluent herdsmen and rebels. In Xinghai County, the PLA's 134th Division operated a ranch that housed 1,019 cattle and 10,870 sheep, all of which were seized during conflicts with the rebellious nomads (HAPG, 1997, p. 269). Additionally, two memoirs recounting the history of Haixi Prefecture's Tianjun County and Tianjun Ranch mention that thousands of livestock at that state ranch were forfeitures of rebel properties (Cao, 2000, p. 65). In 1958, the county government confiscated 100,000 livestock from wealthy herd owners and rebels, and 73,776 animals were sent to Tianjun Ranch in 1960 (Chen, 2002b, pp. 85-86).

During the Great Leap Forward, most autonomous prefectures and counties in Kham and Amdo declared that they had completed socialist reforms by 1958. For example, in Qinghai, there were only 45 corporation groups and one state ranch initially. However, between April and August

1958, this number surged to 1,439 corporation groups and 256 state ranches (QHXS, 1980, pp. 134-135). Hainan Prefecture, one of the major pastoral areas in Qinghai, established 547 corporation groups and 92 joint-ownership ranches (HAPG, 1997, pp. 263-264). Sichuan's Garzê Prefecture had fewer pastoral communities, but it also developed some corporation groups for herdsmen. Dêgê County, for example, founded 36 pastoral corporation groups by 1962 (DGCG, 1995, p. 114). In August 1958, the CCP leadership issued "The Resolution on the Issue of Establishing People's Communes in Rural Areas" (HAPG, 1997, p. 264), marking the end of the tentative cooperative approaches that had just begun. This indicated that collectivization was about to transition into full communization. For example, Huangnan Prefecture had 76 corporation groups, with nearly 80% of households participating. In September 1958, the prefecture announced that its entire jurisdiction had been communalized (HNPG, 1999, p. 230). In Sichuan, the nomadic region of northern Ngawa established 166 corporation groups and two communes by the end of 1958 (ABPO, 2009, p. 89).

A fully communized community should not possess private properties. After the order for complete communization was issued in August 1958, confiscation quickly extended to all households. People's livestock, food, and tools became the means of production owned by the communes. The redistribution of these means of production granted individuals only the right to use them. As a result, the commune members not only worked together but also shared meals, "enjoying" the fruits of their collective labor. The primary task of communization was to eliminate class distinctions. To categorize households into different classes, local cadres employed Marxist economics to evaluate people's daily lives. Adopting terms from agricultural societies such as "*dizhu*" (landlord) and "*funong*" (rich peasant), they created four class labels for nomads: "*muzhu*" (herd lord), "*fumu*" (rich pastoralists), "*zhongmu*" (mid-level pastoralists), and "*pinmu*" (poor

pastoralists). A pastoralist household's class was determined by the number of livestock it owned (Weiner, 2020, p. 177).

As *rgyal-po/tu-si* households and monasteries enjoyed privileges and wealth, most *rgyal-po/tu-si* and abbots were labeled as "herd lords" or "rich pastoralists." This made them primary targets in the context of "class struggle." Beyond the confiscation of property and the removal from political and religious positions, class struggle often manifested through a political ritual known as "*pidou*," where the communist cadres mobilized the masses to verbally and physically attack those deemed "class enemies." *Pidou* aimed to raise awareness of economic exploitation and intensify people's animosity toward the exploiters. However, the exploitative relationships were often exaggerated, and the methods to compel confessions of guilt were exceedingly radical, frequently leading to instances of death and mental breakdowns. Moreover, since *pidou* incited hatred among individuals, it is widely believed that this practice could quickly erode the moral foundations of society, with relatives, friends, and acquaintances becoming divided into either comrades or class enemies (Li, 2012, pp. 96-97). Nulo witnessed a *pidou* in which a lama was stripped naked and beaten by a mob, and the Chinese soldiers told people not to kill him too fast but to expose his faults first and make him pay with blood. Eventually, the lama was tortured to death and dumped into the river (Nulo, 2014, p. 203).

The campaign against the "upper classes" in nomadic Tibetan areas was China's equivalent of the Kazakh "Little October."[67] Previously, the local elites had been treated with friendly and tolerant policies, but suddenly they became the targets of the revolution. Unlike in Kazakhstan, where the Little October campaign occurred before collectivization, in China, the public criticism

[67] See Appendix 1.

of "class enemies" and the forced collectivization of all nomads happened simultaneously (Weiner, 2020, pp. 174-177). This was made possible by the rapid pace of the collectivization movement and the radicalism of the Great Leap Forward.

The Democratic Reform swiftly dismantled the traditional social and political institutions of Kham and Amdo between 1956 and 1958. The politically independent *rgyal-po/tu-si* system was completely abolished. Monasteries were closed down, and lamas and monks were forced to abandon their religious lives and engage in secular labour. For ordinary nomads, the reform proved disastrous too. Official documents show that proletarians and extremely poor individuals represented only a small fraction of the pastoralist population (see the tables below). Although a gap between rich and poor existed, nearly all households owned livestock, which explains the significant resistance to rapid communalization among nomads. For them, the so-called collectivization was no more than a plunder of properties.

class	**Household numbers**	**population**	**Population percentage**	**Livestock numbers**	**Livestock percentage**	**Livestock Possession per Capita**
Herd lords	27	141	2.98%	6598	10.91%	46.8
Rich pastoralists	17	107	2.29%	3350	5.52%	31.3
Midlevel pastoralists	254	1247	26.39%	25453	42.05%	20.4
Poor pastoralists	637	3230	68.36%	25107	41.52%	7.7

Table 2: Class Division and Livestock Possession of Maoya Pastoral Area, Litang County (*li tang rdzong*), 1958 (GZSL, 2009, p. 213)

class	Household numbers	household percentage	Livestock numbers	Livestock percentage	Livestock Possession per household
Herd lords	3	3.84%	5963	25%	1987.66
Rich pastoralists	6	6.89%	4791	19.85%	798.5
Midlevel pastoralists	27	31.03%	9448	38.73%	388.9
Poor pastoralists	51	58.5%	3881	16.11%	76.09

Table 3: Class Division and Livestock Possession of Darlag County (*dar lag rdzong*), Golog Prefecture,1956 (QHSL, 1985, pp. 85-86)

Similar to the situation in Kazakhstan,[68] the collectivization of nomads inevitably led to their sedentarization, which was one of the goals of the party leaders, who regarded the traditional grazing methods and seasonal migrations as backward. They believed that these old practices should be replaced with modern pasturing methods offered by cooperatives and advanced farming techniques brought in by agricultural immigrants (Weiner, 2020, pp. 137-138). Consequently, with livestock being gathered into state ranches and cooperatives, traditional nomadism ultimately disappeared.

This chapter provides background information on the collectivization of nomadic communities in Kham and Amdo. It discusses the state ideology and policy implementation that ultimately led to the disintegration of these communities and resulted in great famine. This chapter

[68] See Appendix 1.

aims to help readers who may not be familiar with the history of communist countries and the struggles of ethnic minorities understand the causes, processes, and consequences of collectivization campaigns. The next chapter will discuss how yaks, similar to the Tibetan nomads, were greatly affected by China's state projects to eliminate nomadism.

Household code	Cattle number	Horse number
1	14	5
2	24	
3	27	15
4	16	
5	25	
6	41	
7	45	
8	18	
9	27	
10	56	
11	56	7
12	106	1
13	28	13
14	69	
15	31	5
16	29	7
17	7	15
18 (four households)	160	11
19 (three households)	124	

Table 4: Large Livestock Numbers of Xiangguo Village, Zoigê County, 1952 (ABSL, 1985, pp. 35-36)

Chapter Four: Seeing Like a Yak (Part II): Why a State's Internal Colonization Fails

Yaks and Nomads

This chapter explores the reasons behind the failure of the Chinese government's collectivization of Tibetan nomads. Rather than integrating these minority communities, this reform resulted in significant disasters for both the local people and the animals. Yaks, the unique bovine animals of the plateau, suffered greatly during the collectivization of Tibetan nomads. The parallel between the fates of humans and animals highlights the deep connections between human society and the environment. This situation embodies the integration of human culture and the environment, which is the second aspect of the anti-representationalism framework. However, in this case, this integration is tragically demonstrated by the simultaneous destruction of human communities and yak herds.

The collectivization movement in Kham and Amdo has many similarities to its counterpart in Kazakhstan, particularly regarding the high death toll among both nomads and their livestock. This reflects the deep connection between nomadic people and the non-human animals in their societies. However, a key difference between the two movements is that a significant number of Tibetans actively participated in rebellions to resist the collectivization campaigns, resulting in a huge loss of life during the conflicts. Through their resistance, the Tibetan nomads demonstrated a strong will to reject the control exerted by the invading state power. The nomadic population's desire to maintain political independence and a nonstate status aligns with their nomadic lifestyle, which is characterized by high mobility and seclusion. Interestingly, yaks, the primary animals of

the plateau and the Tibetans' most important livestock, share similar traits with the nomads. Yaks require extensive migration to find grazing grounds. The wild yaks, which greatly contribute to the genetic diversity of domestic yak herds, tend to live in isolation most of the time and can become aggressive when disturbed. This parallel between human and non-human behaviour suggests that environmental factors may play a significant role in shaping their dispositions.

The interdependent relationship between the nomads and the yaks illustrates how the environment impacts its human and non-human inhabitants in similar ways. In the second half of the analysis, I employ Tim Ingold's dwelling perspective to explain the entanglement of environment and culture. This framework posits that culture is not a separate domain, exclusive to humans and independent of the environment. Instead, what we call culture is essentially a set of behaviour patterns that dwellers develop based on the specific conditions of their environment (Ingold, 2000).

My research also draws inspiration from James Scott's state theories (Scott, 1998; 2009). By connecting Scott's studies to Ingold's framework, my study suggests that a state's perspective often resembles Cartesian logic, which assumes that individuals can freely impose their ideas onto an object or the surroundings. This perspective contradicts the reality of the intertwinement between an environment and the behaviours of its dwellers. Consequently, the enforcement of state policies frequently undermines the relationships among humans, non-humans, and the environment, leading to significant disasters.

One of the works by Scott (1998) relevant to this study is titled *Seeing Like a State*. I have named this case study "Seeing Like a Yak" to illustrate its connection to Scott's analysis and the contrasting perspective to the state logic explored in his book. "Seeing Like a Yak" represents the viewpoint through which Tibetan nomads perceive their surrounding. As they share the plateau

environment with yaks, the behaviours of these animals often help explain human habits and various phenomena in the world. For example, yaks require long migrations in search of food and survival; similarly, humans also need to embrace nomadism to adapt to the vast grasslands. A well-known Tibetan myth entitled “Srid-pa Slaughtering a Yak” describes the world as having been transformed from different parts of a yak. “Srid-pa” means “world” or “cosmos” and is the name of the Creator in the story. The myth explains that Srid-pa slaughters a yak and places its head on mountains, which is why the mountains are so towering. The tail is tossed onto a trail, providing an explanation for the twisted paths. The yak’s skin is spread across the ground, which accounts for the flatness of the earth. This myth not only tells the origin of the world but also illustrates that the characteristics of the environment and the physical features of the yak share many similarities. This folk idea aligns with the dwelling perspective, which posits that a dweller’s body, behaviours, and habits embody the specific conditions of the environment.

Yaks are the native bovine species of the Tibetan Plateau, and their physique allows them to adapt to the harsh conditions of high elevations. Their bodies are covered with dense fur and possess underdeveloped sweat glands, enabling them to retain warmth in cold weather. When grazing, yaks use strong tongues to grab grass and cut roots with their hard incisors (Cai, 1990, p. 46). They have fully adapted to the plateau’s climate and are extremely intolerant to heat. When temperatures rise above 13 degrees Celsius, yaks begin to feel uncomfortable, which is reflected in an increased breathing and heart rate. If the temperature reaches 20 degrees Celsius, yaks will seek shelter near water or in the shade to rest（Cai, 1990, p. 35; Zhongguo Maoniuxue Bianxie Weiyuanhui, 1989, p. 28）. Unlike most bovine animals, even in winter, yak cows can produce milk as usual, providing plentiful nourishment for Tibetan nomads. Milking in bitterly cold

weather is a common practice in pasturing communities (Zhongguo Maoniuxue Bianxie Weiyuanhui, 1989, p. 29).

In most nomadic Tibetan areas, yaks are the primary livestock. According to a survey conducted in 1958, the three major pastoralist communities in northern Ngawa had 90,748 yaks, 200,466 sheep, and 17,896 horses (ABSL, 1985, p. 76). Although the total number of yaks was smaller than that of sheep, yaks are more valuable, with higher individual prices. During interviews I conducted in Songpan in 2013, my informants mentioned that the price of a good yak (mainly *dzo* and *dzomo*) could exceed 6,000 Chinese Yuan (approximately 1,200 Canadian dollars). In contrast, sheep typically ranged in price from 1,000 to 2,000 Yuan. Today, when the market is good, the price of an individual yak can increase to between 10,000 and 20,000 Yuan (equivalent to 2,000 to 4,000 Canadian dollars). In Qinghai, sheep also represented the largest livestock numbers. For instance, in the 1950s, Huangnan Prefecture had 680,000 sheep, which constituted 77% of all livestock in the area; the region had 167,700 cattle (mainly yaks and hybrids), accounting for 19% (HNPG, 1999, p. 238). Nevertheless, cattle[69] were often regarded as the most important category of "large livestock" in Qinghai (QHXS, 1980, p. 19), while sheep were classified as small livestock.

The nomads generally tend to keep more sheep in the grasslands with humid conditions. As a result, the number of sheep is significantly higher than that of yaks in the eastern parts of Qinghai, such as Huangnan. In the Gansu counties bordering Qinghai, the wetlands provide excellent pastures for sheep. A 1980 investigation revealed that only 21.7% of the local livestock were cattle, with yaks making up 75% of all bovine animals (GNAG, 1993, p. 179). In western Qinghai, the proportion of cattle is closer to that of sheep due to the harsher climate and drier environment. For

[69] In the following text, the term "cattle" primarily refers to yaks and their hybrids.

example, a survey conducted in Golog in 1952 found that the region had 515,249 livestock, of which 54.89% were sheep and 41.82% were cattle (QHSL, 1985, p. 80). Although the Ngawa counties bordering Golog also had more sheep than cattle, they are well known for producing Mewa yaks, the best yak breed in China. In the nomadic areas of Garzê, the number of sheep is significantly lower. In Dawu County (rta' u dzong) in 1956, sheep accounted for only 14.15% of the total livestock. The primary livestock in that county was yak, which numbered 11,499, constituting 61.54% of all livestock (KDDD, 1963, p. 16).

Tibetan people have been raising yaks for thousands of years. Most of the yaks seen in nomadic communities are domesticated. The nomads often hybridize yaks with cattle. The male hybrids are known as *dzo*, while the female hybrids are called *dzomo*. *Dzo* are infertile, but *dzomo* can reproduce as healthy yaks and can produce large amounts of milk daily. The gentle nature of these hybrids makes them ideal for agricultural labour and transportation, which is why they often make up a significant portion of the herds (Zhongguo Maoniuxue Bianxie Weiyuanhui, 1989, pp. 17, 193). In this study, both *dzo* and *dzomo* are categorized under the broader classification of yaks.

Domestic yaks were originally tamed from wild yaks thousands of years ago. Due to notable physical differences, domestic yaks and wild yaks are now recognized as two distinct species (Cai, 1990, p. 83).[70] Wild yaks have a withdrawn character and tend to shun humans and their livestock most of the time. However, during mating seasons, bulls from the wild often sneak into domestic herds to mate with domestic cows. Occasionally, these cows will follow the bulls back to their wild habitats, although they typically return to their herds after mating. Locally, this intriguing behaviour is referred to as "wild yak's marriage by capture." The male wild yaks attempting to

[70] Like wolf and dog.

blend in with domestic livestock are often recognizable due to their large body size and exceptionally stout horns. Skilled herdsmen can easily spot them but usually let them go, as they believe that wild yaks can enhance the genetic diversity of domestic yaks (Zhongguo Maoniuxue Bianxie Weiyuanhui, 1989, p. 228). In this way, yaks are a unique type of livestock, as domesticated yaks still maintain connections to their wild relatives.

In the regions of Kham and Amdo, yak herds are spread across both mountainous areas and grasslands. To ensure the animals have enough to graze on, herdsmen must migrate long distances and regularly change their pastures according to the seasons. The plateau does not experience four distinct seasons; instead, the annual grazing cycle is divided into two main periods: the warm season (June to October) and the cold season (November to May). During the warm season, pastures are typically located in elevated areas, while cold-season pastures are often found in low-altitude regions and flat terrains, where the herds can be sheltered from strong winds. Most nomads maintain permanent or semi-permanent settlements near their cold-season pastures. When they are pasturing in more distant warm-season pastures, they reside in the yak-wool tents known as “ghur” (Cai, 1990, p. 115; Demick 2020, p. 54; Zhongguo Maoniuxue Bianxie Weiyuanhui, 1989, p. 139).

Tibetans are heavily reliant on yaks, as these animals play a crucial role in various aspects of their lives. The ghur is just one of the major products derived from yaks. These animals also provide nomads with beef, milk, and hides. Butter made from yak milk is an essential component of the Tibetan diet, especially for preparing butter tea. In households and monasteries, butter is also used as fuel for lamps. The hides are often processed into leather for boots and clothing, and in some river basins, yak hides serve as the primary material for making rafts (Demick, 2020, p. 60; Zhongguo Maoniuxue Bianxie Weiyuanhui, 1989, p. 19). In addition, yak dung serves as the main fuel for cooking and heating in regions without trees.

The Nomads' Resistance

Following the Chinese government's announcement of collectivization in February 1956, many Tibetan communities in Kham and Amdo chose to resist. The rebellion first erupted in Sichuan and Gansu before spreading to Qinghai. The initial revolts in Sichuan were led by *rgyal-po/tu-si* and lamas, who recognized that the reforms threatened their power and religious practices (Yang, 2002, pp. 127-129). A significant number of civilians armed themselves and participated in the uprisings out of fear of losing their properties, monasteries, and traditional ways of life. According to a cadre's memoir, many of the revolts in Nyagrong County (*nyag rong rdzong*) were sparked by conflicts over "borrowing guns," a euphemism for weapon confiscation. As firearms were considered valuable possessions by the Tibetans, this led to widespread anger and protests. The rebellions often began with ambushing reform work teams, resulting in the killing or detention of officials as hostages (Luo, 1988, pp. 227-254). From February to March, nearly all Tibetan regions in Garzê and Ngawa revolted. The rebels targeted county seats and government buildings, as well as ambushing military forces (Li, 2012, pp. 57-59).

In 1956, Garzê Prefecture experienced fierce combat, particularly in the counties of Litang and Batang. In Litang, the local *rgyal-po/tu-si* and the abbot of the monastery organized a rebel army consisting of 3,000 fighters. They besieged the county government and the garrison. Initially, the government troops faced significant disadvantages and suffered heavy casualties before reinforcements arrived. A few weeks later, additional communist troops were deployed, and the tide of war began to shift. On March 29th, the PLA dispatched two Tu-4 bombers[71] from an air

[71] Tu-4 is a Soviet strategic bomber that was modelled on USA's B-29 bombers.

base in Shaanxi Province to bomb the Litang Monastery, which the insurgents were using as a command post (SCMG, 1999, p. 297). Under the cover of artillery fire, the PLA army began its assault on the rebel front lines. On the following day, the rebels were defeated, and the *rgyal-po/tu-si* was killed (GZMG, 1999, p. 188). According to local oral history, the *rgyal-po/tu-si's* death was very heroic; he pretended to be surrendering but suddenly pulled out a gun and killed several PLA soldiers, including a regimental commander. Then, he was executed (Li, 2012, pp. 77-82). The battles in Batang were similar. A group of three thousand rebels, led by monks and local headmen, besieged the county government and cut off its water supply for 21 days (Xie, 1988, p. 221). Despite having the advantage of greater numbers over the local cadres and police, the rebel forces were ultimately defeated due to the combined assault from PLA reinforcements and Tu-4 bombers (BTCG, 1993, pp. 350-351; Duo, 1993, pp. 84-87).

Many insurgencies in Garzê Prefecture were centered around monasteries, indicating a deep involvement of Tibetan Buddhism in local politics. For instance, in Dêgê County, Pelpung Monastery (*dpal spungs dgon pa*) served as the center for many local rebellions. (LGKP, 1963, pp. 66-67). In Garzê County[72], the lamas of Dargye Monastery (*dar rgyas dgon*) provided significant military support to the insurgents in various counties. They even participated directly in ambushes, resulting in the deaths of many CCP cadres (GZSL, 2009, p. 278). Strong resistance from Tibetans also occurred in Qagchêng County (*phyag phreng rdzong*), where several PLA Tu-4 bombers attacked the renowned Sangpiling Temple, aiding the army in defeating the Kham rebels (Li, 2012, pp. 91-92; Zhao & Chen, 1993, pp. 34-35). A confession from a lama in Sêrxü County (*ser shul rdzong*) revealed that the primary motivation for joining the rebellion was to protect his community's Woinbo Monastery and its properties, as he anticipated that the communists would

[72] One of the counties of Garzê Prefecture.

close the monastery following the collectivization campaign. He also noted that internal pressure was a significant factor driving people to revolt; those who refused to participate were labeled traitors. Ultimately, all able-bodied men in his community took part in the insurrection (Tu, 1984, pp. 101-107).

In Ngawa Prefecture, the largest rebellion took place in Zoigê County, where 15 nomadic "tribes" formed a rebel army of approximately 3,500 members. They engaged in combat with several PLA troops in April 1956. This insurgency lasted for two weeks and was ultimately suppressed by government forces, resulting in the annihilation of more than 3,000 rebels. Subsequent rebellions also erupted in Songpan and Heishui areas in 1956 and 1957. Heishui County's rebel army consisted of 2,900 "tribal" warriors armed with 1,500 firearms. In May 1956, they launched raids on the county government and reform work teams. PLA troops faced significant casualties during battles in the mountainous regions, as the rebels often retreated to their villages during the day and conducted guerrilla-style attacks at night. The rebellion in Heishui was not quelled until late June, with reports indicating that more than 5,000 rebels were killed (SCMG, 1999, pp. 298-299). In Songpan, around 1,000 insurgents operated in the northern area of the county, which borders Kakhok (*rka khog*, present-day Hongyuan County). The local Mewa (*rme ba*) nomads were known for their fierceness, prompting the PLA to employ a combination of force and negotiation to subdue them. However, during the pursuit, hundreds of rebels managed to escape to neighboring counties. (ABPG, 1994, pp. 766-779).

From 1958 to 1960, continuous insurgencies erupted in various nomadic areas across the grasslands. The process of collectivization in Qinghai progressed more slowly than in Sichuan, and significant reforms in the region's pastoralist communities did not take place until the onset of the Great Leap Forward movement. As a result, 1958 saw a widespread outbreak of armed

rebellion. The first insurgency occurred in April in Rebgong (*reb gong*)[73] within Huangnan Prefecture. Within a month, several more rebellions took place in the prefectures of Yulshul, Golog, and Hainan (QHMG, 2001, p. 62). In May 1958, Yulshul County's party leader was assassinated and stabbed to death when he was giving a speech. In the same month, the Golog rebels, who had allied with some "tribal" forces from Gansu, besieged the county government of Jigzhi (*gcig sgril*). At this time, more than 20,000 people were involved in the rebellion in Jigzhi. In Chindu County (*khri' du rdzong*) of Yulshul Prefecture, the number of insurgents even reached 30,000 (QHMG, 2001, pp. 514-521). In Hainan Prefecture, the PLA troops defeated a 6,000-strong rebel army in Guinan County in July 1958. A few weeks later, Xinghai County came under attack from a 7,000-strong rebel force, led by the county's vice magistrate and the vice chairman of local PCC.[74] After facing defeat, they fled to Madoi County (*rma stod rdzong*) in Golog Prefecture, where they plundered 100,000 livestock from a local commune (HAPG, 1997, pp. 653-655).

According to different sources, considerable numbers of civilians were killed in the crossfire of the counterinsurgency battles, and some killings were purely massacres. Most warriors from nomadic "tribes" were armed. When they fled, their families often accompanied them. Since Chinese soldiers could not differentiate between unarmed civilians and large groups of rebels, their gunfire was frequently indiscriminate. In the territory of Golog, Nulo and some refugees witnessed a battlefield where numerous dead bodies of Tibetans and livestock were left to rot. Given the collapsed tents and abandoned food, they speculated that a nomadic community had been raided by PLA troops. Later, they encountered a massacre scene of a group of pilgrims. Most people were shot to death when they tried to run from their tents; many of the deceased were women and

[73] Today's Tongren area.
[74] They were former headman and monastery lama.

children. Their dogs and dead livestock were still tied up, indicating that these people had been ambushed, as they did not have time to release the animals and escape on horseback. Poor visibility likely caused the Chinese soldiers to misidentify civilians. Thus, the attack must have occurred at night (Nulo, 2014, pp. 157-162). Jianglin Li and Benno Weiner both note that PLA troops often struggled to distinguish between civilians and rebels. For instance, one bomber pilot admitted that it was very hard to tell the difference, as both rebels and ordinary pastoralists rode horses and carried guns. As a result, the warplanes had to target all riders attempting to flee (Li, 2012, pp. 214-215). After the fighting, captives and those who surrendered were treated similarly by security forces, which fostered increased distrust of the government among the nomads (Weiner 2020, p. 184).

In her book *When the Iron Bird Flies*, Jianglin Li provides a detailed account of one of the largest massacres in Qinghai. In May 1958, 3,000 households, amounting to more than ten thousand people from several nomadic communities, gathered at Khosin Tuglothang [75] in Huangnan Prefecture, attempting to cross the Yellow River to escape to Gansu. On June 1st, the PLA forces intercepted them and launched an assault on the nomads, resulting in the deaths of 1,600 individuals and the capture of the rest. Subsequent military reports concluded that only 1,732 captives were considered "rebels." The remaining 7,487 participants in the so-called "rebellion" were ordinary people who had been "tricked or coerced by the rebels;" this group included elderly people, women, children, and monks. Those identified as "rebels" actually were some pastoralists armed with guns, indicating that many of the deceased were also ordinary pastoralists (HNPG, 1999, p. 1032; Li, 2012, pp. 192-200).

[75] Khosin Tuglothang is currently known as Keshengtuoluo, located along the Yellow River in Kesheng Township, Henan Mongol Autonomous County, Huangnan Prefecture. This area is near a small hill referred to as Tolohai (a transliteration from Mongolian) or Mount Doglo (Li, 2022, p. 442).

Unlike sedentary peasants, the nomads may use migration as a "weapon of the weak" to evade the power of the state (Scott, 1985). However, from the government's perspective, this act of escaping is seen merely as a refusal to cooperate, leading to the classification of nomads as insurgents. In Hainan Prefecture's Xinghai County, nearly all nomads chose to flee to the mountains with their livestock. As a result, the government determined that 97.9% of the local nomadic population participated in the rebellion, with 9,820 pastoralists and 1,020 monks classified as rebels. Many of these nomads sought refuge in Mountain Maqên (*rma chen*, now known as Maqên County), but they were spotted by the PLA Air Force. The PLA warplanes bombed the crowd and supported the army's assault on the "rebels" in the mountains, resulting in the deaths of over 7,000 "enemies" and the "rescue" of approximately 2,000 "coerced common people." Most of those killed as "rebels" were pastoralists attempting to escape (Li, 2012, pp. 236-242).

The Starvation and Plagues Affecting Both Nomads and Animals

Several accounts of nomadic revolts describe incidents of livestock raids. The insurgents attacked communes and state ranches, looting cattle and sheep. These events highlighted two key issues. Firstly, the enforced policies of joint ownership and collectivization were imposed against the wishes of the pastoralists. Herd owners viewed the collectivization campaign as direct theft of their livestock, leading insurgents to strive to reclaim their animals. The impact of the Great Leap Forward caused several preparatory measures to be skipped, resulting in nomadic communities being abruptly informed to begin reforms. From the outset, the radical collectivization plans faced fierce resistance. For example, the Golog rebellion, which occurred in May 1958, was fueled by widespread backlash against joint ownership (Li, 2012, p. 171). The second issue was food

shortages, which further drove the rebels to steal livestock and grain. Tibetan nomads depended heavily on livestock for meat and dairy products. With the majority of yaks and sheep concentrated in state-run ranches, very few animals remained available for local consumption. Although the Chinese government attempted to promote agriculture in nomadic regions, these efforts soon failed. As a result, famine spread rapidly among communes and cooperative organizations. Starvation compelled many pastoralists to participate in the looting. For instance, in the insurgency that took place in Huangnan Prefecture in May 1956, three groups of rebellious pastoralists ambushed government trucks, seizing grain and fodder (Li, 2012, p.118).

Nulo personally experienced the devastating famine. During his escape, his father was killed in a confrontation with PLA troops. After being captured by the Chinese, he was sent to a welfare institution that housed over 1,000 orphans and 600 elderly people. He noted that hunger was a widespread issue in the welfare institution, and many frail residents starved to death. Nulo and his brother managed to survive by stealing sheep from a state ranch, but many others were not so lucky. He witnessed hungry people cut and eat a rotten donkey's leg; he also saw two children smashing a dead man's leg bone and consuming the marrow inside (Nulo, 2014, pp. 246-252). Ultimately, only about 50 children and a dozen elderly people survived the famine (Nulo, 2014, pp. 258-262).

Livestock theft was quite common in state ranches. According to a memoir about Tianjun Ranch, many sheep mysteriously died while grazing, and the authorities could not determine the cause of their illness. Eventually, it became clear that some hungry pastoralists were killing the sheep for meat since the ranch only allowed people to consume dead animals. Slaughtering healthy, living livestock was strictly forbidden (Cao, 2000, p. 66). In Xinghai County, which was noted for the involvement of almost all if its population in the rebellion, 25% of the residents in one

township died of starvation in 1959. The extreme hunger drove many individuals to risk execution by joining the rebels (Weiner, 2020, p. 190). In Zêkog County, food supplies ran out in the spring of 1960, forcing people to forage for weeds and roots to survive. Some attempted to steal small amounts of food and scrap metal but were arrested and charged with "counter-revolution" (Weiner, 2020, p. 188).

The famine in Kham and Amdo had multiple causes. The main factors contributing to the food shortage were the state's confiscation of livestock and its failure to distribute grain effectively. After collectivization, pastoralists lost their livestock, and the government was expected to provide food. However, according to Jianglin Li, the food supply only met 36% of the region's needs, leaving the remaining 64% to address their own food shortages (Li, 2012, p. 63).[76] Before collectivization, pastoralists had the option to sell livestock in exchange for grain and other food supplies. With the end of animal husbandry and the shutdown of markets, commune members could only exchange their labour merits for food from collective canteens. However, the food supplies in communes were not stable. Additionally, most of the yaks and sheep sent to the communes were slaughtered, and the meat was exported to the Soviet Union (Demick, 2020, p. 61).

The second reason for the famine was the failure of agricultural projects. Similar to the situation in Kazakhstan, the Chinese government believed that communization would settle nomadic populations and convert vast areas of grassland into arable land (Bianco, 2021, p. 184; Wemheuer, 2014, p. 170). However, most agricultural experiments conducted during the Great Leap Forward were unsuccessful, which worsened the food shortage. In Kham, the government

[76] In the agricultural areas of Sichuan, high grain requisition was the primary cause of food shortages (Li, 2012, p.106), similar to those in Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

forced Tibetan peasants to replace barley with wheat, but wheat proved unable to adapt to the harsh climatic conditions of the plateau. Additionally, local officials instructed residents to dig irrigation canals that were largely ineffective, as the glacier melt water was intermittent and unreliable. Plowing must use manpower, as the local yaks were not trained for agricultural work (Becker, 1996, p. 234; Demick, 2020, p. 59). In Amdo, many pastures previously used by nomadic herders were converted into farmland, but farmers quickly discovered that nothing would grow in these newly tilled fields. In Gannan Prefecture, large areas of cold-season pastures were transformed into agricultural land, resulting in the deaths of 577,500 livestock between 1958 and 1962 (GNPO, 1987, pp. 122-123; GNAG, 1993, pp. 105-106). In 1960, 994 agricultural migrants from Guyuan, Henan Province, were sent to the state farms in Haixi Prefecture to help cultivate new fields. However, no crops succeeded in those farms. During the first winter, 208 migrants deserted, and 71 people died. By two years later, all remaining migrants returned to Henan (Cao, 1998, p. 102).

The collectivization efforts in nomadic Tibetan areas led not only to a significant decline in the human population but also to mass mortality among livestock. As previously mentioned, the pastoralists' animals were confiscated by the government and military, and subsequently relocated to state ranches. Very soon, many of these animals became sick and died due to poor management, malnutrition, and terrible living conditions. Larger livestock, such as yaks and horses, experienced the most severe consequences. These animals were accustomed to migrating long distances and grazing on vast seasonal pastures. However, now every 100 yaks were confined to a small plot of land on the ranch, severely limiting their mobility. Efforts to convert grassland into agricultural land destroyed many pastures, leading to a depletion of grass around the ranches. Consequently, the animals began to die due to a lack of fodder (Becker, 1996, p. 237).

Many Chinese documents mention the mass mortality of livestock but do not provide further details. One memoir about Tianjun Ranch notes, "A large number of livestock at the ranch died due to unsuitable climate and natural disasters; the state farms slaughtered many animals and used yaks as farm cattle…" (Chen, 2002b, p. 87). In 1958, Haibei Prefecture's Jinyintan Pasture (located in Haiyan County) was chosen as the site of China's first nuclear weapon development centre (No. 221 Factory). In October of that year, local officials compelled the pastoralists of the newly established commune to march through the snowy, high-altitude plateau, migrating to Tuole Ranch, which is 500 kilometers away. The migration lasted two months and involved 9,000 people, 1,700 households, and 270,000 livestock. Due to the hasty implementation of joint-ownership collectivization and communization, the exact number of livestock is unknown. However, estimates suggest that about 30% of the livestock died during the journey to Tuole Ranch. Many human migrants also suffered, with some dying or becoming sick or disabled from cold-related injuries (Zhang & Gao, 2007, pp. 55-60). At Tuole Ranch, the production was severely disrupted by the Great Leap Forward. The movement encouraged ranch workers to implement various absurd measures to increase output. For instance, they injected the urine of pregnant women into the muscles of female sheep in an attempt to boost the animals' pregnancy rates. Additionally, they used tractors to till the grassland, aiming to plant crops that were destined to fail. These misguided efforts ultimately damaged the pastures and resulted in the death of many livestock. By the end of the Great Leap Forward, only 50,000 to 60,000 animals survived on the ranch (Zhang & Gao, 2007, pp. 61-62).

The *Huangnan Prefecture Gazetteer* notes that the prefecture's Henan County established a state ranch in 1958, which initially housed 92,377 animals. In the following years, the ranch experienced a loss of 75,630 livestock. By 1963, five years after its founding, only 67,395 animals

remained, including 50,643 that were birthed on the ranch during this period (HNPG, 1997, p. 284). The gazetteer also provides data on annual livestock totals, revealing a significant decline in livestock numbers between 1958 and 1962. A similar trend was observed in Hainan Prefecture, which also saw a notable decrease in livestock during this period. A curve diagram in its gazetteer illustrates that Hainan's livestock numbers sharply declined from 1958 to 1962 (HAPG, 1997, p. 232). The data shows that cattle and horses suffered greater losses compared to sheep. From 1957 to 1961, 47% of the cattle and 53% of the horses perished, while only 30% of the sheep were lost. This indicates that the larger animals were more vulnerable to the effects of sedentary raising methods (HAPG, 1997, pp. 227-228). According to Wemheuer, in Qinghai alone, the number of deceased cattle was 15 million in 1957, 10.8 million in 1958, and 9.3 million in 1960 (Wemheuer, 2014, p. 170).

The exact number of Kham and Amdo Tibetans who died as a result of conflicts caused by collectivization and the Great Famine remains uncertain. According to Jianglin Li's study, 81,366 Tibetans in Gansu were lost between 1957 and 1961, representing 31.8% of the provincial Tibetan population in 1957. Additionally, from 1958 to 1964, 80,697 Tibetans in Sichuan and 90,753 in Qinghai disappeared. In regions where fierce fighting occurred, such as Golog, Yulshul, and Sêrtar, the population decline approached 50% of the pre-reform numbers. It is estimated that the Kham and Amdo areas lost around 300,000 Tibetans during this period (Li, 2012, pp. 446-447). Approximately 100,000 fled to Tibet and India.

Between 1956 and 1959, when the Tibetan resistance to collectivization in Kham and Amdo was at its strongest, Tibet itself was largely unaffected by the Chinese government's radical policies. However, the unrest in the Tibetan regions outside of Tibet eventually spread to Lhasa, resulting in a protest in February 1959. The communist government seized this opportunity to void

the 1951 treaty and ordered PLA troops to invade Tibet, aiming to overthrow the theocratic regime. After the Dalai Lama fled to India, the process of Democratic Reform soon extended into Tibet.

	All livestock	Large livestock		
		cattle	horses	sheep
1957	1,417,400	273,900	28,700	1,095,200
1958	1,379,800	232,100	24,300	1,106,700
1959	1,203,200	187,700	19,700	977,600
1960	1,102,600	179,300	18,700	861,700
1961	1,148,700	191,600	19,200	923,200
1962	1,149,900	217,800	19,600	905,200

Table 5: Annual Livestock Data of Huangnan Prefecture (HNPG, 1997, p. 240)

	All livestock	Large livestock					Small livestock	
		cattle	horses	donkeys	mules	camels	sheep	goats
1957	3,409,710	405,470	72,393	17,221	2,396	1,283	2,448,929	462,018
1958	2,758,610	284,943	46,196	15,412	1,746	935	2,035,694	373,684
1959	2,355,146	243,314	35,880	13,756	1,904	899	1,742,691	316,702
1960	2,250,565	217,708	34,011	10,820	1,851	813	1,712,144	273,218
1961	2,246,973	214,649	34,113	10,198	1,595	671	1,740,239	245,508
1962	2,425,068	25,7631	37,136	10,955	1,426	672	1,880,115	237,133

Table 6: Annual Livestock Data of Hainan Prefecture (HAPG, 1997, pp. 227-228)

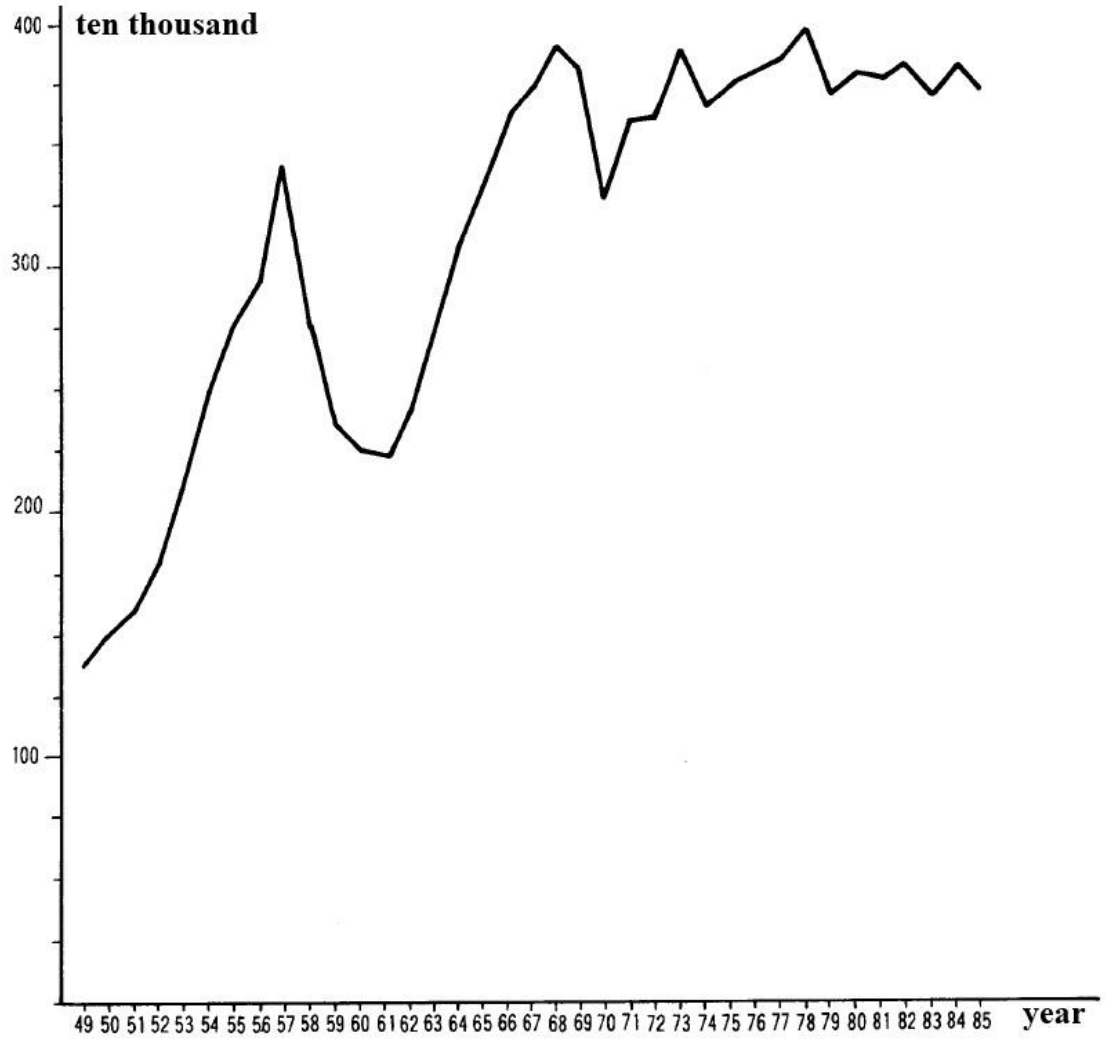

Figure 5: Hainan Prefecture's livestock numbers (HAPG, 1997, p. 232)

Genocide and Internal Colonialism

Scholars studying the famines in communist China and the Soviet Union have differing opinions on whether these events can be classified as genocide. Wemheuer, who compares Ukraine and Tibet, references several scholars with varied viewpoints on this subject. For instance, historian Robert Conquest argues that Stalin intentionally orchestrated the Ukrainian Famine as a

punishment for local resistance against the Soviet regime. Likewise, Norman M. Naimark suggests that Stalin's primary target was the nation of Ukraine, rather than the individual Ukrainians, which indicates that the Ukrainian Famine aligns with the broader definition of genocide (Wemheuer, 2014, pp. 206-212). Nonetheless, Wemheuer argues that the Ukrainian government and advocates for Ukrainian statehood politicized the famine, using it to foster a sense of victimhood and unite all Ukrainians, thus reinforcing a national identity. He believes that the Tibetan exiles employ a similar tactic to advance their nation-building efforts. Specifically, he notes that the exiled Tibetan government utilizes the narrative of famine to incorporate the regions of Kham and Amdo into their vision of a larger Tibetan territory independent from China (Wemheuer, 2014, pp. 212-218).

Robert Kindler, author of *Stalin's Nomads: Power and Famine in Kazakhstan*, argues that the Soviet famine of 1930-1933 should not be classified as genocide because there is no evidence indicating that Stalin intended to destroy the entire Kazakh and Ukrainian nations. Furthermore, Kindler points out that the famine was not limited to Kazakhstan and Ukraine; it also affected other regions of the Soviet Union, suggesting that these two nations were not specifically targeted, despite experiencing the highest death tolls (Kindler, 2018, p. 11). Similarly, Steven Sabol (2017) emphasizes that there is a lack of clear government intent to annihilate all Kazakhs, which leads him to reject the idea that a Soviet genocide took place in Kazakhstan (p. 47). Sarah Camron also notes that there is no evidence to support the claim that Stalin deliberately inflicted starvation on the Kazakhs. She argues that the famine was primarily caused by the lack of direct control from the Soviet government rather than overall governmental supervision. However, Camron (2018) contends that the Kazakh Famine fits a broader definition of genocide because the disaster had a

multifaceted impact on Kazakh society, aligning with Lemkin's description of the eight ways a targeted nation can be victimized through genocide (pp. 15, 178).[77]

Camron acknowledges that, compared to the extensive research on the Ukrainian Famine, there is limited academic investigation into the Kazakh Famine that occurred in a nomadic context. This imbalance in information significantly hampers the ability to compare the two cases of the former Soviet Union (Cameron, 2018, p. 176). Like Kazakhstan, many Kham and Amdo societies that also underwent collectivization and famine were nomadic, yet the scholarly examinations of these communities are even rarer.

Many scholars recognize that the debate over whether the Soviet famines were genocidal is largely influenced by contested definitions of genocide. If one strictly applies the United Nations' narrow legal definition of genocide[78] to the cases in the Soviet Union, none of the famines falls under this classification (Cameron, 2018, p. 178; Wemheuer, 2014, p. 209). However, academics' understanding of the genocide concept is evolving.[79] In recent decades, sociologists have broadened their comprehension of genocide, identifying that genocidal effects can result from a range of actions, including more subtle means. For example, in response to new atrocities occurring worldwide, some scholars have introduced concepts such as "cold genocide" and "genocide by attrition" (Anderson, 2015, pp. 9-25; Cheung et al., 2018, pp. 38-62; Fein, 1997, pp. 10-45; Reeves, 2005, pp. 21-25). These concepts can enhance our understanding of the connection

[77] The eight ways are political, social, cultural, economic, biological, physical, religious, and moral (Lemkin, 2008, pp. 82-89).
[78] The UN's 1951 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide emphasizes the perpetrator's intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as the key criterion for defining genocide.
[79] Recent developments in international laws regarding genocide also indicate a shift in interpretation from a primary focus on intent to considering multiple components of genocide. For example, on January 26, 2024, the International Court of Justice issued "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)." This ruling interprets genocide based on a variety of actions rather than just intent (https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203454).

between famine and genocide. Kjell Anderson (2015), who studies the cold genocide in West Papua, argues that genocide can occur even when perpetrators do not have a genocidal intention but cause genocidal consequences through negligence and fail to address foreseeable outcomes (pp. 9-25). The famines experienced by the nomadic communities in Kazakhstan, Kham, and Amdo can be seen as instances of genocide by recklessness. In Qinghai, for example, officials blindly pursued unrealistic economic goals during the Great Leap Forward. They implemented absurd agricultural practices to boost production without considering the basic needs of pastoralists and their livestock, leading to massive mortalities.

Being reckless does not necessarily mean that one lacks destructive motive. Anderson (2015) argues that recklessness and omission can result from settlers' underlying motivations, such as the desire to seize land and displace its indigenous residents (pp. 9-25). Sociological studies of settler colonialism often adopt macroscopic perspectives, focusing on the exploitative social systems that marginalize certain groups, such as Indigenous communities, by portraying them as inferior races and placing them in disadvantaged positions. In this context, the reckless and indifferent attitudes of settler authorities towards these groups are permitted and even encouraged by the systems designed to undermine the marginalized population. This consent and encouragement reflect the dominant groups' instrumental motives to maintain power, seize land, and extract resources. Additionally, a settler state's recklessness and indifference toward colonized populations also embody its assumed superiority over those groups (Anderson, 2015, pp. 9-25).

During the violent period of the Democratic Reform, famine was just one of the reasons for death. Thousands of Tibetans lost their lives in the armed resistance against collectivization. The previous sections have shown that many insurgencies in Sichuan and Gansu began as soon as the reform started. In Qinghai, many rebellions occurred even before the effective implementation of

collectivization, indicating that the Tibetans were proactive in defending their traditional lifestyles (Weiner, 2020, p. 163). Additionally, many Tibetans died due to the government's aggressive counterinsurgency and retaliation operations. Several official documents acknowledge that wrongful arrests and executions of captives, famine refugees, and other innocent civilians were common during these military campaigns (GNPO, 1987, pp. 114-115; Li, 2012, pp. 246-248; QHXS, 1980, p. 134; Zhang, 2001, pp. 154-159). For example, Jianglin Li uncovered a classified document revealing that 23,260 people were killed in Qinghai in 1958 due to wrongful arrests, unjust verdicts, and coerced collective training (Li, 2016, p. 51; Weiner, 2020, p. 187). Numerous labour camps were established to punish insurgents and reform those considered "class enemies." Life in the communes resembled imprisonment as well, leading to many deaths caused by the poor conditions of confinement (Becker, 1996, p. 254).

The overcrowded conditions in communes, labour camps, and state ranches facilitated the rapid spread of infectious diseases, leading to high mortality rates among both humans and animals (HAPO, 1984, p. 54; YSPO, 1985, p. 94). Starvation forced people to consume the decomposing corpses of dead livestock, which resulted in cross-infection between human and animal populations (Li, 2012, p. 245). For instance, in August 1959, measles, pneumonia, and influenza claimed the lives of more than 25% of the residents in Wenquan Township, located in Xinghai County. At the same time, rinderpest, anthracnose, and sheep pox destroyed 38,768 animals, which accounted for 33.43% of the livestock population in the area (Li, 2012, p. 245).

These events suggest that the deaths and violence that took place during the period of collectivization were the result of more than just the famine. The collectivization campaigns should be seen as a composite crime or genocidal process. Since the radical reform policies were the main cause of these tragedies, it is necessary to borrow a framework larger than "Soviet famine" or

"communist famines" to analyse the collectivization disasters in the nomadic regions of Kham and Amdo. This larger framework is colonialism studies.

Sabol (2017) argues that the Kazakhs in Tsarist Russia and the Sioux in North America are comparable in that both nations relied on mobility for their livelihoods and experienced severe impacts from colonialism (p. 35). While the Sioux were not pastoralists, they were seasonally migratory and depended on bison hunting for sustenance. Sabol compares the Sioux during the Indian Wars to the Kazakhs during the same period when the Russian Empire expanded into Kazakhstan. He asserts that both nations underwent internal colonization (Sabol, 2017, p. 172).

"Internal colonialism" is a concept that was widely used before the 1990s (Bernauer, 2025, pp. 107-116). In recent decades, this idea has been overshadowed by emerging concepts such as "settler colonialism." Internal colonization, or internal colonialism, can be defined in various ways, with scholars using the term in different contexts. Some academics focus on this concept's "colonialism" aspect, using it to describe how a dominant group oppresses marginalized populations in a manner reminiscent of how European colonial powers exploited countries in the Global South. The concept of internal colonialism gained popularity after many formerly colonized countries achieved independence. Scholars argue that the strategies used by European imperialist states to control their colonies in Asia, Africa, Oceania, and the Americas are still reflected in the policies of many post-colonial governments toward marginalized populations. These imperialist and colonialist strategies are characterized by the focus on controlling, exploiting, and extracting both labour and natural resources from marginalized communities (Bernauer, 2025, pp. 107-116). Thus, internal colonialism frameworks often emphasize the apartheid-like division between the dominant and oppressed groups. This division is crucial for maintaining the unequal and exploitative relationships between them. Settler colonialism studies, on the contrary, focus on

revealing how settler regimes attempt to obscure the distinctions between colonizers and the colonized. This strategy of settler governments supports their underlying goals, such as permanently establishing settlements, seizing land, and replacing Indigenous populations (Bernauer, 2025, pp. 107-116; Veracini, 2010, pp. 3-4). In addition, some scholars emphasize internal colonization's "internal" aspect, stressing that this type of colonialism is a specific ruling strategy aimed at the disadvantaged groups within a country, rather than in oversea colonies (Calvert, 2001, pp. 56-63). This perspective can be applied to describe the experiences of various marginalized populations, including not only Indigenous groups but also other minorities, such as African Americans (Pinderhughes, 2011, pp. 235-256).

While the concepts of internal colonialism and settler colonialism share some similarities, there are important distinctions between them. Settler colonialism primarily examines how settler regimes appropriate Indigenous Peoples' land and dismantle their societies and cultures. In contrast, internal colonialism often employs geographic and demographic analyses to reveal the inequalities in economic development and labour division (Bernauer, 2025, pp. 107-116; Pinderhughes, 2011, pp. 235-256). Internal colonization often describes the suffering experienced by the oppressed populations in specific regions. This perspective assumes a geographic separation between oppressors and the oppressed, which is valid in many cases. For example, the Kazakhs and Tibetans are both ethnic majorities in their respective areas, and their communities are geographically distant from those of the colonizers. Because they were incorporated into different colonial states and exploited by their governments, "internal colonization" is an appropriate term to describe their situations. Settler colonialism studies focus on the disintegration of Indigenous societies caused by settler regimes. In this research paradigm, the geographic boundary between Indigenous and settler societies is often seen as blurred, as Indigenous groups have largely been

dissolved into many individual citizens spread throughout the settler country (Bernauer, 2025, pp. 107-116). Some scholars argue that settler colonialism and internal colonialism reflect different contexts within a colonial state. Settler colonialism reveals the overarching goal and strategies of a settler society to eliminate Indigenous groups, while internal colonialism describes the colonial policies and their consequences in specific regions, particularly in communities where Indigenous People make up the local ethnic majority (Bernauer, 2025, pp. 107-116). In this sense, settler colonialism and internal colonialism are two closely related perspectives.

Citing Patrick Wolfe's conclusion that settler colonialism is a land-centered project, Sabol (2017) emphasizes that both Russia and the United States attempted to colonize nomadic and non-sedentary societies through land allotment, agriculture, and forced settlement (p. 174). The United States established the Bureau of Indian Affairs to manage lands in the American West. Likewise, Tsarist Russia created the Ministry of State Domains and the Steppe Commission to oversee the newly conquered territories in Kazakhstan (Sabol, 2017, pp. 173-179). Through the Homestead Act, the U.S. government encouraged settlers to migrate to lands formerly belonging to Indigenous communities. These tribal lands were divided into small plots and transformed into sellable private properties. In Russia, a significant number of Slavic peasants were sent to settle in the Kazakhstan steppe, while the imperial government prohibited Kazakh pastoralists from accessing areas designated for these Russian settlements (Sabol, 2017, pp. 181-185). As Wolfe (2006) explains, agriculture is essential for settler colonialism because farming represents a sedentary lifestyle that fosters a permanent occupation of land and can facilitate the expansion of settler society (p. 395). Nomadic, semi-nomadic, and seasonally migratory societies utilize land extensively. Through agricultural projects, both Russia and the United States sought to transform these societies' traditional lifestyles into more intensive land use practices, which included cattle ranching in the

U.S. These efforts aimed to break the connections between local groups and their land, ultimately seeking to eliminate their migratory lifestyles altogether.

Settler regimes cannot tolerate the mobility of Indigenous societies because this characteristic prevents a state from fully controlling its territory and population. As a result, internal colonization often seeks to settle Indigenous populations. The American government actively relocated entire Indigenous groups to reserves, forcing them to settle. Similarly, the Russian government imposed strict restrictions on Kazakh migration; without official permits, nomads were unable to move from one district to another (Sabol, 2017, p. 185). Although the Russian Empire did not succeed in eradicating Kazakh nomadism, the goal of settling nomadic communities was passed on to the Soviet government, which ultimately fulfilled it. As nomads lost their livestock and moved to kolkhozes, the process of collectivization marked the end of a traditional nomadic lifestyle that had lasted for thousands of years.

The collectivization processes in Kham and Amdo exemplify both internal colonization and settler colonization. Many of the measures employed by the Chinese government were reminiscent of those used in Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union, and the settler regime in the United States. By creating ethnic autonomous prefectures, establishing new counties, and forming rural administrative regions, the communist regime fragmented the pastoral lands inhabited by local nomads. Similar to the situation in Kazakhstan, the Tibetan pastoralists were stripped of their livestock and forcibly relocated to cooperatives and communes, ultimately resulting in a fully sedentary population. The traditional nomadic lifestyle, which depended on migrating between seasonal pastures, was abruptly halted, leading to the death of many animals that could not adapt to ranch environments. The Chinese government also attempted to introduce agriculture to the grasslands, but this approach quickly proved unfeasible due to the harsh climate of the plateau and

the pressing political environment exacerbated by the Great Leap Forward. In terms of the extent of the tragedy, the Democratic Reform in Kham and Amdo appears to have been even more aggressive than the collectivization in Kazakhstan, as many Tibetan communities were destroyed in real wars, resulting in thousands of brutal killings. The Chinese reform was not a gradual project that subtly undermined local society; rather, it was an extremely violent process that eradicated traditional institutions and lifestyles in a very short period.

The framework of internal colonialism helps clarify the debate surrounding the connection between genocide and the collectivization practices of communist regimes. As I have will discuss in Chapter Five, colonialism can result in structural genocide because settler societies create destructive impacts on Indigenous communities. This structural destruction overlaps with the negative effects that a state imposes on its minority groups through internal colonization. Specifically, in the cases of China, Russia, and the United States, the governments may not have intended to eliminate groups such as the Tibetans, Kazakhs, and Sioux entirely, and some of them are still allowed to live in their communities and exist as local ethnic majorities. However, these countries did seek to promptly and permanently end the migratory lifestyles of these Indigenous groups. Their projects were not aimed at exterminating every individual within these groups, but rather at removing all non-sedentary populations from their territories. The termination of migratory lifestyles involves not only changing pasturing and hunting habits, but also disintegrating the social institutions that support traditional economic practices. In this sense, while the collectivization campaigns and other efforts to settle nomads may or may not meet the legal definition of genocide, they can still produce genocidal effects on nomadic societies. Furthermore, as Cameron points out, the atrocities associated with collectivization in communist countries encompass all eight dimensions through which genocide can be perpetrated according to Lemkin

(Cameron, 2018, p. 178; Lemkin, 2008, pp. 82-89). This argument is particularly relevant to the case of Kham and Amdo, where the Tibetan victims experienced considerable physical harm alongside political, economic, religious, and other forms of non-physical destruction. As discussed earlier, the moral foundation of these communities was also severely impacted by "*pidou*" activities. In terms of its consequences, the Democratic Reform in Tibetan areas is a typical example of genocide.

Returning to the topic of famine, it is important to view this kind of disaster through the lens of internal colonialism. As Wemheuer (2014) points out, oppressed nations often politicize famines from the past because these events reflect the unequal relationships between dominating and subjugated nations (pp. 192-194). For instance, both the Irish Famine (1846-1850) and the Indian Famine (1879-1902) occurred under British rule and were triggered by natural causes. However, the British Empire's response to these disasters reveals its callous attitude toward the conquered nations. During the Irish Famine, England continued to export food from Ireland despite the widespread starvation. Although the British government attempted to alleviate the situation by importing corn to Ireland, many Irish peasants were unfamiliar with this new food and unable to use it effectively for sustenance (Wemheuer, 2014, pp. 192-194). Events like this illustrate that famine is not merely a natural occurrence but rather an extension of political relationship. Likewise, when examining the epidemics that European settlers brought to Indigenous communities, Andrew Woolford emphasizes that Indigenous Peoples were forcibly subjected to the exploitative and destructive relations of colonialism. Their suffering from various European diseases cannot be viewed merely as a natural phenomenon (Woolford, 2009, pp. 89-91). Famine and diseases often occur together. Like diseases, famine is never an isolated subject (Woolford, 2009, p. 90); many cases of famine should be understood within the context of internal colonialism. In other words,

instead of debating whether a communist famine constitutes genocide, we should focus on how a state's internal colonization can lead to genocidal outcomes.

Nonstate Societies and Dwelling Perspective

Our final question is why these internal colonization projects ultimately failed. If the objective of internal colonization was to integrate the peripheries of a country into its state-building process, then the campaigns in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and China's Tibetan regions were all unsuccessful. In the short term, these projects resulted in significant disasters and conflicts within local societies; integration was largely achieved through coercion. In the long term, the integration did not last. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, both Ukraine and Kazakhstan became independent countries, and now Ukraine and Russia are at war. In China, Tibetan areas have been subjected to strict surveillance by the authoritarian government. Since the 1980s, Tibet has experienced frequent riots and protests. Notably, in 2008, when China aimed to present a prosperous national image by hosting the Olympic Games, the largest riot since the 1980s erupted in Lhasa. Since 2009, hundreds of Tibetans have protested against Chinese rule through self-immolation. As of 2022, a total of 160 Tibetans have resorted to this radical form of resistance. Due to the Chinese government's information blockade, many details surrounding these self-immolation incidents remain unknown. However, it is significant to note that while only a few incidents occurred in Tibet, most protests took place in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu, namely, Kham and Amdo, indicating that the tradition of rebellion in these areas continues.

When analyzing the disasters caused by the collectivization projects of communist regimes, Kindler and Weiner both reference James Scott's book, *Seeing Like a State*, to highlight the tension

between modern state ideologies and the complexities of local societies (Kindler, 2018, pp. 3-5; Weiner, 2020, p. 206). Scott argues that modern states prefer clarity and simplicity, which often drive state projects aimed at reforming local societies and the natural environment. This preference stems from the state's need for taxation. The simpler and clearer a local society's relational structure and population distribution are, the greater tax revenue and more effective control the state can obtain from that society (Scott, 1998, pp. 218-220). As a result, authoritarian states often reorganize local communities and natural environments for enhanced clarity and simplicity. This leads to unavoidable conflicts between central governments and local societies. Scott's theory regarding the government's inclination for simple and clear spaces aligns with Zygmunt Bauman's perspective on the relation between modernity and ambivalence. Bauman describes the modern state as a "gardening state," which is intolerant of anything that disrupts its national vision. It often perceives minorities as threats to social order and national security, seeking to eliminate them much like a gardener removes weeds (Bauman, 1991, pp. 35-52).

Territories with clear and straightforward social and demographic structures are easier for governance and tax collection. Therefore, a state naturally abominates complex landscapes such as mountains, deserts, wetlands, and prairies, where local residents often live in scattered communities and lead nomadic lifestyles. These lifestyles hinder a state's efforts to achieve efficient governance, prompting the government to seek ways to make nomads sedentary. In contrast to these nomadic groups, agricultural populations are sedentary and concentrated in compact communities, allowing a state to more easily understand the distribution of households and collect taxes effectively (Scott, 1998, pp. 184-187). As a result, the introduction of intensive agriculture frequently becomes the initial strategy employed by a state to settle nomadic groups. Kindler notes that, from the perspective of communist states, the mobility of nomadic groups and

their extensive use of land complicate integration projects. Therefore, the Soviet state aimed to eliminate nomadism and replace this lifestyle with agriculture (Kindler, 2018, p. 5). Scott further emphasizes that a state's attempts to simplify and clarify the spaces under its control often end in failure, as most local societies are unfamiliar to high-ranking government officials, which results in many unrealistic policies (Scott, 1998, pp. 204-209). This was evident during the Democratic Reform in Kham and Amdo, where the unitary agricultural plans created by top officials proved to be entirely ineffective in local environments.

Scott's theory regarding the state's preference for simplicity and clarity provides insight into the motive behind internal colonization. However, I believe that his later work, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, published ten years after *Seeing Like a State*, offers an even more helpful perspective for understanding the ultimate failure of internal colonization. This book emphasizes the viewpoints of local people rather than solely focusing on the perspective of the state (Scott, 2009). In this study, Scott specifically highlights groups of people who actively choose not to live under state control.[80] He cites British anthropologist Edmond Leach's research to illustrate that, prior to World War II, there existed many "nonstate spaces" in the world (Scott, 1998, p. 187). He describes a geographic region known as Zomia, which stretches from the highlands of Burma to the mountainous areas between Tibet and Sichuan. This was a typical nonstate space. The residents of Zomia opted to inhabit elevated regions or remote communities, allowing them to evade state taxation and military conscription (Scott, 2009, pp. 16-20, 145-150). Many communities in Zomia relied on unique crops, such as sweet potatoes, for sustenance, and some engaged in shifting cultivation to adapt to the highland geography. Nevertheless, these societies were not entirely

[80] It is similar to his earlier work, *Weapons of the Weak*, in which Scott draws attention to a particular type of resistance that often manifests in passive-aggressive forms (Scott, 1985).

isolated from the state; they occasionally ventured out of their comfort zones to benefit from interactions with state societies through trade, banditry, and various other activities (Scott, 2009, pp. 207, 327).

Zomia encompasses China's southwestern mountainous areas yet shares many characteristics with the grassland that stretches from northern Ngawa to Qinghai. Before the Democratic Reform, the grassland nomads managed to sustain social and political systems that were independent of the surrounding state powers for a considerable period. Additionally, they derived significant economic benefits from their trading and raiding activities. However, like Zomia, the independence of the grassland societies began to face challenges before World War II, as the power of Muslim warlords started to encroach upon the communities of Tibetan nomads. In the 1950s, the communist regime's Democratic Reform delivered a severe blow to the nomadic groups on the grassland. Notably, this wave of destruction affected not only the Tibetan nomads but also the animals in their environment, particularly yaks.

The wild yak can be seen as a perfect symbol of the Zomia lifestyle. This species prefers to inhabit remote and elevated habitats but occasionally descends to interact with human-owned yak herds for mating opportunities. Similar to their human counterparts in Zomia, wild yaks seek safety in secluded areas while occasionally venturing into the outside world to gain advantages. The similarities between yaks and humans in nonstate societies suggest that their behaviour patterns are influenced by shared environmental factors. This observation prompts us to shift our focus from Scott's political science to an ecological perspective.

As previously emphasized, a state's initial intent may be to either force nomads to settle down or "benevolently" assist "backward" groups in adopting modern lifestyles. However, these intentions often result in disastrous outcomes or even genocidal impacts on the living environment

of the affected populations. Why do state projects lead to such consequences? At the end of the chapter, I attempt to address this question by applying Tim Ingold's dwelling perspective to analyze the complex relationship between state and nonstate societies. Similar to Scott's views, Ingold (2000) argues that cultural behaviours require specific environments to practice (p.154). Those who choose to escape state control frequently migrate to mountains, highlands, and grasslands, as these areas provide ideal living spaces for those evaders. Likewise, many groups in nonstate societies adopt highly mobile lifestyles, such as nomadism, seasonal migration, and shifting cultivation, which necessitate vast areas of land for regular migration. Therefore, the environment serves as the foundation for these cultural behaviours.

Ingold's theory differs from simple environmental determinism because it is grounded in James Gibson's ecological psychology. Gibson argues that the objects and events within an environment provide cues that guide perceivers on how to take action (Ingold, 2000, pp. 166-168). For example, a rock conveys messages about its ontological properties through hardness, allowing most perceivers, whether human or animal, to immediately recognize it as a tool suitable for smashing things. As a result, humans utilize rocks as weapons, monkeys recognize that rocks can crack open coconuts, and eagles drop bones onto rocks to break them into smaller pieces for eating. This characteristic of the environment is known as "affordance." By highlighting an environment's affordances, Ingold suggests that the environment acts as a participant in interactions. For nomads and animals that prefer seclusion and migration, the vast grasslands and high mountains beckon them to inhabit, as the affordances of these landscapes make a nomadic lifestyle a sensible choice. This explains why the plateau's nomads and wide yaks share many habits.

As mentioned earlier, wild yaks actively participate in the interaction with the environment and serve as a metaphor of the evasive lifestyle. Their domestic relatives living in human

communities also remain closely connected to the environment. For domestic yaks, the wild is a space where they maintain important bonds. When domestic cows mate with wild yaks, they often bring the wild yaks' genes back to their herds. This results in healthier and stronger offspring, which enhances the herd's adaptability to harsh environmental conditions. The "marriage-by-capture" culture of yaks benefits humans as well. The Mewa yak is recognized as the best yak breed in China and was developed by the Mewa people, a pastoralist group from northern Ngawa. It is said that the Mewa migrated to Ngawa from the northeastern pasture of Garzê in 1918 due to disputes with neighboring communities (ABSL, 1985, pp. 170-171; Duo & Zhang, 1985, pp. 133-136). During the migration, their yaks frequently mated with different wild yaks along the way, eventually leading to the formation of a robust yak breed (ABPG, 1994, p. 1073; Cai, 1990, p. 86). These examples illustrate that for many people and animals, retreating into the environment can be crucial for acquiring the "nutrients" that support their vitality. To truly understand this connection with the environment, one must engage in practical relationships with the objects and actors encountered in their surroundings, much like the yaks do.

Drawing on her Indigenous academic experience and Ingold's dwelling perspective, Zoe Todd highlights the ontological pluralism in the interactions between the Paulatuuq communities in northern Canada and local fish species. This diversity arises from the various activities in which both humans and fishes are engaged. Todd (2014) notes that while understanding this diversity is primarily rooted in the dwelling practices of local Inuvialuit residents, it also serves as a basis for negotiation between Indigenous communities and the settler state that often adopts simplistic approaches to fish-related issues (pp. 217-238). In other words, perceiving this pluralism allows for greater flexibility in political negotiations. The flexible nature of human political behaviors mirrors the multiple roles that fishes play in the environment and their adaptable navigation in the

water (Todd, 2018, pp. 60-75). The shared action strategies of the Paulatuuqmiut and fishes reflect the affordances that the environment offers its dwellers (curvy waterways need flexible navigation).

The environment is not only the foundation of lifestyles but also a source of skills and thoughts. For individuals living within it, their relationship with the environment is participative and interactive; they rely on daily interactions with various objects and elements in their surroundings to develop their habits. In this sense, human culture primarily consists of skills necessary for residing in a particular dwelling space (Ingold, 2000, pp. 166-167). Ingold suggests that Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* can help explain the dynamic relationship between environment and skill. Cultural skills are acquired through the routine performance of specific body movements rather than through formal instruction.[81] Therefore, the relationship between dwellers and their environment is fundamentally practical. Knowledge gained through perception is also practical, as it depends on what the environment offers and how individuals engage with the objects and events within it (Ingold, 2000, p. 162). Ingold's theory posits that the human mind cannot exist independently of its environment, challenging the Cartesian separation of culture and nature and representing the dwelling perspective that he advocates.

[81] Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology also emphasizes the important role of "flesh" in shaping subjective consciousness. In the context of practice theory, Merleau-Ponty (2002) highlights that body is essentially "pre-objective," and that the subject interacts with objects through the body. Nonetheless, I believe that early practice theory and the phenomenological perspectives associated with it remain anthropocentric, or what might be termed "subject-centric," despite their shared commitment to challenging Cartesian mind-body dualism. In other words, while these theorists investigate how objects shape subjects, their research aims to understand the nature of subjects rather than the nature of objects. For instance, Martin Heidegger (1996) focuses on "Dasein" (existence) and emphasizes that its essence lies in the relationships between the subject and the world he or she dwells in, yet in his view, "Dasein" primarily refers to a human experience. Likewise, Merleau-Ponty (2002) highlights the body's role in human perception, yet his theory remains centred on how human subjectivity forms through the body. Bourdieu (1977) uses a similar strategy; his "habitus" refers to human dispositions and behavioural tendencies, although he says that these dispositions are shaped by the social arenas known as "fields" and one's position within a field.

The dwelling perspective contrasts with the building perspective, a misconception that affects many modern mindsets. The building perspective, influenced by Cartesian dualism, views human thoughts as an independent domain, leading to the belief that individuals can freely import their "ideas, plans, and mental representations" into the world (Ingold, 2000, pp. 185-186). For instance, when engineers design a residential structure, they tend to see it as a product of human intelligence. However, they often overlook the fact that successful building requires an environment that is conducive to dwelling. An architectural design that remains only on paper is meaningless. Residents do not merely inhabit a structure; they also exist within an environment that gives meaning to the act of building.

Modern states tend to use various building perspectives. As government projects seek to achieve clarity and simplicity, the state often imposes its unilateral plans on remote areas, leading to the destruction of both local communities and their surroundings. Specifically, since those who choose to dwell in remote areas, high mountains, and other nonstate spaces are abhorred by the state authorities, the environments that the evaders dwell also become a nuisance to the planners of state projects. Governments often struggle to assert their influence in these regions, where complex landscapes provide refuge for those who evade state control, and vast wilderness areas enhance their mobility. Consequently, the state projects aimed at gaining control over uncharted territories also need to address the "hostile" environments of these regions. A pertinent example mentioned by Scott (1998) is the use of Agent Orange by the US military to eliminate the tree canopies under which Vietnamese fighters hid (p. 188). Similarly, when the government seeks to eradicate nomadism, it must also focus on altering the landscapes that facilitate the mobility of nomadic groups and the environmental objects that support pastoralism, such as the animals on which they rely.

When a state seeks to impose its plans on a newly conquered area and extend its control over previously nonstate societies, it often isolates local communities from their environments. This isolation allows the government to obtain a clearer understanding of the demographic situation. For example, during the collectivization campaigns in Kazakhstan and China, nomadic populations were forcibly relocated to collective farms and communes, effectively severing their ties to their accustomed habitats. This practice not only affected human communities but also impacted animals, plants, and other non-human elements. The significant mortality rates of yaks and other livestock were largely due to their forced separation from their natural environments. In both Kazakhstan and China, nomadism was replaced by animal husbandry on ranches, and many migratory livestock were confined by fences and barbed wire, restricting their movements between pastures. Additionally, the government aimed to reshape the landscape to facilitate governance, working to replan and prepare the land for intensive agriculture. The manner in which a state observes and alters its territory exemplifies the building perspective.

From the dwelling perspective, the dwellers' lifestyles and the animals they interact with are integral parts of their environment. This environment provides them with a space of refuge; therefore, their way of life, which often evades state control, is deeply rooted in it. The practical relationships between the dwellers and their environment create a complex network of various objects and events, which presents a significant challenge for the state. When the state forcibly separates people and animals from the environment, both their culture and physical survival are severely threatened. As the state seeks to eliminate complexity, its internal colonization of the areas where humans and environment closely interact can only proceed at the expense of the lasting bonds between the environment and its dwellers. The yak was one such dweller; once they were confined to ranches, they quickly became weak and perished. The same tragedy befell the nomads

who were detained in collective farms and communes. One of the most disastrous consequences of the collectivization campaigns in Kazakhstan and China was the substantial loss of both the nomadic population and their livestock, highlighting the state's profound misunderstanding of the relationship between culture and environment.

Based on the discussion above, I argue that the primary reason for the failure of internal colonization lies in the contradiction between the modern state's pursuit of clarity and simplicity—an ideology associated with the building perspective—and the fact that nonstate societies have a deeply intertwined relationship with their environment. The bond that nonstate societies have with the environment is based on how the landscapes provide spaces conducive for state evaders to live. In this sense, an environment's affordances are essential for the way of life of these dwellers.

Concluding Remarks

In the two chapters related to Tibetan nomads and yaks, I have introduced the history and geography of Kham and Amdo, where the Chinese government initiated some of the earliest collectivization campaigns aimed at reforming traditional Tibetan communities. I have provided a detailed account of the violent processes involved in this state project and the disastrous outcomes that ensued. I view this attempt of internal colonization as a failure because it did not achieve a stable integration of the ethnic groups living on the periphery of the state. Instead, it resulted in genocide violence, the deaths of many humans and animals, and subsequent conflicts.

The two chapters focus specifically on nomadic groups. Nomadism is a lifestyle prevalent in many nonstate societies, characterized by high mobility that necessitates specific environmental conditions, including the availability of animals capable of long-distance migration. The intricate

relationship between human culture and the natural environment complicates the state's efforts to form clear and straightforward images of the territory and population that it governs. Therefore, the complexity of nomadic societies drives the state to implement campaigns aimed at settling these groups, often at the expense of the bonds between nomads and their environment. Consequently, the nomadic communities, their livestock, and the landscape are all destroyed. To grasp the genocidal effects of these policies, it is essential to adopt a dwelling perspective, understanding the interactions between the dwellers and their surroundings. Such an approach can reveal how animals and other environmental elements are foundational to human lifestyles and explain why the state projects targeting nomads ultimately harm their animals as well.

Chapter Five: What Did Buffalo Genocide Kill?

The term "buffalo genocide" was coined by Nehiyaw/Nakawe/Metis scholar Tasha Hubbard (2014) to describe the nineteenth-century mass buffalo hunt that brought American bison to the brink of extinction (pp. 292-305).[82] Hubbard categorizes this historical event as genocide for several reasons. Not only was the entire bison population almost eradicated within a few decades, but these massacres coincided with the rapid expansion of settler colonialism into the western plains of the United States and Canada. As a result, the slaughter of the continent's native bovine species and the colonial genocide against Indigenous People occurred simultaneously. In this sense, Hubbard (2014) views the buffalo genocide as an integral part of the colonial genocide of North America (pp. 292-305).

For Hubbard, the killing of buffaloes represents a form of colonial genocide. This is because the extermination of bison not only devastated the foundation of Plains Indigenous communities but also disregarded Indigenous perspectives that acknowledge the personhood of bison. Such a perspective embodies the anti-representationalism discussed in previous chapters. In this chapter, a systematic, anti-anthropocentric, and anti-representationalist analysis of the history of the buffalo hunt is applied to uncover the broader impact of this buffalo genocide, extending beyond the loss of millions of buffaloes' lives.

This chapter comprises eight sections. The first two sections delve into the interconnectedness of genocide, colonialism, and environmental damage. These three aspects form

[82] In this chapter, the terms "bison" and "buffalo" are used interchangeably. The term "bison" specifically refers to the American bison, which is commonly known as buffalo in North America. While "bison" is often used in academic contexts, "buffalo" is more frequently found in popular literature and everyday language.

a theoretical framework for examining the issue of buffalo genocide. The third section reflects on the resource-centric paradigms dominating studies on the extinction of bison. Sections four and five present historical research on the mass bison hunt during the nineteenth century and the development of major hunting methods. Section six explores the changing role of Indigenous hunters in the commercial bison hunt. The final two sections shift to an anti-anthropocentric and anti-representationalist lens to evaluate the profound impact of the buffalo genocide on Indigenous societies. My central argument is that the destruction of the American bison essentially constituted a structural genocide that disrupted relational practices between buffaloes and Indigenous Peoples. At the end of the chapter, I point out that this devastating outcome was primarily achieved through a process of dehumanizing bison.

Settler Colonialism and Genocide

During the last decades, several scholars of genocide studies and colonial history have developed theories on colonial genocide and the similar processes that happened in setter societies. It is important to note that most scholars in this field contend that colonial genocides typically occur in a more gradual and subdued manner yet result in broader and more profound devastation for the victimized groups (Moses, 2000, pp. 89-106; Wolfe, 2006, pp. 387-409). Unlike genocidal events characterized by rapid and violent conflicts, colonial genocides often inflict harm on victim groups and individuals through systematic methods, such as unjust institutions, discrimination, cultural hegemony, and resource extraction, though violence is one of the tools in a perpetrator's toolkit and many Indigenous Peoples suffered sharp population loss due to war, starvation, and diseases. Settler colonialism is a multi-dimensional process in which killing and physical destruction are merely one of the means used to put Indigenous collectivity to an end.

For Raphael Lemkin, originator of the genocide concept, this particular atrocity is not reducible to mass killing; rather, genocide signifies the destruction of the collectivity beyond the sum of group members (Lemkin, 2008, p. 79). He focused on the "national pattern" when developing his genocide theory. According to Lemkin (2008):

> Genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. …genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. (p. 79)

Therefore, genocide's ultimate goal is to terminate a group's collective way of life, especially their social and cultural foundations of shared identity. Although killing all group members seems to be one of the most straightforward ways to annihilate a collectivity, it is a very inefficient and unrealistic method.

Lemkin understands a nation as an entity defined by shared institutions and culture. During the 1950s, he expanded the scope of his comparative study of genocide, attempting an all-encompassing historical and geographic overview of the phenomenon. This included examination of the genocides that happened during the Ukrainian famine and the colonial expansion in North America (Irvin-Erickson, 2021, pp. 193-215; McDonnel & Moses, 2005, pp. 501-529; Powell, 2007, pp. 531-535). Given Lemkin's original theory's emphasis on human groups' cultural foundations in the sociological sense, it is not surprising that many of the damages caused by colonialism are considered by Lemkin to be genocidal. Those who reject the idea of colonial

genocide often argue that settler governments did not have a specific plan to completely eliminate Indigenous Peoples, and that many Indigenous people survived the expansion of settler societies (Hopper, 2021; Lewy, 2004, pp. 55-63). However, settler regimes forcefully dismantled the foundations of Indigenous traditions and survival, resulting in the dissolution of many Indigenous communities and the end of their collective ways of life. Thus, this process falls into the category of "genocide," according to Lemkin's interpretation of this concept. In *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin (2008) highlights the importance of national patterns in his definition of genocide, asserting that the collective way of life is as vital as physical elements for the survival of a group (p. 79). He does not claim that the intent or a plan to eliminate a group is the sole criterion for defining genocide.[83] Instead, he argues that a genocide can be carried out in eight different ways, ranging from biological to cultural dimensions (Lemkin, 2008, pp. 82-90).

Lemkin emphasizes the patterns of collective ways of life and attempts to understand the multi-dimensioned ways that genocide can cause group destruction. Similarly, many scholars studying colonialism focus on social and cultural structures when examining the harm caused by settler societies to Indigenous communities (Moses, 2000, pp. 89-106; Wolfe, 2006, pp. 387-409; Woolford, 2015). They try to uncover how the expansion of settler colonialism impacted the stability and sustainability of Indigenous traditions, as well as how the inherent momentum of settler societies drives this destructive process. Examples of this momentum include settler societies' ties to the international market and their need for land for settlements and agricultural expansion (Moses, 2000, pp. 89-106; Wolfe, 2006, pp. 387-409). Furthermore, these societies often

[83] The UN's Genocide Convention prioritizes perpetrators' intent to destroy victim groups as the main criterion for defining genocide. However, this is a result of compromises made during political negotiations. I discuss this issue in detail in the chapter "The Perception of Genos."

assume the superiority of Western civilization, a belief that is frequently used to justify their conquest of Indigenous groups (Woolford, 2015, p. 5).

For instance, Patrick Wolfe (2006) argues that settler colonialism is a land-centered project (pp. 387-409). Killing all Indigenous people is unnecessary, as settlers only need to destroy Indigenous societies to the extent that is required to seize their land. In most cases, assimilation is the most effective and economically efficient way to alienate Indigenous people from their traditional communities, which does not mean that colonial genocide is merely cultural. As colonialists' assimilative measures are often carried out through coercion and accompanied by violence, they ultimately also cause physical destruction to Indigenous People and their communities. Settlers take and secure Indigenous People's lands using a variety of methods, though violence is inevitable. The spatial removal of Indigenous Peoples is often the first choice. When this solution does not work, settlers try assimilation. When assimilation is impossible, mass killing is carried out as the last resort.[84] Wolfe underscores that settler genocide is a structure instead of an event in that colonialism consists of a set of ongoing unequal, unjust, and unfair relations that serve the goals of seizing Indigenous People's land and eliminating their collectivity. As he puts it, "settler colonialism is a specific social formation" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 401). It is not an event because settler genocide does not refer to certain historical episodes or incidents; rather, it represents a lasting social structure manifested through various institutions within settler societies.

A. Dirk Moses examines the process of British colonization in Australia. He argues that the violent incidents and massacres, which he classifies as "genocidal moments," were the byproducts of some irreconcilable conflicts between Indigenous Peoples and British colonizers. The conflicts

[84] In the US, these events took place in a different order: removal, massacre, and then assimilation.

were fundamentally economic and propelled by the momentum from the international market of sheep products (Moses, 2000, pp. 89-106). Regarding settler colonialism in North America, Andrew Woolford likewise suggests focusing on the larger picture beyond specific events and perpetrators' murderous intent in that the relations between Indigenous and settler societies are inherently destructive for the former. For example, the assimilation policies and residential schools were often portrayed by settlers as well-intentioned practices, and they did allow some individual students to survive without suffering or even benefit from the experience; however, according to Woolford, benevolence and destruction are not opposites in this system, for they are both guided by an absolute moral certainty that asserts Western civilization's superiority (Woolford, 2015, p. 3). In other words, the settler regimes grant themselves power and privilege to determine the future of Indigenous societies whom the settlers think inferior, which inevitably inflicts a devastating arbitrariness on Indigenous communities and their traditions.

As the examples above shows, many scholars of colonialism and genocide see settler society as a system that produces genocidal effects. This is because its institutions, policies, and social relations are all harmful to Indigenous Peoples. As Tony Barta (1987) argues, in a settler society, genocide functions as a policy or relationship detrimental to Indigenous populations to the extent that such a society can be termed a genocidal society (pp. 237-251). Throughout the history of colonialism, settler regimes consistently tried to eradicate Indigenous People's collective identities and traditions. This cultural damage often went hand in hand with physical and biological destruction, including disease spread and environmental damage. This aspect of colonialism suggests that scholars in the field of genocide studies should thoroughly analyze the impact of settler governments' policies on non-human entities, including property, natural resources, and the

environment. In addition, they should shift their focus from identifying the intent of the perpetrators to understanding how the victims perceive the harm they are experiencing.

Ecocide and Resource-centric Perspectives

Environmental damage is a salient phenomenon in many Indigenous communities under settler domination. Firstly, these communities have deep connections to their surroundings, relying on the natural resources for sustenance and livelihood. Environmental damage poses a significant threat to their survival, as it can lead to starvation and harsh living conditions due to the scarcity of essential resources. Moreover, environmental damage also undermines the cultural foundation of these communities. The traditions, knowledge, and arts of Indigenous groups are intricately linked to their specific environments. Therefore, the destruction of their environment or their displacement from their traditional lands renders many cultural elements obsolete, gradually eroding the collective identity of the group. This erosion of collective identity can ultimately lead to the disintegration of the group as a whole. Without a collective identity, a group no longer exists from the perspective of constructivism. While it may seem like an indirect consequence, the destruction caused by environmental damage can ultimately lead to destruction of human collectivity.

Many scholars have recognized the significant link between environmental damage and group destruction, leading them to develop theories exploring the relationship between these forms of devastation. One important concept that has emerged in this context is “ecocide.” This term refers to the ecological harm that results in the physical destruction of a human group, population decline, social disintegration, and cultural extinction. It is “the extensive damage to, destruction of

or loss of ecosystem(s) of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely diminished" (Short, 2016, p. 63). The term "ecocide" was first coined during the Vietnam War when scholars and activists used it to condemn the U.S. Army's use of Agent Orange, a chemical herbicide that destroyed the tree canopies in enemy territory. Later, lawyer Polly Higgins expanded this concept to encompass the severe damage inflicted on ecosystems and the threat to local residents' peaceful enjoyment of their environment (Eichler, 2020, p. 107; Higgins, 2010, p. 63). Although ecocide is not widely recognized as a crime at the international level, at least ten countries have enacted laws to criminalize it (Eichler, 2020, p. 107). Now, "ecocide" is a concept closely connected with colonialism. It encompasses acts such as land seizure, deforestation, and pollution resulting from large-scale resource extraction (Short, 2016, pp. 38-67). Throughout history, settler governments and various colonialist forces, including individual settlers, government agencies, and private companies, have actively promoted these activities. As Indigenous Peoples often depend on natural resources for their survival and cultural practices, environmental exploitation can lead to the devastation of Indigenous communities in the affected areas. Kjell Anderson's investigation into Indonesia's economic activities and social engineering projects in West Papua highlights how resource extraction and environmental damage have pushed local Indigenous communities' traditions and culture to the brink of extinction. While Anderson (2015) refers to the situation in West Papua as "cold genocide" rather than "ecocide," his study reveals the link between ecosystem destruction and the genocide of human groups (pp. 9-25).

The concepts of structural genocide, cold genocide, and ecocide provide valuable insights into the history of the mass buffalo hunt in North America. During the 19th century, buffaloes were crucial for the survival and autonomy of Indigenous communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples

of the Plains. The depletion of bison herds posed a severe threat to their existence, making the mass buffalo hunt a clear example of ecocide.

Some historians also explore the link between the buffalo hunt and land appropriation. For instance, Wolfe highlights the case of Greenwood LeFlore, a Choctaw chief during the Trail of Tears period, to illustrate how the US government utilized the notion of private ownership to dispossess Indigenous Peoples of their communal land and tribal membership. LeFlore and thousands of Choctaws were exempted from removal because the government granted them American citizenship and homesteader rights, which effectively transformed them into individual property owners rather than tribal members, and their previous tribal land was fragmented into tradable commodities (Wolfe, 2006, pp. 396-397). Likewise, during the nineteenth century, the commercialization of bison hunting led to the emergence of private ownership among Indigenous hunters. Although most hunters continued to share meat with their tribal community, they began to reserve the more profitable parts, such as hides and tongues, for trade with the white settlers. This shift away from traditional cooperative hunting practices significantly impacted Indigenous communities, leading to a transition from communal hunting to smaller group or individual hunting (Isenberg, 2000, pp. 98-99). Concurrently, white settlers capitalized on the declining bison population to advance their land-centered colonialism, using domestic cattle to occupy the plains once roamed by bison herds. The arrival of domestic cattle also brought several bovine diseases to the buffaloes, which hastened the destruction of the bison population during the second half of the nineteenth century, much like how human settlers brought contagious diseases to Indigenous communities, leading to a sharp decline in Indigenous populations (Isenberg, 2000, p. 142).

In studying the relationship between humans and the environment, the concept of ecocide and relevant theoretical frameworks mainly takes an instrumental rationalist perspective. This

perspective defines buffaloes as a natural resource that supports the physical sustainability of certain human groups. Originating from Western ecological worldviews, this perspective is prevalent in many modern historians' studies on the bison hunt. Scholars who adopt this perspective tend to focus on the economic and political causes of the bison's extermination, and they understand this consequence's impacts on Indigenous communities from the perspectives of resource sustainability and ecological balance. In this limited perspective, bison were viewed as either a source of sustenance for Indigenous peoples or a commodity that drove the growth of colonial capitalism (Mamers, 2019, p. 18).

For instance, William Hornaday (2002), one of the earliest authors to document the bison hunting process, made a long list illustrating how various parts of a buffalo (such as hides, bones, meat, and buffalo chips) served different purposes for both Indigenous Peoples and settlers (pp. 120-135). This suggests that the species' commercial value sparked greed and led to overhunting, nearly causing its extinction. Hornaday emphasizes that the Plains Indigenous Peoples' self-sufficiency depended on bison, as they could not only obtain enough buffalo meat for survival but also trade buffalo products with the white settlers for some "useless and often harmful luxuries" like whisky. He believes that the desire to trade can explain why many Indigenous groups continued hunting buffaloes even though the American government offered them beef and other provisions (Hornaday, 2002, p. 114). This argument is supported by environmental historian Chris Magoc (2006), who writes: "…Indians were lured to hunting for market value of the skin alone. This signalled an ominous departure from the Indian tradition of extracting use-value from the entire animal…" (p. 91).

It is worth noting that not only do these scholars hold that Indigenous commercial motivation played an important role in the extermination of bison, but they also believe that the

traditional relationship between Indigenous Peoples and bison was primarily founded on the practical use of the animal, such as by providing food and raw materials for a variety of tools. Based on this explanation, it is understandable why these scholars conclude that the mass bison hunt mainly led to a resource crisis, resulting in starvation and poverty for Indigenous people. From these scholars' resource-centric perspective, the disappearance of bison herds led to a loss of resources, forcing the Plains Indigenous Peoples to give up their political independence and rely on the provisions of the settler government.

Historians who use the resource-centric ecological framework believe that the main reasons behind the mass bison hunts were the market demands of settler society and military strategies. Those who focus on market demands emphasize the importance of a technological breakthrough in the tanning process during the 1870s. Before this innovation, only buffalo hides with very short fur could be processed. The new tanning method allowed the thickest furred hides to be processed into various products, especially the belts used in machinery, making buffalo hides an essential raw material and valuable commodity during the age of industrial expansion (Brink, 2008, p. 238; McHugh, 1972, p. 355; Taylor, 2011, p. 3163). Aside from commercial factors, it is widely believed that political motivation also played an important role in the decline of the bison population. Several scholars point out that the American government was aware of the sharp decline of the bison population but did nothing to stop the hunters from wiping out one herd after another (Dary, 1974, p. 128; McHugh, 1972, p. 402; Zontek, 2007, pp. 25-27). The authorities' attitude was tacit approval, if not silent encouragement. Some nineteenth-century observers believed that the government was pleased to see the demise of the bison because it would make way for the expansion of domestic cattle and ranches (Magoc, 2006, pp. 101-102). Additionally, some US army commanders, such as Philip Sheridan, openly expressed their support for the buffalo hunters,

as the extermination of bison would starve Plains Indigenous people and facilitate the armies' mission to subjugate them (McHugh, 1972, pp. 403-404).

These resource-centric theories and paradigms provide valuable views for understanding the extermination of American bison. Scholars apply the framework of economic rationality to explore the perpetrator's motivation and the victim's suffering. They conclude that the extermination of American bison herds caused damage to natural resources and was an attack on the subsistence of Indigenous nations. While this framework is useful in revealing important aspects of the bison extermination process, it has its flaws. One obvious issue is that it largely overlooks the perspectives of the victims. While this resource-centric framework acknowledges that environmental damage poses a threat to some people's survival, it categorizes this threat as an indirect disastrous loss. Within this framework, ecological damage is described as devastating to societies, but it is not considered a literal destruction of human groups. Those who adhere to this framework would argue that environmental damage *leads to* the destruction of groups, rather than ecological damage *being* the destruction of a collective. In this sense, ecocide and the similar resource-centric frameworks contrast with Hubbard and other Indigenous scholars' claims that ecological damages like the nineteenth-century mass bison hunt are genocide. Lauren J. Eichler, drawing inspiration from Hubbard and various Indigenous scholars, reflects on the anthropocentric bias and the human-nature dualism found in the definitions of genocide and ecocide. Many Indigenous worldviews and concepts of personhood emphasize the interconnectedness of humans and non-humans. This perspective not only challenges the validity of the ecocide concept but also calls into question the distinction between genocide and ecocide. Eichler (2020) argues that within Indigenous contexts, ecocide is genocide, as animals, plants, and the environment are not resources

but other-than-human persons who are integral members of social and moral networks (pp. 104-121).

Rethinking the Resource-centric Paradigm

The opposing viewpoints mentioned above stems from the epistemic difference between Western and Indigenous perspectives. In his article "Ontological Destruction: Genocide and Canadian Aboriginal Peoples," Andrew Woolford points out that a group's way of understanding the world can influence how they define destruction. Because Indigenous Peoples have close daily interactions with the animals, plants, and entities in the environment, their societies and ways of life are closely connected to their lands and surroundings. This gives them a more acute awareness of destruction. "To fully acknowledge the Aboriginal experience of attempted destruction, we need to understand land and environment not simply as means of sustaining group life, but as key components of group life" (Woolford, 2009, p. 89). Indigenous communities and their lands are not only physically interdependent with each other but also socially and culturally inseparable. As a result, environmental damage represents a direct attack on these communities, rather than an indirect destruction through pollution and extraction of natural resources. As Winona LaDuke (1999) puts it, "Many Native people view the historic buffalo slaughter as the time when the buffalo relatives, the older brothers, stood up and took the killing intended for the younger brothers, the Native peoples" (p. 154). She also cites one of her interviewees' words and comments: "The slaughter was 'really devastating to not only buffalo nation but to the Indian nations as well'…… 'We believe that the way they treat the buffalo is the way that they treat the Indians'" (LaDuke, 1999: 154).

To better comprehend the interconnectedness of Indigenous communities with the land and environment, it is necessary to adopt an anti-anthropocentric perspective. This involves moving away from the Western naturalist philosophy's binary opposition of culture and nature, and instead recognizing the similarities between human behaviours and the actions of non-human entities in the environment. By acknowledging the actions of non-human beings and their significance to human communities, we can understand why some non-human persons are essential components of group life and why the boundaries of society are not always confined to its human members. Simply put, "group life" should be considered a category that encompasses both human and non-human actors. Or, as Hubbard (2014) puts it, "An Indigenous paradigm expands the conception of people to include other-than-human animals……According to Indigenous ways of knowing, humans do not hold exclusive title to personhood, and therefore neither to genocide" (pp. 294-295).

The historians who use resource-centric perspectives often overlook or underestimate Indigenous knowledge and beliefs about non-human animals and the environment. When it comes to bison, they typically ignore the fact that, in Indigenous worlds, buffalos are non-human persons and agents (Mamers, 2019, p. 15). Likewise, settler officials and militaries typically looked down on Indigenous cultures and lifestyles related to bison. However, it is interesting to note that the narratives of these government and military personnel inadvertently contain a lot of information demonstrating the close relationship between buffaloes and Indigenous People. For instance, buffaloes were often seen as similar to Indigenous Peoples and were considered a threat to civilization. "They eat grass. They trample the plains. They are as uncivilized as the Indian," says one of the governmental officials in the 1880s (Haines, 1995, p. 205). The settlers migrating to the plains saw buffaloes as obstacles, as the herds often blocked the trails for wagons (McHugh, 1972,

p. 26). During that time, English accounts of the bison often described the animal as violent, and the slaughter of bison was seen as an action of conquering nature. Policymakers believed that the extermination of bison was crucial for relocating Indigenous People to reserves and advancing civilization (Isenberg, 2000, pp. 152-155).

Regarding the history of mass bison hunts, Tom McHugh, the author of *The Time of the Buffalo*, concludes that the destruction of bison was unavoidable under the circumstances of settler colonialism. He argues that the animal was inherently opposed to the expansion of agriculture and private ownership of land. (This viewpoint reminds us of Wolfe's study on Choctaw's acquisition of US citizenship.)

> We can look back on the massacre and say that it was inevitable, that the buffalo and civilization were incompatible and one or the other had to go; if the hunters had not decimated the herds, the "nuisance value" of the beasts would eventually have necessitated their extermination……The dilemma of homesteader on a prairie swarming with buffalo would have been precarious indeed; one can easily visualize the havoc left in the wake of stampede through treasured cornfields. Thus, we can say, if the virgin grassland was to be tamed by plow and fence, it was necessary for buffalo to go. (McHugh, 1972, p. 398)

In this sense, the buffalo genocide and the genocide of Indigenous Peoples were two results of the same social structure of settler society as well as the same land-centred project of settler colonialism.

LaDuke might agree with McHugh's comments that settler colonialism inflicted structural violence on both Indigenous Peoples and bison. However, she focuses more on the introduction of

domestic cattle and interprets its consequences from an Indigenous perspective. LaDuke emphasizes that the expansion of cattle husbandry not only led to the destruction of wild species like bison but also created an unethical relationship between humans and animals. Cattle are categorized as livestock and are processed for their protein. Similarly, bison were hunted as a natural resource and eventually exterminated as if they were pests or weeds hostile to civilization. "Cattle culture's takeover of the prairie and the subsequent destruction of the buffalo herds is multifaceted mistake, and one whose significance is becoming increasingly apparent. At its foundation, many would say, is a spiritual mistake: killing without reverence" (LaDuke, 1999, p. 147).

According to some early scholars of genocide studies, an important precursor to genocide is often the removal of victim groups from the universe of moral responsibility (Bauman, 1989, p. 192; Fein, 1979, p. 4). The moral apathy exhibited by the settlers towards both Indigenous People and native other-than-human animals had devastating consequences for Indigenous communities, as it disrupted the traditional networks through which humans and buffaloes interacted. In this destructive process, Indigenous People and buffaloes both fell victim to dehumanization. For buffaloes, the recognition of their personhood within the traditional interactive relationships with Indigenous People was denied. This concept of personhood, which was previously acknowledged, also indicates that in Indigenous communities, the categories of social groups are broader than those in Western societies. This lays an important foundation for us to reconsider the concept of genocide and reevaluate the history of the buffalo genocide through a decolonized lens. In the subsequent sections, I review the key stages of the mass bison hunt during the 19th century and explore what this process destroyed, as well as why it is classified as a genocide within the frameworks of anti-anthropocentricism and anti-representationalism.

Commercialized Bison Hunting's Three Stages

Historians typically categorize the commercialized bison hunting process into three stages. The first stage refers to the fur trade before 1830, which led to the extinction of all bison east of the Mississippi River. The second stage occurred between 1830 and the mid-1870s, during which the southern herds on the Great Plains were decimated. The third stage, spanning from the mid-1870s to 1890, coincided with the Indian wars and ultimately pushed the northern herds to the brink of extinction.

The first stage developed very slowly, making it difficult for historians to pinpoint a specific starting time. White hunters and fur traders began venturing into the continent's interior as early as the seventeenth century. While they hunted buffaloes themselves, they often chose to trade with Indigenous hunters for furs. Prior to the early nineteenth century, buffalo robes were not a significant commodity in the trade between European settlers and Indigenous people. However, the situation changed in the 1820s when the market for beaver pelts collapsed. This led to an increase in the value of buffalo robes and tongues, resulting in a significant growth in hunting campaigns over the course of that decade (Haines, 1970, p. 117). Historians estimate that around 200,000 buffaloes were killed annually during the early 1820s (Dary, 1974, p. 73).

In Canada, the North West Company of the Red River area was defeated in a nine-year war and forced to merge into the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. The Hudson's Bay Company then dominated the fur trade along the Red River and rapidly expanded hunting activities in this area. As a result, the number of buffalo in southern Canada started to decline quickly (Dary, 1974, p. 72). In Canada, most hunters were Métis contracted with the Hudson's Bay Company (Foster, 1992,

p. 62; Haines, 1995, p. 129). According to research by George Colpitts, commercial buffalo hunting in Canada was significantly different from that in the United States, primarily because Canadian hunting focused on producing pemmican, though robes were also important products. Canada's unique climate created an ideal bioregion for pemmican production. The cold winters led animals to develop thick layers of fat, while the relatively cooler summers and autumns made it easier to process the fat (Colpitts, 2015, p. 6). Additionally, after achieving a monopoly in 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company aggressively drove down pemmican prices to one-quarter of their original value. This forced Métis hunters and Indigenous peoples to hunt more buffalos to maintain their profitability. In this way, the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly accelerated the extinction of bison in Canada (Colpitts, 2015, pp. 148-218).

By 1830, the buffalo population east of the Mississippi River had been wiped out. White settlers hunted the animals for meat, leading to the decimation of most bison herds in the region. According to McHugh (1972), the last two buffaloes in this area were killed in western Wisconsin in 1832 (p. 389). Historian David Dary suggests that during the 1820s, the main hunting forces on the high plains east of the Rockies were Indigenous hunters, with white men in small numbers at that time. However, they encouraged those Indigenous hunters to hunt buffaloes and trade the robes and tongues at the trading posts (Dary, 1974, p. 73).

The disappearance of bison herds in the region east of the Mississippi River did not raise alarm among settlers and Indigenous communities. This was because the local herds were small in numbers, and the local Indigenous groups did not rely on buffaloes for their livelihood as much as the Plains Indigenous Peoples did. After wiping out the bison herds in the east, the hunting campaigns quickly expanded to the western parts of the continent. The second historical stage,

from 1830 to 1870, witnessed a series of heavy blows on the bison herds west of the Mississippi River.

In the second stage, bison skins were the most profitable natural resource in America (Krech, 1999, pp. 142-143). Annually, the entire supply of buffalo robes was around 100,000. In 1848 alone, 110,000 buffalo robes were sold by the American Fur Company. In the same year, more than 25,000 buffalo tongues were traded in the market of St. Louis. Before railways extended to the Great Plains, Missouri was the trading center of buffalo products. Traders used steamboats to collect, ship, and trade large amounts of fur robes in an efficient way (Haines, 1970, pp. 117, 189). With the expansion of the colonialism of Euromericans, trading posts were quickly established along the main transportation lines, and white settlers migrating to today's Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon, and California shot buffaloes that they encountered for meat and fun (Dary, 1974, p. 78; Isenberg, 2000, p. 109). Meanwhile, many Indigenous hunters became professional skin suppliers; they abandoned traditional hunting methods and killed buffaloes only for their most valuable parts (Isenberg, 2000, pp. 105-108). Over the years before the Civil War, commercialized bison hunts conducted by both white and Indigenous hunters started to cause significant damage to the buffalo herds on the southern plains; some Indigenous groups living in the buffalo country began to notice the decline of buffalo population (Haines, 1970, pp. 117, 157).

During the 1860s, the construction projects of the Union Pacific, the Kansas Pacific, and the Northern Pacific extended to buffalo country in succession, which had three major effects on the animals. Firstly, the Union Pacific's railroads divided the bison on the plains into southern and northern herds, permanently separating the two herds with the tracks (Haines, 1970, p. 174). Secondly, the railway construction companies hired professional hunters to provide buffalo meat to feed the workers, which led to an accelerated mass hunt and slaughter of the bison (Haines,

1970, pp. 174-176; McHugh, 1972, pp. 383-385). Thirdly, the trains and passengers kept disturbing the herds, causing more damage to the species (McHugh, 1972, p. 382). Shooting buffaloes from the moving carriages became a new form of entertainment; many wealthy Europeans even traveled to America to participate in hunting activities on trains. In addition, the development of railways brought more white hunters to the plains, leading to a competition for harvesting buffalo hides. Historians note that the prices of the robes ranged from 50 to 150 dollars each. The hunts were mainly driven by commercial hunters, both professional and amateur, with some becoming legendary figures, such as Bill Cody, known as "Buffalo Bill". Due to overhunting and mass killing, the southern herd of American bison was depleted by the 1870s. Texas, once rich in buffalo herds, had to close all of the hunter headquarters by 1877 due to the disappearance of bison and the exodus of hunters (Dary, 1974, p. 114). As a result, the plains south of the Union Pacific railway became devoid of buffalo.

Some environmental historians argue that climate change played a significant role in the drastic decline of bison populations in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Periodic droughts on the Great Plains hindered the growth of grass and led to wildfires, creating unfavorable conditions for the survival of bison (Krech, 1999, p. 137). Before this period, a climate resembling a Little Ice Age favoured the growth of grass until the 1820s, after which a major drying trend began in the 1840s. From 1850 to 1880, severe and frequent droughts put immense pressure on the buffalo herds (Krech, 1999, p. 137; Flores, 2007, pp. 162-163). This prolonged drought coincided with the rapid commercial hunting of bison, leading to a significant decline in their population on the Great Plains. The increasing numbers of horses and domestic cattle further added to the pressure on the bison herds, as these animals also required water and grass. The scarcity of water made it easier for hunters to locate the herds, as both humans and bison tended to gather around

water sources or in moist valleys (Flores, 2001, p. 65). Additionally, the introduction of livestock by settlers brought diseases such as anthrax and bovine tuberculosis to the Great Plains, resulting in the deaths of many bison (Daschuk, 2019, p. 102; Flores, 2001, pp. 65-66; Krech, 1999, p. 137).

In Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company decided to get involved in the buffalo trade during the 1830s. The company needed more pemmican to feed its sailors and saw an opportunity to profit from the growing demand for buffalo robes and tongues. By accepting robes from Indigenous hunters, the company also hoped to attract Indigenous people who had previously traded with American fur traders in Pembina (Dobak, 1996, p. 41). In the early stages, some Indigenous nations like the Blackfoot and the Cree took part in the commercial bison hunt. However, the industry was eventually dominated by the Métis from southern Manitoba (Foster, 1992, p. 62; Haines, 1995, p. 129; McHugh, 1972, p. 358). By the 1840s, Métis hunters had depleted the buffalo herds around their settlements along the Red River Valley. As a result, they had to travel to Saskatchewan and Alberta in search of buffaloes. This led to complaints from many local Indigenous Peoples, such as the Cree and the Assiniboine (Dobak, 1996, p. 44; Krech, 1999, p. 139). In the 1850s and 1860s, the conflicts between various hunting groups and the pressure on the bison herds in western Canada intensified. The Assiniboine, Plains Cree, and Blackfoot peoples frequently resisted encroachment by Métis hunters on their territories, while the Hudson's Bay Company exploited conflicts among hunting groups to lower acquisition costs (Colpitts, 2015, pp. 248-251; Daschuk, 2019, p. 65). This was exacerbated by the arrival of thousands of Sioux who crossed the border to escape the unrest in the United States (Dobak, 1996, p. 47). Compared with its American counterpart, the bison-related business in Canada was small. From 1830 to 1870, around 17,000 buffaloes were slaughtered annually for the business of the Hudson's Bay Company (Dobak, 1996, p. 45); between 1840 and 1870, the company's posts in Canada processed nearly 70,000 buffalo robes and dressed

skins harvested from hunters each year (West, 2016, p. 193). After forty years of booming development, the Canadian market of bison products finally collapsed in 1875 when the robe prices in Montreal dropped dramatically. Ironically, in the same period, Canadian hunters found that the buffaloes in this country had nearly died out. The hunters tried to explore new territories along the Bow River but could only find fewer and fewer buffaloes. By 1879, all bison herds in western Canada were gone (Colpitts, 2015, p. 257; Foster, 1992, pp. 72-74).

On the Great Plains, the massacres gradually came to an end. The transition from the second to the third stage was not clearly defined in time, but rather by a geographic boundary – the Union Pacific's rail line. As the mass bison hunt intensified in the southern plains, there were fewer white hunters on the northern side of the railroad. However, after the buffalo hunters depleted the southern herd in the mid-1870s, they crossed the rail line and flooded into the territory of the northern herd, marking the beginning of the final stage of the buffalo genocide (Isenberg, 1992, p. 237).

During the third stage, the United States began to gain advantages in its wars against Indigenous nations. As a result, more Indigenous bands were restricted to reserves, making white hunters less afraid of Indigenous attacks (Haines, 1970, pp. 202-203). The development of railways allowed more hunters to access frontier areas, where local herds were barely affected by hunting activities. Additionally, the railways facilitated the transportation of buffalo hides to eastern markets at a faster speed (Krech, 1999, p. 140). As mentioned in the previous section, during the early 1870s, the advance of the tanning process enabled workers to make high-quality leather from buffalo hides, which opened new markets for buffalo hunters (Dary, 1974, pp. 94-95). As the demands grew, buffalo hunting became a highly profitable business, comparable to a gold rush. The Civil War had ended a few years earlier and led to a rapid development of weapons. Gun

producers such as Remington and Sharps improved the rifles used during the war and invented new weapons to meet the demand of buffalo hunters. During this time, buffalo guns were typically single-shot rifles with long barrels that could shoot powerful bullets. The price of a buffalo gun ranged from 100 to 150 dollars, which was quite expensive, especially considering that a wagon cost around 500 dollars (Dary, 1974, pp. 100-101). Despite the high cost of guns and supplies, the promise of high returns attracted thousands of hide hunters to the western parts of the Great Plains during the 1870s. Many of these hunters were poor individuals hoping to achieve instant wealth (Isenberg, 2000, p. 157). The hunter armies quickly depleted the southern herd and then poured into the last habitat of the American bison on the northern plains.

Historians agree that the passive attitude of the American government contributed to the destruction of the bison. In 1867, the government's Peace Commission and several Indigenous nations, including the Comanches and Southern Cheyennes, signed the Treaties of Medicine Lodge to end the wars between the southern plain bands and the US army. Although these treaties stipulated that Euro-Americans should not settle in the hunting territories of these Indigenous nations, they did not prohibit white hunters from pursuing bison on the plains that did not belong to the reservations. This created a large loophole, allowing thousands of hide hunters to flood the plains and kill bison. Similarly, the Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1868 acknowledged the Sioux's exclusive right to use the bison herds on the northern plains. However, it did not prohibit white settlers from entering the area in the name of scientific exploration, land grants, and mining claims (McHugh, 1972, p. 392; Isenberg, 2000, pp. 124-125). Soon, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills attracted numerous gold rushers and miners to the northern plains. This was followed by a large influx of hide hunters into the area a few years later. Historian Andrew Isenberg suggests that when the government signed the treaties, they were aware of the decline of bison herds. They did

not believe that the Indigenous nations could rely on the bison for independence forever. Therefore, the treaties were considered a temporary measure to pacify Indigenous Peoples (Isenberg, 2000, p. 128). In another study, he argues that an ideology emphasizing conflict and competition prevailed in 19th-century American society. During that time, most officials had abandoned the last century's paradigm of the noble savage and accepted the idea that Indigenous People were an inferior race doomed to extinction. As bison were closely connected with the Plains Indigenous Peoples, the species' destruction was also accepted as a process of natural selection (Isenberg, 1992). Therefore, it is not surprising to see that President Ulysses Grant eventually vetoed the bill designed to save the bison, even though it had passed both houses of Congress in 1874.

Historian David Smits (1994) argues that the US army was more radical than the government and played a key role in the extermination of bison. Many army officers believed that eliminating bison was the best way to subjugate Indigenous Peoples in that the seasonally migratory bands could not maintain independence without hunting bison herds. Some high commanders, such as Generals Sherman and Sheridan, not only sponsored civilian hunting activities but also ordered their soldiers to kill buffaloes (Smits, 1994, p. 314). The army officers also assumed that killing bison might show off military power and deter the Indigenous forces. During the Medicine Lodge Treaty Council, a Kiowa chief observed US soldiers escorting peace commissioners slaughtering all the buffaloes on the way to Medicine Lodge Creek. The soldiers were wasteful, only taking tongues and hump steaks for food (Smits, 1994, pp. 317-321). After hide hunters flooded the plains, the army provided them with free ammunition and other supplies (Smits, 1994, p. 332).[85] Based on historical evidence, Smits believes that the US government and

[85] Dan Flores argues that the evidence for this view is insufficient; some historical records indicate that certain military units escorted Indigenous people on buffalo hunts (Flores, 2016, p. 42).

army intentionally encouraged the destruction of the northern herd to compel the Indigenous nations to surrender.

Nonetheless, Isenberg (2000) argues that the number of soldiers was too small to eliminate the entire northern herd (p. 129). The destruction of bison was a consequence of multiple factors. Besides the army, drought, exotic bovine diseases, and Indigenous hunters also took a toll on the bison herds (Flores, 2016, pp. 39-41; Isenberg, 2000, p. 129). However, Isenberg (2000) contends that the primary reason was the expansion of the American economy; market demands drove thousands of commercial hide hunters to the plains, wiping out one herd after another (p. 129). During the 1870s, an average hunter could hunt 50 buffaloes daily, and good hunters might kill 75 to 100 (Dary, 1974, p. 112). McHugh (1972) estimates that commercial hunters slaughtered three million buffaloes during the period between 1872 and 1874, whereas Indigenous hunters only killed one million (p. 392).

By the 1870s in Canada, even in the Alberta region, bison numbers had become extremely scarce. While overhunting was the primary cause of the bison population's sharp decline, the establishment of numerous military forts, such as Fort Macleod and Fort Calgary, and ranches also disrupted the bison's seasonal migrations, making hunting increasingly difficult. Soon, famine began sweeping through many Indigenous communities (Binnema, 2016, p. 172). At this point, the Canadian government recognized the famine's impact on Indigenous populations. Yet the authorities chose to exploit the famine and control over food rations to coerce Indigenous groups into accepting treaties (Daschuk, 2019, p. 101). This official intent evolved into policy and was widely implemented after the Conservative Party won the 1878 election, with John A. Macdonald becoming Prime Minister. The Macdonald administration used hunger and government food rations to force Indigenous communities to accept treaties and relocate to reserves, thereby creating

conditions for the construction of a railway to the Pacific. His strategy effectively propelled the expansion of the Canadian settler state into the western territories (Daschuk, 2019, pp. 114-134).

In the final stage of the buffalo hunt, the northern herd dwindled and retreated to the plains between Montana and Dakota. After 1879, it became extremely difficult to find large herds (Dary, 1974, p. 117). The mass bison hunt that had lasted for decades finally came to an end in the 1880s. The last shipment of hides was sent out in 1884, and the bison herds completely disappeared from the Great Plains of North America (Dary, 1974, p. 119; Krech 1999, p. 141). The famous Crow chief Plenty Coups said:

> By the time I was forty (1888), I could see that our country was changing fast, and that these changes were causing us to live very differently. Anybody could now see that there would be no buffalo on the plains, and everybody was wondering how we could live after they were gone. (Linderman, 2017, p. 172)

After people hunted all the live buffaloes, they began to reuse the bones. The buffalo bones were gathered from the plains and transported to factories, where they were crushed into powder and turned into fertilizer. Some famous historical photos depict enormous bone piles towering like hills. The bone trade expanded quickly in the 1880s but soon decreased. In 1890, the final shipment of buffalo bones occurred in Saskatoon, signaling the end of the Buffalo Time (Dary, 1974, pp. 134-135; Krech, 1999, p. 141).

Before European Americans arrived on the Great Plains, Indigenous groups had been hunting bison for thousands of years without significantly impacting the health of buffalo herds (Brink, 2008, p. 34; Cunfer, 2016, p. 10; Walker, 2016, p. 149). However, a half-century of commercial hunting led to a devastating decline in the bison population. This mass hunt, driven

by Euro-American colonialism, also reshaped the relationship between Plains Indigenous Peoples and bison. The relationships between humans and bison in Indigenous societies were complex, and the changes they experienced impacted more than just their survival. Their social and spiritual lives were also significantly affected. Understanding the impacts on the social, emotional, and cognitive dimensions will help us grasp why the mass bison hunt is considered a genocide within Indigenous epistemologies. The following section will discuss the three main bison-hunting methods that developed in the 19th century. By examining the evolution of these methods over different historical periods, we can see how human-bison interaction changed.

The Evolution of Major Buffalo-hunting Methods

The first hunting method is known as buffalo jump and pound. According to archaeological evidence, Indigenous People have been using this method to hunt bison for thousands of years. The "jump" method involves hunters utilizing the natural landscape to lead a bison herd to a prepared route that ends in a high precipice, known as a buffalo jump. The panic will cause the buffaloes to blindly follow their leaders, resulting in the entire herd falling off the cliff and crashing at the bottom. Some animals will fall to their death, and the injured ones will be killed by hunters waiting at the base of the cliff. The "pound" method was primarily used in areas where high cliffs were not available (Walker, 2016, p. 144). It employs a similar luring strategy as the jump tactic but drives the herd into a corral made of branches and rocks. The buffaloes become confused by the "walls" and are unable to find the exit, ending up trapped in the wooden corral and running around until exhausted. The hunters then finish them off with arrows and spears.

The jump and pound tactics are essentially variations of the same method applied to different terrains. Both strategies require hunters to have ample knowledge of bison habits in order to drive the herd in the right direction. The communal hunt involved the entire community and featured a clear division of labour based on gender and age. Archaeologists have found more buffalo jump sites than buffalo pound sites, indicating that the former was a more popular hunting method in the past.

A buffalo jump hunt usually began with rituals involving dances, charms, and buffalo stones, also known as *iniskim*. These stones contained the power to summon the buffalo spirits and attract the herds to the hunting field (McHugh, 1972, pp. 81-84). Once a herd was located, young scouts, known as "buffalo runners" or "buffalo chasers" in different groups, were sent to drive or lure the animals toward the trap. Disguised beneath wolf skins, these buffalo chasers had to use patience and carefully push the herd to the prepared route, a process that usually lasted for days. The lane leading to the cliff was often marked with white boulders or branches. When the herd got close to the entry of the lane, the chasers would shout or clap to startle the buffaloes. At the same time, other community members, including elders, women, and children, would wave robes and cloth at the two sides of the lane, ensuring the herd ran in the right direction (Verbicky-Todd, 1984, pp. 109-118). Sometimes, one or two runners would run in front of the herd, guiding them to the edge of the cliff; this was a dangerous job, as the runners must take the last moment and jump sideways before reaching the cliff (Brink, 2008, pp. 138-139). The buffaloes were taken by surprise when they reached the end of the road and could not stop before the cliff. Even if a few of the leading buffaloes managed to halt, their panicked followers would push them off the mountain (Verbicky-Todd, 1984, pp. 109-121). Typically, a successful jump hunt could capture hundreds of buffaloes. Another group of hunters, along with the community's female members, had already

gathered below the cliff. After the buffalo's jump, they slaughtered the surviving animals and then began the butchering process.

The buffalo pound method involved all the strategies and steps used in the buffalo jump, with the only difference being that the herd was driven into a wooden corral rather than off a cliff. In addition, Indigenous People sometimes utilized winter weather for hunting, as buffalo's heavy bodies often became stuck in deep snow, providing an opportunity for hunters to catch them. In 1835, a missionary observed a surrounding method for buffalo hunting, in which people formed a cordon around a herd of buffaloes and ran in circles to terrify them. Then, they slowly closed the circle to trap and kill the animals (Dary, 1974, p. 57).

The Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in southern Alberta is the most famous buffalo jump remaining in the world. Indigenous People used this location to hunt bison for 7,000 years before it was abandoned. Now, this archaeological site has become a UN World Heritage site. Archaeologists have found the remains of an extensive system of drive lanes at this location, showing that Indigenous People had intricate knowledge about the surrounding landscape. The lanes connect the cliff with a basin rich in grass, which explains why this place became a long-lasting hunting field. The hunts at this site tended to succeed because the basin behind the cliff kept attracting buffalo herds to graze (Brink, 2008, pp. 71-81). At the bottom of the cliff, there was a creek running through, which created ideal conditions for cooking and camping. Many traces of ritual, butchering, and cooking are still visible in the prairie below the jump site.

After horses were introduced to the Great Plains, the traditional method known as buffalo jump and pound began to be replaced by equestrian hunting methods. As a result, many buffalo jump sites were abandoned in the 19th century. The groups with few horses continued to use the traditional method for a longer period; for example, the Assiniboine and Plains Cree were still

relying on it after 1850. The last known instance of this hunting practice was in 1874 when it was carried out by some Blackfoot hunters (Verbicky-Todd, 1984, p. 132).

The second major method of buffalo hunting is "chasing on horseback" or equestrian hunting. During the nineteenth century, this method was also known as "buffalo-running." The prevalence of this method in Indigenous nations was largely connected with the activities of early European colonists such as the Spaniards, who introduced horses to the southwest region of North America in the seventeenth century. Horses soon became valuable commodities and started to spread east and north. During the eighteenth century, the trades and raids among Indigenous nations brought horses to other parts of the continent, including the Great Plains (Daschuk, 2019, p. 44; West, 2016, p. 180). After 1800, all nations on the plains became equestrian (Krech, 1999, pp. 135-136). Horses not only impacted Plains Indigenous Peoples' hunting methods but also altered their modes of transportation. Before the arrival of horses, Indigenous Peoples primarily relied on dogs to haul heavy loads.

After acquiring horses, the Plains Indigenous Peoples quickly mastered the skills of equestrian hunting, which eventually rendered traditional hunting methods obsolete. This process developed gradually. Initially, Indigenous hunters attempted to combine equestrian skills with traditional methods, so horseback and horse-less methods co-existed for quite some time. The earliest recorded instance of Plains Indigenous Peoples adopting horseback hunting to enhance old hunting methods occurred in 1832 when 500 Sioux successfully hunted 1,400 buffaloes using this technique. The Sioux incorporated horses into the surrounding strategy mentioned above by riding in a large circle to enclose the herd of buffaloes. Then, they slowly tightened the encirclement to terrify the animals (McHugh, 1972, p. 133). Horses were also used in combination with the buffalo jump and pound method because not all communities had enough horses to surround entire buffalo

herds. Many horse-poor bands still needed to use buffalo jumps and wooden corrals to trap their game. However, the efficiency of locating, following, and driving herds could be significantly increased by just a few warriors on horseback. The help of horse riders made traditional hunting easier. Once a group had enough horses to equip all its hunters, they would stop using the buffalo jump and pound methods and switch solely to equestrian hunting (McHugh, 1972, p. 136). By the mid-nineteenth century, buffalo running had become the main way for Plains Indigenous Peoples to hunt bison, leading to the abandonment of most buffalo jump and pound sites.

During the peak of the horseback hunting method, skilled Indigenous buffalo runners were able to hunt a large number of bison without forming an encirclement. The key to their success was the coordination between horse riding and archery. Before 1870, most horseback hunters preferred to use bow and arrow as their primary weapons. At that time, most rifles were not very effective in buffalo running because reloading and aiming while on a moving horse was extremely difficult (Isenberg, 2000, p. 88). Also, the old-fashioned lead bullets were not powerful enough and often could not penetrate the thick skin of the buffalo, making it difficult to bring them down. However, during the time it took to make one gunshot, an archer could aim and shoot six arrows while riding a running horse (McHugh, 1972, p. 138). Typically, a buffalo runner could kill two or three animals in a single run (Isenberg, 2000, p. 88). The Crow chief Plenty Coups once talked about his fondness for this method and said:

> The bow was the best of weapons for running the buffalo. Even the old-time white men, who had only the muzzleloading guns, were quick to adopt the bow and arrow in running buffalo. But a powerful arm and a strong wrist are necessary to send an arrow deep into a buffalo. (Linderman, 2017, p. 17)

The arrows shot by skillful hunters were deadly, as they only aimed at the buffalo belly, which is the animal body's softest and weakest part. The mounted archers would utilize the elevated position to shoot arrows both forward and downward. The immense power of the bow often propelled the arrows to penetrate the bodies of animals and insert into the ground. When shot, the buffaloes usually refused to stop immediately, but the wound and pain would eventually force them to drop out of the herd, fall, and bleed to death (Linderman, 2017, p. 18).

Sometimes, a small group of equestrian hunters could kill dozens of buffalo per day. Once a community acquired enough horses, they could organize communal buffalo chases, as seen in the 1832 Sioux example. Hundreds of buffalo chasers quietly approached the herd from the downwind side, and then the hunters divided into two groups. When the opportunity arose, the two groups charged the herd with a V-shaped formation, outflanking the buffaloes from two sides and eventually forming a circle enclosing the herd. While the hunters on horseback were swiftly closing in, they would shoot the besieged animals from the outer edges of the herd towards the centre. Communal buffalo-running often involved hundreds to thousands of buffaloes. Women and children would ride with the hunters and butcher the carcasses on the spot, similar to what was done at a buffalo jump site (Verbicky-Todd, 1984, pp. 140-151).

In Canada, buffalo-running was the primary hunting method of the Red River Métis hunters. Unlike the Plains Indigenous groups, who preferred to use bow and arrow, these Canadian hunters always used guns to kill buffaloes while chasing the herds. Every summer, the Métis hunters would gather a large horseback army and set out to find buffalo. The expedition typically lasted for four months, concluding as winter approached (Hornaday, 2002, pp. 167-178). It is important to note that Métis hunters had distinctly different methods for hunting bison compared to other Indigenous hunting groups, particularly in the timing of their annual hunts. Indigenous traditional hunts

typically took place in autumn, while the Métis developed a summer bison hunt. This was aimed at utilizing specific animal fats to enhance the taste of pemmican and to increase production to meet the demands of the Hudson's Bay Company. After 1821, summer buffalo hunting became the main method for Métis hunters. This extended hunting season contributed to the accelerated decline in buffalo populations (Colpitts, 2016, pp. 201-224).

The Crow chief Plenty Coups once encountered a large camp of Métis buffalo hunters while traveling to a Sioux village:

> These mixed-bloods of the Red River were a tribe of people to themselves. Neither red nor white, they traveled and camped together, wearing bright-colored white men's clothes mixed, like their blood, with the regular apparel of our own people. Their habits were more nearly like ours than like those of white men, except that they used Red River carts drawn by horses, carts that squeaked and screamed across the plains like a herd of crying things looking for rest. And they packed dogs often, just as our fathers did before they got horses to carry their things. (Linderman, 2017, p. 203)

For the Indigenous horseback hunters like Plenty Coups, their bows and arrows were not replaced by guns until the 1870s when repeating rifles were invented and proven to be more efficient than archery in buffalo hunts (Dary, 1974, p. 66).

White men rarely hunted buffalo on horseback; instead, they invented a cruel sport using "iron horses." That was the game of shooting buffalo from a moving train. When the railways first extended to the plains, the buffalo herds were unfamiliar with trains and did not perceive them as a threat. As the train passed through areas with buffalo herds, the conductor would slow down and

let the passengers shoot the animals from the carriage windows. Sometimes, the train and the herd traveled side by side for miles, allowing people to kill large numbers of animals. The slaughter was carried out purely for fun, and the carcasses were left to rot in piles. It usually took about a year for the herds to realize the danger of humans and to stay away from the "iron horses" (Haines, 1995, p. 177; McHugh 1972, p. 350).

During the early decades of the second stage of the mass buffalo hunt, Indigenous horseback hunters provided a significant number of bison robes and tongues to the market. Using the buffalo-running method, a team of 15 to 25 hunters was able to harvest a thousand buffaloes in one hunting season, typically during the summer when the fur on the skins is short. However, the white hunters soon invented a more efficient hunting method called "still hunt," which allowed a single shooter to kill one to three thousand buffaloes in one season (Hornaday, 2002, p. 160). During the second and third stages of the mass bison hunt, still hunt emerged as the primary method of hunting buffaloes.[86] This approach was predominantly used by white hunters, who believed that the traditional method of buffalo-running employed by Indigenous hunters was too slow to capture enough game (Hornaday 2002, pp. 161-162). The term "still hunt" refers to the method's focus on finding a strategic position to confuse the targets. In an ideal situation, the hunters would be able to fire from a few hundred yards away, and the buffaloes would not detect them and run, which allowed the hunters to shoot the buffaloes one by one as they stood still (McHugh, 1972, p. 361). Once the hunter found such a spot, he should conceal himself very well and get as close to the herd as possible. Then, he just needed to remain in position and continue firing the long-range breech-loading guns, taking down dozens of buffaloes without stopping. The shooters were often followed

[86] This hunting method was primarily used in the United States, as very few white hunters participated in the commercial bison hunting in Canada (Cunfer, 2016, p. 24).

by skinners, and they would only kill as many buffaloes each day as the skinners could process in one day (McHugh, 1972, p. 363).

The still hunters were often on foot (Hornaday, 2002, p. 164). During the final stage of the mass hunt, when buffaloes became scarce, the hunters would ride horses to search for bison herds. Once a herd was located, they would leave the horses and supplies behind and proceed on foot or by crawling to the shooting spot. This was necessary to avoid startling the animals. The still hunt typically took place in the morning and ended before noon to allow time for the skinners to work on the dead bodies (Isenberg, 2000, p. 133). When approaching a herd, the hunter must stay downwind to avoid alerting the animals with his scent. Ideally, the hunter should find a slight elevation or a bush to hide behind. If such terrain was not available, the hunter must crawl to the shooting position and try to stay low in the grass. The shooting spot was often 100 to 250 yards away from the targets. Once ready, the shooter would scan the herd with a telescope and identify the lead cow. The female leader of the herd was always the first target. The shooter would aim at her lungs beneath the heart and kill her with one shot. As other buffaloes typically followed the lead cow's commands, her death would result in the entire herd becoming disoriented (Isenberg, 2000, p. 134). Despite the loud gunshot, most buffaloes would stay where they were, trying to understand their leader's fall, which created an opportunity for a still hunt. The shooter then killed one buffalo after another until the smell of blood prompted the herd to move out of range. It is reported that a skilled still hunter could kill up to 50 to 60 buffaloes in a morning hunt (Hornaday, 2002, p. 166; Isenberg, 2000, p. 134).

The white still hunters were responsible for destroying most buffalo herds during the second half of the commercial bison hunt. This method allowed the Euro-American hunters to overtake the horseback Indigenous groups and become the biggest hide providers during the

nineteenth century. The famous observer and historian Hornaday suggests that still hunt represents the greed of white hide men. He also points out that this was a very cruel practice in which the hunters made use of the animals' bewilderment to slaughter them (Hornaday, 2002, pp. 160-162). After the first shot, the herd might be astounded but usually would not run. The buffaloes might hear the noise of the gunshot and see the smoke rising on the ridge, but they could not establish a causal relationship between the fall of companions and these phenomena hundreds of yards away. Reportedly, many buffaloes have a strange curiosity for blood. In the hunt, they even gathered around the dead body to examine the fallen one's wound, which gave the hunters a perfect "still" to take down more (McHugh, 1972, pp. 364-378). Occasionally, a few wary animals might sense the danger and try to flee; the hunters would then target them after the lead cow (Isenberg, 2000: 134).

The method of still hunt highlights the disconnect between hunters and the buffaloes they pursue. Unlike the more traditional methods such as buffalo-running, still hunt cannot be considered a fair confrontation between humans and animals. Buffalo chasers engaged in close combat with their prey, while still hunters remained hidden at a distance, sniping the animals without putting themselves in danger. Despite this, many still hunters boasted about their hunting experiences and laughed at the bison's "stupidity." This lack of respect and reverence for the animal is a prime example of what LaDuke (1999) refers to as a "spiritual mistake"; namely, killing without reverence (p. 147).

The Disputes over Plains Indigenous Peoples' Roles in the Commercial Hunt

Frank B. Linderman (2017) conducted an interview with Plenty Coups and authored the memorial of this Crow chief. According to Linderman, Plenty Coups felt deep sorrow at the extinction of bison and was hesitant to discuss his life thereafter. The chief only said:

> …when the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened. There was little singing anywhere. Besides, you know that part of my life as well as I do. You saw what happened to us when the buffalo went away. (Linderman, 2017, p. 237)

Linderman interprets Plenty Coups' words and argues that the destruction of the bison had a significant impact on Indigenous communities, leading to starvation and poverty. With the hunters having nothing to hunt, their lives became aimless. Many reservation residents like Plenty Coups stopped maintaining their homes; for a long time, they had no visitors except tuberculosis and famine. For Plenty Coups, his sorrow also stemmed from the personal experience of witnessing the white hunters' recklessness (Linderman, 2017, pp. 237-238). As LaDuke suggests, the wanton hunting of bison was not only predatory in terms of resources but also deeply insulting to the esteem of Indigenous People. What many Indigenous communities lost went beyond just a source of subsistence; it also erased the environmental foundation of their traditions (LaDuke, 1999, pp. 147).

While the mass bison hunt had a significant impact on Indigenous People, some historians emphasize that Indigenous hunters also played a role in the extermination of bison. Before the white hide men's still hunt became the primary hunting method, buffalo-running was the most efficient way to harvest bison skins. After the 1840s, Indigenous hunters slaughtered more than

600,000 buffaloes every year (Zontek, 2007, p. 20). During the second stage of the mass hunt, Indigenous buffalo runners eliminated millions of buffaloes on the southern plains and provided large amounts of robes to the Euromerican traders. For example, historical evidence shows that most western Sioux bands had been hunting buffaloes for the American Fur Company since the 1820s. By the 1840s, the Sioux had occupied several buffalo grounds through wars with neighboring nations like the Crows and the Pawnees. In 1837, a smallpox epidemic destroyed many Crow and Pawnee communities, which created an important opportunity for the Sioux to take over the buffalo grounds east of North Platte. Historians found that whenever the Sioux hunters seized a new buffalo ground, they always quickly wiped out the local herds for robes (Flores, 2007, pp. 160-162). Some historians suggest that even if the Euro-American settlers did not flood into the Great Plains, the Indigenous nations would still have exterminated the bison by themselves. The acquisition of horses allowed them to slaughter the buffalo herds more efficiently, and the demands of the hide market kept driving them to kill more buffaloes than they needed (Flores, 2001, p. 68; Isenberg, 2000, p. 33).

The commercial hunt was very wasteful compared to traditional communal hunts. Animals were killed for their skins and tongues, and the rest of the body was left to rot. This practice was unsustainable for the species because only young cows produced good hides. As hunters targeted female buffaloes, the species' reproductive rate was severely reduced (Zontek, 2007, p. 20). Due to the growing demand in the market, there was an over-supply of bison hides, leading to a decrease in prices during the last stage of the buffalo hunt. As a result, hunters had to kill more buffaloes in order to maintain their profits (McHugh, 1972, p. 253).

In relation to the issue mentioned above, several scholars argue that Indigenous People were originally conservative in their use of buffaloes. However, they became wasteful because

white traders enticed them to trade more buffalo products in exchange for tempting goods (Isenberg, 2000, p. 82; McHugh, 1972, pp. 400-401). While the introduction of horses did make buffalo hunting more efficient, it was ultimately the decision of the Plains Indigenous groups to participate in commercial hunting. The Euro-American market's demand for buffalo robes, coupled with the provision of horses by settler society, directly and indirectly led to the decline of the bison population (Dary, 1974, p. 68).

Therefore, when discussing the wantonness and wastefulness of Indigenous buffalo hunters, many historians turn to world-system frameworks to explain the impact of the market economy brought to North America by the Euro-American settlers. These scholars appear to embrace the paradigm established by anthropologist Eric Wolf (1982), highlighting the connections between the regional economy and the global market. According to these historians, by the nineteenth century, Indigenous societies were already integrated into a market system dominated by European colonists, and the traditional values of Plains Indigenous Peoples had been significantly affected by structural changes (Flores, 2001, p. 61). For example, from 1670 to 1870, Canada's Hudson's Bay Company held exclusive rights to trade and commerce in Rupert's Land, a vast area that includes parts of today's Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. This privilege enabled the company to monopolize local trades, particularly the buffalo hide business with Indigenous hunters. Additionally, this monopoly connected many Indigenous nations, such as the Assiniboine, the Cree, and the Blackfeet, to the company's supply chain and the international market, significantly increasing the hunting activities in western Canada (Dobak, 1996, pp. 33-52). The involvement of Indigenous communities in commercial hunting quickly depleted their own resources and escalated conflicts between bands as different groups competed for the dwindling buffalo herds (Isenberg, 2000, p. 111). The influence of the capitalist system caused the economy

of the Plains Indigenous Peoples to become exploitative and market-oriented. As a result, their buffalo hunt evolved into an unsustainable and wasteful activity (Isenberg, 1992, p. 235; 2000, p. 106).

The historians who use the world-system frameworks suggest that the economic activities of settler society changed many Indigenous communities and disrupted the relationship between people and the environment. As discussed earlier, the commercial hunting not only turned traditional hunters into professional suppliers of fur robes, but also depleted the buffalo herds on the plains and replaced these wild animals with domestic cattle. This led to the abandonment of communal hunting, with hunters focusing on acquiring valuable goods and seeking high profits in the fur trade. Instead of pursuing resources essential for their communities' survival, many Indigenous buffalo hunters were driven by the desire for monetary gain within the economic system of settler society. These Indigenous hunters were no longer part of communal hunting teams; they became wholesalers who served the economic system of the settler society, much like previous tribal members who became US citizens and contributed to the breakdown of the tribal communal lifestyle. In this way, the commercial buffalo hunt, which turned many Indigenous individuals into exploitative hunters, was one of the methods used to carry out the structural genocide of settler colonialism. For the settlers, bison were an obstacle to the advance of civilization; they were eager to eliminate these wild animals to make room for their cattle. As Patrick Wolfe (2006) suggests, settler colonialism "destroys to replace." The disappearance of bison allowed for the expansion of the market economy, particularly the cattle industry. As a result, the Indigenous hunters shifted to supplying the market economy, and the bison were pushed out to make space for cattle. This structural change naturally led to a reckless and wasteful extraction of the remaining valuable resources from the bison.

While Eric Wolf's world-system paradigm and Patrick Wolfe's theory of structural genocide offer valuable perspectives for examining the nineteenth-century massacre of American bison, these frameworks both present a theoretical dilemma. The discussion of wantonness and wastefulness is crucial for reflecting on the ecological damage and resource extraction caused by the mass hunt. However, those who emphasize this aspect often overlook that "waste" is fundamentally a concept of the market economy. In modern economics, waste refers to the inefficient use of resources and the failure to extract their full value. Like those resource-centric theories, the notion of waste is closely connected to Western civilization's instrumental rationality. When scholars discuss the extent to which Indigenous hunters became wasteful, wanton, and market-oriented, they are essentially applying the economic principles of Euromerican settlers to the experiences of Indigenous people and buffaloes. While this approach effectively highlights the exploitative relationship between settlers and Indigenous societies, as well as the ecological damage caused by excessive resource extraction, it often overlooks the subjective feelings of Indigenous people in relation to environmental destruction. For many Indigenous people, bison's destruction was more than just environmental damage and the decline of the bison population was closely linked to the settler genocide in North America. A theoretical framework that focuses solely on resource efficiency may be misleading, as it fails to acknowledge these significant impacts of the settler genocide on the "worlds" where Indigenous Peoples and bison resided.

The Interactions between Bison and Indigenous People

In the concluding sections of this chapter, I will shift to a few anti-anthropocentric frameworks and use several ontological-turn perspectives to analyze the impact of bison elimination on Indigenous communities. I will also apply these frameworks and perspectives to the discussion of

genocide, particularly examining Christopher Powell's theory of social figuration to evaluate the destructive consequences of the mass bison hunt. The shift to these theoretical perspectives is essential because Indigenous approaches to environmental interaction are fundamentally distinct from the resource-centric practices of market economy. While each community has unique methods of engaging with the environment, most Indigenous cultures possess complex knowledge and skills for coexisting with animals in their daily lives. These unique perceptions and practices enable Indigenous Peoples to develop diverse ontologies about the world around them. These ontologies are often non-anthropocentric, acknowledging personhood in non-human entities such as animals, mountains, and waters. Anti-anthropocentric paradigms prioritize the interactions between humans and non-human entities, emphasizing the latter's influence on the environment and human actors. Within this framework, humans and non-human animals participate in interactive processes and events within their shared environment.

The discussion below will present two main arguments. Firstly, both humans and other-than-human animals are dwellers of their environment. As dwellers, they must adapt to their surroundings, while also having the ability to shape the environment. As previously explored, according to Tim Ingold (2000), human culture is not simply a set of preconceived perceptions and behaviours, but rather a body of knowledge and skills that generations develop through their interactions with the environment (pp. 2-3). Additionally, other actors such as animals and plants also play a role in this interactive process and influence the development of human culture. Therefore, the boundary between culture and nature is not as explicit as previously assumed. Secondly, Indigenous ontologies that acknowledge the personhood of other-than-human animals are not merely religious beliefs, but rather the epistemic outcomes of everyday human-animal interactions. According to the anti-representationalism proposed by Martin Paleček and Mark

Risjord (2013), an entity's ontological properties depend on its interactions with people (pp. 2-23). In other words, an entity's ontological properties are relational and hinge on its relationships with other beings, including humans. As a simple example, if a dog forms a close bond with a human, it becomes a member of the family rather than just a regular animal, thus embodying personhood. This new ontological property of the dog as a family member is not a figment of the human owner's imagination, but a genuine relationship established through the behaviours of both the dog and the human. These two perspectives prompt us to reconsider the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and buffaloes and to recognize the personhood of bison as perceived by Indigenous communities. This understanding is crucial for comprehending the accusations of buffalo genocide.

The colonialist ideology of the nineteenth century portrayed bison as symbols of savagery, while popular culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries often depicts Indigenous people as always living in harmony with wild animals. Indigenous cultures are often described as thrifty and efficient in their ways of life, with romanticized depictions of pre-colonial Indigenous people living in idyllic environments, enjoying ample natural resources, and hunting a variety of game (Dorst, 2007, p. 183). This oversimplified view of the Indigenous way of life is stereotypical and potentially misleading. In reality, Indigenous Peoples' traditional ways of life were as challenging as survival methods in other cultures. Indigenous hunters had to carefully assess changing animal herds to ensure sufficient food. Hunting is not like logging. Animals do not just stand there like trees and wait for people to take them down. Success in hunting required wisdom, bravery, and diligence to avoid potential risks. Sometimes, failure is inevitable, and the hunters must face frustration (Walker, 2016, p. 142).

From an anti-anthropocentric perspective, the Indigenous buffalo hunters were just one of the participants in the environment of the Great Plains. This environment is the setting in which

human beings must learn to dwell. Studies of natural history demonstrate that American bison played a significant role in shaping the landscape of the plains and showed strong adaptability to the local ecosystem. This adaptability was based on a bison-shortgrass partnership lasting more than 10,000 years. Bison herds tended to live in the western plains, rich in shortgrass, as these plants provided them with more protein than tall grass. The shortgrass also benefitted from bison as the animals' droppings returned plentiful fertilizers to the soil. Additionally, bison grazing helped select tougher grass breeds to survive and stimulated new grass growth. After droughts and wildfires, the shortgrass could rapidly restore and take over the areas where tall grass grew. Eventually, the entire prairie was dominated by the hardy shortgrass favoured by buffaloes (Isenberg, 2000, pp. 22-23; McHugh, 1972, p. 43). Bison also created North America's oldest road network. As they migrated, they repeatedly walked along the same routes, leaving permanent trails on the prairie and in the mountains. This extensive road network spanned from the Appalachians to the Great Plains and served as important paths for early human explorers (Dary, 1972, p. 180). The environment constitutes the pre-existing setting for its dwellers, and humans were not the first to occupy it. When the ancestors of Indigenous Peoples arrived on this continent, they encountered a world deeply influenced by bison and other native animals. Given the bison's ability to impact the environment, it is difficult to argue that agency is a trait exclusive to humans; animals also play a role in the interactive network they share with humans. Therefore, in order to adapt to the new circumstances, Indigenous People had to collaborate with other-than-human animals, co-creating the surrounding environment and learning to engage with other entities in the ecosystem.

Environmental historians have observed that Indigenous people often established reciprocal relationships with other-than-human animals (Mamers, 2019, p. 14). For example, the Blackfoot learned organization techniques for buffalo hunting from wolves, and many of their strategies for

using buffalo jumps and pounds were inspired by wolf packs. Certain Indigenous groups, including the Blackfoot, Piegan, and Blood, held beavers in deep reverence, as the beavers' ability to control river systems helped these communities better predict the migration routes of bison herds (Colpitts, 2015, p. 64).

The relationship between Indigenous People and the environment of the Great Plains was not static. Over time, human dwellers adapted to the environment through a long and dynamic process. For instance, many Indigenous nations did not become migratory groups and rely on buffalo for living until a few hundred years ago (Isenberg, 2000, p. 90). Some groups categorized as Plains Indigenous Peoples in the nineteenth century were actually woodland dwellers before 1800. For example, the Lakota, one of the major Sioux tribes, had two subtribes, the Oglalas and Brulés, who migrated to the prairie in the seventeenth century while other Lakota bands remained in the woods. The plentiful buffalo herds on the plains led to significant population growth for the Lakota emigrants, despite the impacts of the smallpox epidemic. In the early nineteenth century, the Lakotas continued to move westward and allied themselves with Cheyennes. They defeated Crows and Kiowas at the Black Hills, allowing them to control the local trade of buffalo robes (Flores, 2007, pp. 158-160).

Some scholars argue that the westward migration of Indigenous groups during this period had already led to a decline in buffalo numbers, largely due to the acquisition of horses (Calloway, 1996, p. 122; Isenberg, 2000, p. 2). Historian Dan Flores suggests that Southern Plains Indigenous communities, like the Comanches, probably never successfully developed an ecological equilibrium with buffaloes before the commercial hunt brought the species to the edge of extinction, largely due to these Indigenous groups' relatively short possession of horses (less than 200 years) (Flores, 2001, p. 68). In other words, the equestrian hunting methods reduced the numbers of bison

too fast, though hide trade was also a significant cause. While horses enabled Indigenous Peoples to hunt more buffaloes than before, their equestrian hunters never got a chance to learn how to use the new technique in a sustainable way before all buffalo herds were wiped out by white hide men. The Indigenous nations' migration to the plains and their setback in using horses indicates that their efforts to adapt to the environment and the new factors in it (e.g. horses and epidemics) were still in process when settler colonialism started to invade the buffalo country.

The examples of the Lakota and Comanche nations show that even for those who live in buffalo country and rely on buffalo herds for subsistence, the interactions between humans and bison were a slow learning and adaptive process full of twists and turns. Many customs of Plains Indigenous Peoples suggest that buffalo hunting was a challenging job, often requiring ceremonies to ensure success. They also needed the assistance of the Buffalo Spirit to find the herds because bison behaviour was quite elusive for human beings. According to many observers, "the Plains Indians were never able to discover a definite pattern for the movements of the herds," for the availability of bison was inconsistent over the years and months. (Verbicky-Todd, 1984, p. 4). The sudden appearances and disappearances of large buffalo herds on the plains led the Indigenous groups to believe that the buffalo nests were located in underground caves. This belief aligns with later scientific findings that bison herds often seek shelter in canyons to escape harsh weather conditions (McHugh, 1972, p. 202). The behaviours of individual buffaloes were also difficult to predict. There were instances when wounded bulls would unexpectedly jump up and charge the hunters. Other times, the lead cows would successfully break through the corrals or driving lanes, leading the herd to escape from the traps of the buffalo jump or pound. Although buffaloes provide abundant food and materials for humans, obtaining them requires overcoming hardship (Isenburg, 2000, p. 86).

Many Indigenous folklores and myths depict bison in contradictory ways, suggesting an intimate yet rivalrous relationship between humans and bison. In a Cheyenne story, a husband goes in search of his runaway wife and finds her in the camp of the buffalo people. He discovers that his wife is actually a buffalo in human form, and at that time, buffaloes hunted and ate people. The husband passed the tests of the buffalo people and retrieved his wife from the herd, and the buffalo people sacrificed one of their members to feed the man. After that, humans started to eat buffaloes (Isenberg, 2000, p. 75). In a Pawnee story with a similar storyline, a man mated with a buffalo cow, causing the cow to give birth to a calf. The man then went to the buffalo camp to claim his son and ended up achieving a victory over the vengeful ruling bull. In recognition of the man's courage, the buffalo council agreed to transform him into a buffalo (McHugh, 1972, pp. 202-205). These stories seem to suggest that buffaloes are aggressive towards humans but ultimately willing to cooperate with people. Some Assiniboine myths tell similar stories. For example, one of the stories is about a woman who is abducted by a buffalo and becomes a buffalo herself. Her husband tries to save her but is tortured by the buffaloes. In another story, a man finds a cow and marries her; the buffalo wife takes the man to her camp and offers him her brother's kidney to eat. These buffalo people seem to be an Indigenous nation, and the man learns to use a bow and arrow to hunt buffaloes from these people (Verbicky-Todd, 1984, pp. 212-213).

The theme of mutual transformation between humans and buffalo is a common motif in Indigenous stories (Posthumus, 2016, pp. 288-290). These stories sometimes depict roles being reversed, with buffaloes portrayed as hunters and man-eaters. Scholars who interpret Indigenous mythologies believe that these man-eating buffaloes symbolize people's fear of the power and strength of buffaloes (Verbicky-Todd, 1984, p. 206). These Indigenous myths express people's concern about the tense and competitive relationship between humans and bison, but they also

depict the intimate bonds between the two parties. For example, the Lakota and Ute people each have a story about the blood connection between humans and buffaloes. According to various versions of this tale, the first human was born in a buffalo's blood or blood clot, and then the buffalo adopted and raised this human sibling (Zontek, 2007, p. 3). In many stories, buffaloes often appear as people. They speak human languages, perform human behaviours, and even marry humans (McHugh, 1972, pp. 202-205). This indicates that Indigenous epistemologies perceive and recognize the personhood of bison. For instance, the Crow chief Plenty Coups had a famous dream in which a buffalo bull becomes a man in a buffalo robe. This buffalo man shows him the cave where buffaloes emerge, and he has a vision that the buffalo time will end when the spotted buffaloes (white men's cattle) from another world come to the plains (Linderman, 2017, pp. 49-51).

The traditional anthropocentric scholarship often dismisses the concept of animals having humanity as a mere animistic fantasy. When it comes to the American bison, mainstream historians often attribute the buffalo's personhood to the beliefs of Indigenous People. From an anti-representationalist perspective, this approach is culturally biased. The anthropocentric scholarship is heavily influenced by Western naturalist philosophy, which acknowledges human animality but denies animals' humanity.[87] In other words, this philosophy sees humans as a unique type of animal; it argues that humans possess certain qualities exclusive to themselves, which are categorized as humanity or personhood. Because of the bias inherent in Cartesian dualism, naturalist ontologies often overlook the societal and moral qualities shared by both humans and non-human animals. These ontologies argue that human culture exists separately from an autonomous realm known as nature, where non-human animals, such as bison, reside (Descola, 2013, pp. 68-78, 172-179). The

[87] I provide a comprehensive discussion on naturalism in "The Perception of Genos."

human-animal boundaries set by naturalist philosophy are arbitrary, as it assumes that the only things humankind and non-human animals have in common are certain biological mechanisms; other shared characteristics are completely ignored. From an anti-representationalist standpoint, however, an object's ontological property is never transcendent and constant. Instead, an object's ontological property is determined by its relationship with other objects. The naturalist philosophy also overlooks the fact that the empirical world is essentially a continuum of phenomena, and all categories are subjectively constructed. Just as a spectrum shows a gradual transition of colors, there is no clear boundary between human and animal behaviors.

Indigenous People and bison are both dwellers in an existing environment as well as actors with agency. As mentioned earlier, the adaptation of Indigenous Peoples to the buffalo country was a complex and challenging process. For centuries, they had close daily interactions with bison, leading to the development of multifaceted relationships and practices. To the Plains Indigenous groups, buffaloes were friends, relatives, and foes. It's interesting to note that in traditional Indigenous societies, buffaloes were not just "believed" to be friends, relatives, and enemies, but were actually treated as such. This is because, in their interactions with humans, buffaloes exhibit qualities that resemble human relationships. Buffaloes provide food like a friend, share living spaces like a relative, and can also show aggression like an enemy. Therefore, in Indigenous societies, buffaloes were not just considered to be friends, relatives, and enemies; instead, they "were" friends, relatives, and enemies. In other words, the buffaloes become actors carrying humanity because they act in the human way. Since Indigenous people's minds were not influenced by the naturalist framework, they did not adopt a human-animal dichotomy to understand buffalo behaviours; for them, the categories of social relation, such as enemy and friend, apply to all inhabitants of the environment, not just humans. As humans and other-than-human animals are

under the same set of social relations, Indigenous people naturally recognize animal's personhood and extend moral principles to the interactions with animals.

Bison's Dehumanization

The discussion above suggests that prolonged interactions between buffalo and humans allowed buffalo to develop an ontological property more than non-human animals. This property transcends the human-animal divide and demonstrates the buffalo's personhood. This property emerged through the practices and interactions between Indigenous People and buffalo. Indigenous people could perceive bison's personhood because they applied a social relational logic to their interactions with the environment, rather than framing their perceptions within the human-animal dichotomy. From an anti-representationalist perspective, it's important to emphasize that the recognition of animal personhood in the human-buffalo relationship is not merely a belief of Indigenous People, but is evident in their actual practices. Importantly, as observers, we need to acknowledge that the culturally biased naturalist philosophy hinders our ability to perceive the shared behavioural characteristics of humans and animals, which can lead to misunderstandings about the nature of interactions between Indigenous People and buffaloes.

Regarding the recognition of buffalo's personhood by Indigenous People, one of the most important examples is found in the aftermath of a buffalo jumping or pounding. When a herd of buffalo tumbled off a cliff, some animals would survive, albeit with serious injuries. In such cases, Indigenous hunters would kill all the surviving animals. The same approach was taken with the hunting method of buffalo pound, where no animals trapped in the corral were allowed to escape, and no lives were spared, including those of calves (Brink, 2008, p. 156). Indigenous hunters killed

the surviving buffaloes to prevent them from sharing the secrets of the buffalo jump and pound with other buffaloes. If the other buffaloes knew about these tactics, the hunters would no longer be able to lure herds into the traps (Krech, 1999, pp. 147-148). A Blackfoot man once explained this custom to a British explorer:

> At any future time be in the Band of Buffalo that they might be bringing to the Pond, by their once being caught in the Trap they would evade going into again, for in general when ever a single one breaks out of the Dead Men, all the rest will follow. (Krech, 1999, p. 147)

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries observers noticed that Indigenous people were very serious about this practice; Indigenous hunters were careful to execute every single buffalo in the pound or at the bottom of the cliff, even though the meat that the dead animals could potentially produce had already exceeded their need (Krech, 1999, pp. 147-148). In case a few buffaloes managed to flee from the jump site, people would chase them on horseback and kill them (Verbicky-Todd, 1984, p. 120).

I do not think this Indigenous buffalo-hunting technique is baseless, and the accounts about this practice immediately reminded me of an experience I had with wild animals. A few years ago in the spring, two squirrel siblings regularly visited my backyard and played on my roof. Concerned that they might damage the shingles, I decided to use a live trap to catch them and relocate them. Catching the first squirrel was easy. I used peanut butter as bait and lured it into the cage without any difficulty. However, when I went to the backyard and collected the trap, the second squirrel witnessed the whole process. It had been there since its sibling was captured, and it must have realized that this “box” emitting a peanut scent was a threat. In the following days, no

matter how much peanut butter I used, this squirrel refused to take the bait and get into the cage. In the end, I was unable to catch the second squirrel.

Animals are similar to humans in that they understand how to avoid danger. Many animals are intelligent enough to recognize traps and perceive threats in their environment, especially when they have seen other animals fall into traps. This ability is particularly noticeable in social animals such as buffalo. Bison herds have complex communication systems to warn each other of dangers; the leaders of the herd use vocalizations and body language to communicate orders for defense, charging, or retreating (Isenberg, 2000, p. 86). Many animals have impressive memories, similar to humans. If they are deceived and trapped but manage to escape, they will learn from the experience and avoid falling into the same trap again. When it comes to recognizing patterns of actions and understanding the consequences of behaviours, there is no fundamental difference between human and animal perceptions (Brink, 2008, p. 157). Without being restricted by the naturalist philosophy, Indigenous Peoples have no reason to deny the personhood and other human-like attributes found in animals. As a result, they refer to bison as "buffalo people" and the herd as "buffalo band" or "buffalo nation." They also treat buffaloes the same way they treat human groups. For example, the Lakota people refer to bison as an *oyáte*. "Oyáte" is a Lakota term that means "people," "nation," or "tribe." It resembles the ancient Greek word "genos." The phrase "pté oyáte," meaning "buffalo people" or "buffalo nation," describes a group of spirit beings that can take on the form of either bison or humans (Posthumus, 2016, p. 285).

Many early Euro-American observers could not understand the Indigenous custom of killing buffalo jump survivors. Consequently, they labeled this practice as a superstitious behaviour (McHugh, 1972, p. 99; Verbicky-Todd, 1984, p. 120). However, we now understand that this Western perspective is not only culturally biased but also quite superficial. Some scholars have

used this custom to argue that Indigenous buffalo hunting was traditionally wasteful (McHugh, 1972, pp. 400-401), incorrectly applying the principles of market economy to a non-Western culture. Indigenous People's "none shall survive" policy was not based on ideas of wastefulness or thriftiness. The buffaloes were not resources for them, and there was no economic consideration in their slaughter. During a hunt, the wounded buffaloes needed to be disposed of for reasons of confidentiality. Similarly, after capturing a group of buffaloes, the hunters would avoid using the same pound repeatedly in order to prevent the next wave of animals from catching on to the strategy. By the same token, when Kiowa people saw buffaloes destroying white men's railroads and cattle ranches, they concluded that the buffaloes were warriors siding with Indigenous People and executing a war against the white men (Calloway, 1996, p. 129).

According to Risjord's anti-representationalism, there is no independent thinking medium between a perceiver and the perceived objects in the environment. In simpler terms, Indigenous people do not need to "believe" that buffaloes have humanity before interacting with them; instead, they engage with the buffalo in a way that is based on interpersonal practice from the very beginning. From this perspective, we can conclude that ontology is not a belief, but rather a mode of practice, and an object's ontological property is demonstrated through its practice in an environment (Risjord, 2020, pp. 586-609).

By bringing the conclusions of the discussion above into the framework of genocide studies, we can understand the nature of the buffalo genocide. Inspired by Norbert Elias's dynamic model of social figuration, Christopher Powell defines genocide as the violent destruction of practical social relations (Powell, 2007, pp. 527-547; 2011, pp. 134-155). He acknowledges Lemkin's holistic view of society and agrees that the target of genocide is always the macroscopic structures and patterns of a group, which cannot be reduced to the individuals who compose the group.

However, Powell is dissatisfied with the static nature of general holistic models and argues that an improved social theory should include dynamic relational networks, as suggested by Elias' theory of figuration. "Figuration" refers to an intermediate state between static and dynamic states. The figuration model prioritizes the perspective of process and describes a social structure as a changing field where some relatively stable relationships are generated through people's practice. The social members' interactions are never static, and all human relations are subject to change over time. Therefore, a group is essentially a dynamic relational network, and what a genocide disrupts is the process of the relation-generating practice that all group members participate in (Powell, 2011). Hubbard cites Powell's theory to support the conclusion of a buffalo genocide when discussing the history of the mass bison hunt. She believes that Powell's definition of genocide implies the possibility of including other-than-human animals as victims of genocide, as animals are also participants in the relational practice occurring on Turtle Island. In addition, Hubbard argues that the buffalo genocide primarily destroyed the buffalo people's inner relations. "The army in effect broke down the family relationships of the buffalo by removing the calves, contributing to the genocidal project." (Hubbard, 2014, pp. 294-299)

I find myself in general agreement with Hubbard's expansion of Powell's definition and value her emphasis on the buffalo's role as a practice participant. Since buffaloes have been interacting with Indigenous People for thousands of years and developed their personhood in the process of practice, they are entitled to be included in collective categories like group and society. Indigenous people perceive bison's humanity, referring to them as a band or a nation, viewing them as a group similar to a human community. Given that the interaction between buffalo and Indigenous People was a relation-generating practice, the buffalo nation can be viewed as a sub-group within a larger Indigenous society that encompassed both humans and other-than-human

animals. As we have discussed, the anthropocentric division between human beings and animals is simply a cultural construct of Western naturalist philosophy. Therefore, the boundary of a collective category, such as society or "genos," does not have to be limited to the group of humans. When a dog becomes a family member, it also changes the concept of family. Similarly, when animals engage in relationships with humans and exhibit personhood, they broaden the category of society. These animals are also members of society, and a society is no longer exclusive to humans. Hence, I assert that the impact of the buffalo genocide extended beyond the disintegration of the buffalo nation's internal networks. What did the buffalo genocide kill? I argue that it also disrupted the relational practice between the buffalo and human members of the Indigenous society.

When looking back on the history of the fur trade in North America, it is sad to see how the humanity of bison and other non-human persons was gradually denied and how the practice related to them shifted from social interaction to resource extraction. For example, during the early fur trade, the Blackfoot people showed little interest in commercial hunting. They offered animal pelts to white explorers primarily as a matter of political courtesy. In fact, the Blackfoot had a strict taboo against hunting beavers. The reason for this taboo, as mentioned earlier, was their recognition of beavers as respectable non-human persons whose dammed water could help predict the migration routes of buffalo herds (Colpitts, 2015, p. 115). However, by the 1810s, the Blackfoot and other Indigenous groups had become deeply involved in commercial hunting associated with the Hudson's Bay Company (Colpitts, 2015, pp. 118-120). Environmental historian Dan Flores points out that a key factor in this process was the introduction of European colonists' notions of animals into the Americas. These notions, which were based on Christian philosophy and some biological theories, considered animals, including bison, to be soulless creatures existing mainly

to serve human needs (Flores, 2016, p. 38). Such colonial views significantly disrupted Indigenous people's understanding of animals as non-human persons.

When white hunters brought still hunt to the plains, they spread the idea that bison were mere beasts without any sense of personhood. They often referred to buffalo as "stupid." Observing buffalo trying to stay with their deceased relatives, the white hunters saw this as an opportunity (a "still") to kill more (Hubbard, 2014, p. 300). The Indigenous hunters, drawn by the hide trade, also deserted the recognition of bison's personhood and began hunting buffaloes in a wasteful manner. They abandoned the traditional communal hunt and only killed buffaloes for their skins and tongues. Often, they left the carcasses to rot, attracting wolves to feast on the buffalo meat (Isenberg, 2000, p. 106). This degrading phenomenon was associated with the incentives offered by white traders. Indigenous hunters began to slaughter more buffaloes to skin and trade due to white men offering more attractive goods (McHugh, 1972, p. 401). As mentioned earlier, during the second stage of the mass hunt, many buffaloes on the southern plains were eliminated by Indigenous commercial hunters on horseback. They only targeted young cows, which led to an unsustainable rate of hunting (Zontek, 2007, p. 20).

Essentially, this degradation was a process in which bison lost their personhood in the eyes of people. Despite the fact that the behaviour of the bison did not change, humans ceased to perceive them and stopped interacting with them in the traditional manner. Observers in the 1870s noted that the Indigenous buffalo runners had abandoned the "none shall survive" policy that their ancestors followed in communal hunts. When some buffaloes managed to escape, they simply let them go and showed no concern about the potential for the secret to leak (Krech, 1999, p. 148). They had forgotten the personhood of the buffalo. In other words, in the minds of these people, bison had transitioned from a participant in practice to mere private property (Brink, 2008, p. 243).

Scenarios like this have happened before: “In the fur trade the Indians often fell out of relation with the beaver and came to regard them as property to be killed at will, to be treated as a commodity” (Vecsey, 1980, p. 29). Such degradation was a direct result of Euromerican colonialism and how it transformed the means for Indigenous survival. Indigenous Peoples have been trying to adapt to the effects of colonialism since they came into contact with white settlers. The adaptation to horseback hunting may serve as a successful example. However, they ultimately failed to resist the aggression of the hide trade and were unable to prevent the extinction of the buffaloes. If white hide men and commercial hunters had not flooded into the prairie, the Indigenous groups might have had a chance to find a sustainable way to coexist with bison and continue their traditional practices with them (Isenberg, 2000, p. 91).

In genocide studies, early scholars tended to focus on the violence against individual victims, whereas most new-generation scholars usually understand genocide from the perspective of social structure (Powell, 2007, pp. 527-547). Similarly, according to Patrick Wolfe (2006), settler colonialism perpetrates a form of structural genocide against Indigenous Peoples (pp. 387-409). This is achieved not by attempting to eliminate all individual members, but by undermining traditional social structures. In doing so, the settler government can erode the collective identities and cultural cohesion of Indigenous communities. The buffalo genocide physically destroyed most buffalo herds, but it also disrupted the relational practice between human and buffalo social members. In this sense, it was a structural genocide too. By land-centered projects, the settler government transformed tribal members into individual citizens and homesteaders, disintegrating communities; through the buffalo genocide, the commercial hunters denied bison’s personhood and removed them from the universe of moral responsibility (Fein, 1979, p. 4), thereby claiming that buffalo were just a commodity and resource. Thus, this structural genocide against bison was

essentially a process of dehumanizing bison. Ultimately, the dehumanization of bison led to the breakdown of the traditional bison-human interactions and the removal of all bison from the prairie, making room for the introduction of cattle ranching and the market economy of settler society.

Conclusions

In this chapter, the discussion begins by examining the close connection between genocide and settler colonialism. The theoretical basis for this relationship lies in the understanding that the main targets of genocide are the structural attributes of a group rather than its individual members. Settler colonialism disrupts the traditional relations and cultural foundations of Indigenous Peoples, resulting in genocidal effects on their social structures. Environmental damage is a major factor in disintegrating cultural foundations, often resulting in the destruction of Indigenous communities that rely on the environment for subsistence and cultural reproduction. Thus, the study of the buffalo genocide is underpinned by a triangular framework formed by the three interconnected agendas of genocide, colonialism, and environmental damage.

In my analysis, I have examined the mass bison hunt process and applied anti-anthropocentric and anti-representationalist perspectives. Based on evidence from historical materials, I have revealed that bison were active participants in human-animal interactions within Indigenous society. I have emphasized that the commercial hunt led to bison's dehumanization, significantly altering the interactions between Indigenous People and buffaloes. Bison were stripped of the personhood and humanity that Indigenous hunters had previously recognized. Using Powell's definition of genocide, I have argued that the buffalo genocide disrupted the relational practice between bison and Indigenous People. I have also highlighted that this disruption was a

structural destruction, as bison were transformed from practice participants to commodities and resources, enabling settlers to eliminate them from the plains and replace the buffalo herds with numerous cattle ranches.

Chapter Six: The Perception of Genos: Comparison, Reflection, and Decolonization

The previous case studies outline three important paths in which the ontological turn of the social sciences can elucidate and deepen understanding of genocide. As discussed in the "Introduction," the ontological turn is a broad academic trend that spans multiple disciplines and encompasses various paths and agendas. The theoretical conclusions drawn from my examination of the Ankole cattle, yak, and bison cases highlight the most prominent aspects of the emerging paradigm known as anti-representationalism. These aspects have been thoroughly explained, elaborated upon, and clarified by numerous scholars, resulting in well-established theories with coherent and intelligible arguments. Through these case studies, I aim to integrate the achievements of the ontological turn with genocide studies, thereby enhancing our understanding of the concepts related to collectivity. I believe that this effort will ultimately contribute to decolonizing the field of genocide studies.

This chapter begins by comparing the three cases examined previously, through which I summarize a model that illustrates the interactive practices between human perceivers and non-humans within a specific environment. Following this, I compare the behaviour of defining the collectives of persons with the process of demarcating ethnic boundaries, arguing that both phenomena require selecting classificatory indicators to highlight shared attributes. This argument links the discussion on perception and ontology to the topic of decolonizing genocide studies, as social collectives are not exclusive to humans, contrary to what Western naturalist worldviews suggest. The term "genos," which refers to collectivity, is inherently flexible and depends on various interactive contexts. Thus, Western collective categories rooted in naturalist ontologies can

be misleading when analyzing genocides, atrocities against animals, and environmental damage in non-Western contexts where non-humans are included in the categories of persons or play key roles in interactions. This is why the decolonization of genocide studies entails an ontological reflection on the concept of genos.

A Comparative Discussion on the Three Case Studies

In "Cattle Killing in the Rwandan Genocide," I explore the unique agency carried by Ankole cattle. Due to their large bodies, which hold significant amounts of fluids, these cattle serve as vehicles of power and containers of energy for local communities. This agency is spontaneous, arising from the inherent properties of these non-human entities. As discussed in the "Introduction," Holbraad's study on divination in Cuba, which utilizes powder, illustrates that this material's agency is rooted in its motility, a physical characteristic that evokes the idea of mana (Holbraad, 2007, pp. 189-225). Similarly, in the Great Lakes region where Rwanda is located, traditional knowledge systems ascribe great value to liquid, viewing it as a medium of vitality. The fluidity of liquids suggests that they harbour different energies. These characteristics of powder and liquid constitute an agency because they serve as initial stimuli that influence human perceptions and behaviours. In other words, human thoughts and actions are interconnected with the objects and events in their environment, drawing momentum from their surroundings. In this context, non-human beings can exhibit agency. Ankole cattle gain this agency through their huge bodies filled with various fluids, leading people to believe that these animals possess immense power and consider them a valuable source of fortune.

The effects of this agency extend to both the local economy and politics. In this chapter, I interpret the expansion of the Rwandan Kingdom through an anti-anthropocentric perspective that emphasizes the relationship between cattle and power. From this viewpoint, the division between the Tutsi and Hutu is not merely a cultural and political construction suggested by earlier scholars. Instead, cattle provided significant financial and political advantages to the cattle-raising groups, enabling them to control land and labour and create a privileged class. In this sense, the Ankoles are not only a producer of physical power but also a source of political power. The widespread killing of cattle during the Rwandan genocide was driven by multiple factors, including the Habyarimana administration's peasant ideology and its anti-pastoralist propaganda. However, I believe that the historical link between Ankole cattle, power, and Tutsi privilege played a crucial role in inciting hatred toward these animals. It is important to emphasize that the cattle-power connection was not merely symbolic; it was rooted in the inherent characteristics of the cattle, such as the extraordinary body size and plentiful body fluids.

In the study of the Chinese government's radical reforms in Tibetan areas, I focus primarily on the victimization of nomads and yaks. Both pastoralists and livestock suffered significant loss of life during the government's social-engineering campaigns. The similar experiences and fates of both human and animal victims highlight the interconnected relationship between human communities and their environment. To understand the reasons behind this failed internal colonization, I draw on the works of James Scott and Tim Ingold. As I discuss in the relevant sections, authoritarian governments frequently impose unilaterally planned projects on local communities, reorganizing populations to meet their oversimplified expectations. This practice exemplifies the modernist ideology that Ingold refers to as the "building perspective," which contrasts with the "dwelling perspective," an epistemology focusing on the interdependence

between human dwellers and their environments. Ingold (2000) argues that this dwelling perspective prioritizes the participative and practical relationships that dwellers have with the objects and events in their surroundings (pp. 154-162). These objects and events present themselves to dwellers through their unique physical forms, behaviours, and dispositions. Based on these encounters, both human and non-human actors develop specific knowledge and skills that enable them to survive, dwell, and interact effectively within their environment.

One of Ingold's primary arguments is that culture is not an independent realm rooted solely in the human mind. Instead, the influence of the environment is embodied in the perceptions and behaviours of its dwellers. What we refer to as culture is fundamentally an accumulation of knowledge, skills, and perceptions that individuals develop to engage with the objects, events, and other agents in their surroundings (Ingold, 2000). Since culture is essentially an extension of environment, the two categories of culture and nature collapse in Ingold's theory. When it comes to nomadic groups that evade state control, it is important to note that many environmental aspects of their habitats, such as mountainous terrain, expansive grasslands, and large animals capable of long-distance migration, determine the lifestyle characterized by seclusion and mobility. In essence, the emergence of nomadism is a natural outcome of these environmental factors. Nomadism is a way of life deeply intertwined with the environment and is largely incompatible with state governance, which relies on a clear and stable population structure conducive to effective surveillance and taxation. Due to nomadic societies' intricate entanglement with the environment, the state projects aimed to eliminate nomads inevitably victimize many environmental elements, especially animals.

Ingold's dwelling perspective is primarily based on James Gibson's ecological psychology. Gibson's framework emphasizes that the environment plays a crucial role in shaping the perception

and cognition of both human and non-human agents. He argues that the objects and events within the environment provide cues for perceivers, who react to the information according to the ways they observe the objects and events (Ingold, 2000, pp. 166-168). The environment's ability to emit messages of possibilities to its observers is known as "affordance." Ingold highlights that different agents may receive varying information from a particular object because they approach the encounter from distinct perspectives. This idea aligns with Martin Heidegger's phenomenology. Heidegger posits that the way the world presents itself, referred to as "availableness," imparts fundamental meanings to perceivers. Our bodies act as instruments of perception, allowing us to engage with the availableness of the surrounding world in unique ways (Ingold, 2000, pp. 168-169).[88] For instance, the edge of a cliff presents a risk of falling for humans and other walking animals, but for eagles, it serves as an ideal launch point (Descola, 2013, p. 186).

> The knowledge obtained through direct perception is thus *practical*, it is knowledge about what an environment offers for the pursuance of the action in which the perceiver is currently engaged. In other words, to perceive an object or event is to perceive what it affords. (Ingold, 2000, p. 166)

It is easy to imagine how the vast grassland, high mountains, and roaming animals give meaningful hints to human dwellers, guiding them to choose a lifestyle characterized by decentralization, autonomy, and free migration. As mentioned earlier, nomadism is the most reasonable lifestyle option in such a context.

[88] In contrast, mainstream cognitive science and cultural studies inherit Cartesian dualism, which separates mind and nature, assuming that people simply transfer the patterns in their minds to the objects they perceive. (Ingold, 2000, p. 163)

The third case study examines bison's destruction during the settler colonization in North America. It focuses on the process of humans denying bison's humanity, which I believe is the most devastating result of the buffalo genocide. This chapter highlights an anti-anthropocentric perspective and delves into the practical relationship between humans and buffaloes. The animals' human-like qualities were widely recognized by Indigenous Peoples, and can be found in their myths about buffaloes and some hunting customs. As commercial hunting rapidly developed, bison were gradually stripped of their personhood and removed from the universe of moral obligations. The influx of white hunters and the introduction of new hunting techniques led to the widespread belief that bison were mere beasts lacking intelligence. This perception contributed to a massacre that ultimately pushed the Buffalo Nation to the brink of extinction. The dehumanization of bison signifies the collapse of the traditional interactive relationship between buffalo herds and Indigenous communities. Drawing on Christopher Powell's argument that genocide disrupts relational practices (Powell, 2007, pp. 527-547; 2011, pp. 134-155), my study concludes that the buffalo genocide was a structural destruction that transformed bison from active participants in relationships to mere commodities and resources. This shift in ontological status favored the expansion of settler colonialism.

The change in Bison's ontological property suggests a causal connection between relational practice and ontologies, which is one of the main arguments put forth by Mark Risjord (Risjord, 2020, pp. 586-609). An environment where inhabitants share a particular way of perceiving and interacting constitutes a "world" in which the ontology of objects and beings is shaped through these relational practices. For example, the close interactions between Indigenous People and animals allowed the former to recognize the human-like qualities in the latter, such as survival skills, hunting techniques, communication abilities, wisdom, and emotions. By understanding

these attributes of personhood, Indigenous people, who perceive the world from a human perspective, categorize themselves and animals together or in congener groups like nations. As a result, in the worlds of Indigenous Peoples, animals are perceived as non-human persons, and the interactions with them resemble those between humans. In this relational practice, animals' personhood is not merely a cognition in Indigenous people's minds; rather, it presents itself through the activities that both humans and non-human persons engage in together. Just like humans, non-human persons demonstrate their humanity through their physical forms, behaviours, and dispositions, all of which contribute to the formation of their ontological properties. In this sense, both humans and non-human persons are participants of the interaction that generates ontologies.

Rethinking Nature-culture Dualism

The case studies on Ankole cattle, yaks, and bison illustrate three important aspects of the ontological-turn paradigm, including non-human animal agency, culture and environment integration, and practice-generated ontologies. These three theoretical paths fall within the academic framework that Martin Paleček and Mark Risjord refer to as "anti-representationalism." All three paths challenge the traditional paradigms that view human consciousness as merely a representation of the empirical world (Paleček & Risjord, 2013, pp. 3-23). In other words, the older paradigms assume that culture and nature are separate domains. Obviously, these three anti-representationalist paths contest the nature-culture dualism and emphasize the processes through which the environment influences perceptions.

The studies related to the agency of objects indicate that an object's physical form and behaviour produce agency, for these spontaneous phenomena determine the object's value and

meaning within human societies. Likewise, Ingold's dwelling perspective emphasizes the affordances of an environment, arguing that objects and landscapes provide information about possible actions to observers, guiding their decisions. Lastly, the examples of interactions between Indigenous Peoples and non-human persons illustrate that participants in these relational practices exhibit unique ontological properties through their interactions. In other words, ontologies arise from actions rather than abstract thoughts. This is why many anti-representationalists assert that their paradigm is belief-less. They argue that individuals often do not need to construct a representation or develop beliefs about objects before interacting with them; rather, objects reveal their properties upon encountering people. For instance, when individuals observe liquid flowing on its own, they do not first create a belief that "liquid equates to energy" before acting accordingly. To them, the liquid is inherently energy; this ontological property is so self-evident that they use the liquid directly as a means of engaging with energy.

Like other frameworks based on Cartesian mind-body dualism, representationalism assumes that the human mind and the physical world exist independently of one another. This assumption often leads people to believe that cultural behaviour is unique to humanity, setting human society apart from other aspects of the universe. However, in his extensive examination of ethnographies regarding the interactions between indigenous groups and their environments worldwide, Philippe Descola (2013) argues that this anthropocentric approach of dividing nature and culture is primarily a European tradition (pp. 86-91). In fact, many civilizations encompass more than just humans in the collective categories equivalent to people, tribe, and nation. These groups often include certain animals, plants, and landscapes, which are seen as subjects that act in human-like and moral ways.

For example, the Achuar, an indigenous people of the Amazon rainforest, categorize all animate objects as persons, which includes not only animals but also plants and spirits. Their distinction between animate and inanimate objects is based on the ability to communicate. In the Achuar cosmology, while animals and plants may not use spoken languages, they often communicate with people through dreams; thus, these non-humans are considered to possess souls as well. According to Achuar philosophy, there is no clear division between human beings and non-human beings; instead, the distinction lies between soul-possessing persons and soulless objects (Descola, 2013, pp. 5-8). Similarly, the Makuna, another indigenous group from the Amazon region, have a broad definition of "people" that includes humans, plants, and animals. They define "people" based on sociality, morality, ceremonial life, intentionality, and knowledge, all of which can be found in animals and plants. Like humans, these non-human persons are understood to live in communities; their feathers and fur hold ritual significance, and they often share knowledge with shamans (Descola, 2013, pp. 8-10). Since the relations between human and non-human communities are identical to the relations between human groups, the Makuna ontology has no reason to exclude animals and plants from the category of people. Similar examples are also observed in various groups across the Northern Hemisphere, including regions in Asia and North America (Descola, 2013, pp. 13-25).

Descola acknowledges that various groups possess their own concepts of personhood. However, he emphasizes that they use different classificatory indicators to demarcate the categories of persons. For instance, the Achuar define personhood through the ability to communicate, while the Makuna emphasize the relational attributes shared between humans and non-humans. Descola argues that the world is fundamentally a continuum, with each civilization employing its unique indicators for classification. Most of the groups he studies do not make sharp

ontological distinctions between humans and non-human animals or plants, unlike Western civilization. In Europe, the idea that humanity is separate from nature does not have a long-standing history either. Instead, it emerged in the seventeenth century (Descola, 2013, pp. 68-71). Back then, some influential philosophers began to promote their mechanistic theories positing that the world operates as an autonomous system, leading to the concept of a separate domain called nature. This establishment of the nature concept reinforced its opposite category. Anything associated with human conscious activities, such as culture, society, and history, was classified as belonging to humanity. Since human consciousness was viewed as not interfering with the laws of nature, humanity and nature came to be seen as two distinct and opposing domains (Descola, 2013, pp. 68-71). Consequently, non-human animals and plants were classified as part of nature, and their attributes comparable to humanity were largely disregarded. Therefore, in Western civilization, physical characteristics and appearances have become the primary indicators for classifying living things. In this sense, Descola (2013) believes that the binary opposition between nature and culture is a contingent construct (p. 91).

Biologists have observed that many animal behaviours are similar to those of humans. For instance, some animals use tools, and their vocalizations convey complex meanings much like human languages. Long-term studies on evolution have also concluded that the cognitive abilities of humans and animals differ primarily in degree (Descola, 2013, pp. 179-184). These findings indicate that the distinction between humanity and animality is subjective. While Descola provides extensive descriptive insights into different ontologies worldwide, he does not specifically address the reasons behind the lack of a clear ontological distinction between nature and humanity in many

non-Western cosmologies.[89] The three research paths of anti-representationalism that we discussed earlier may help answer this question. As Ingold and Gibson suggest, objects in the environment carry information that is meaningful to human perceivers, leading to an understanding that communication and knowledge transfer occur between humans and non-humans. Therefore, people realize that the human mind and nature are not two separate and autonomous systems; instead, they belong to the same domain. Human cognition still seeks to classify the continuum of the empirical world. However, due to the experience of interacting with the environment's affordances and recognizing the personhood of non-humans, many non-Western ontologies select the classificatory indicators that allow them to include both humans and certain non-humans within the same categories.

While anti-representationalism's three paths address different agendas, I believe there are many overlaps in their arguments. Firstly, affordance can be understood as an agency of things, for this concept refers to an ability to provide guidance, and also a behaviour of communication. Secondly, due to this agency, all objects and inhabitants within an environment can interact, becoming participants in relational practices. Lastly, this kind of relational practice determines its participants' ontological properties, as each entity's agency allows it to fulfill a particular role in the interaction. Therefore, we have the following pattern:

[89] Descola received his anthropological training from Claude Levi-Strauss, whose structuralist methodology emphasizes the induction and comparison of various cultural logics, rather than delving into the psychological and phenomenological explanations for specific epistemologies. This academic perspective may shed light on why Descola distances himself from the ontological turn movement, despite its many overlaps with his research.

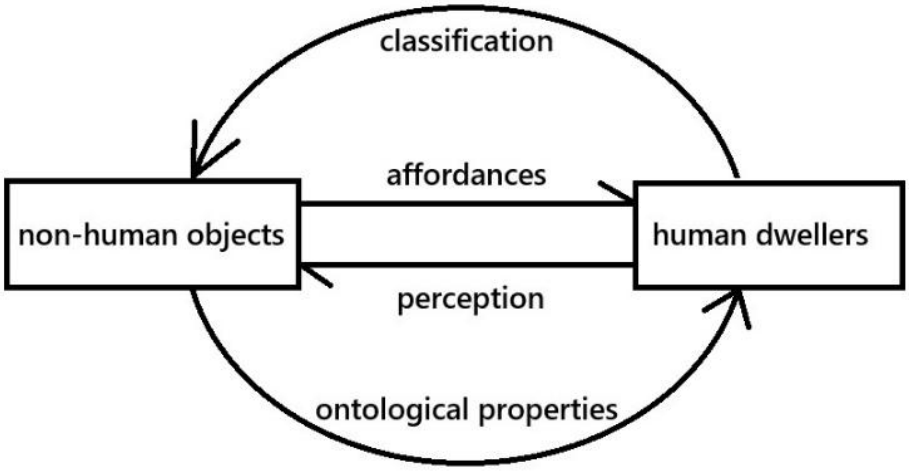

Figure 6: Human-non-human interaction

The center of the diagram illustrates the primary causes of relational practice. Non-human objects in an environment present affordances to the human dwellers who encounter them. The way humans perceive these affordances influences how they interact with these non-humans. As a result, as shown in the outer circle of the diagram, the ontological properties of all participants in the interaction are formed through this process. This, in turn, guides people to categorize all beings into different groups, such as soul-possessing persons and soulless objects.

The Interaction and Perception Related to Genos

The discussion above shows that a group's ontology is closely linked to their experiences within a specific environment. Each classificatory category, as an outcome of interaction and perception, is an aggregation of entities. We can also refer to this as a collectivity or simply a group. In modern Western languages, a large collectivity of human individuals is termed "society," a concept that

often lacks a direct counterpart in many non-Western languages.[90] According to Descola (2013), the concept of society was not invented until the nineteenth century, when the idea of nature had become well-established (pp. 68-71). Given that "society" denotes the aggregation of humans, it is frequently contrasted with "nature." In academic texts, "culture" is often used as a synonym for "society," despite its varied definitions. The term "culture" has two layers of meaning. The first layer refers to behaviours and products that are unique to humanity; in this sense, culture is opposed to nature. The second layer pertains to a nation's distinctive intellectual achievements or to a human group defined by cultural traits. This layer of meaning is connected to certain concepts of German historicism, such as *Volksgeist* (the spirit of the people) and *Völkergedanken* (folk ideas). It has also become a theoretical foundation for cultural relativism, largely due to the contributions of German ethnographer Franz Boas to American anthropology (Descola, 2013, pp. 72-78). In the context of relativism, "culture" is considered in the plural form; people refer to "cultures" when discussing different human groups and societies.

Neither society nor culture is a tangible entity; therefore, people need to understand these collective concepts through perception. The perception of society began with the establishment of sociology as a discipline. Durkheim argued that society exerts a force on individuals, and this social force is both physical and moral. His theory of social force suggests that society is something to be felt. Durkheim believes that a society is more than just the sum of its individual members; it is represented by the compelling influence of social facts, such as laws and regulations. Individuals experience this force and internalize it, transforming it into a moral restraint that guides and controls their will and behaviour (Durkheim, 1915, pp. 205-222; 362-369).

[90] For example, in the early twentieth century, when Chinese academics attempted to translate Western sociology classics, they referred to the field as "the study of groups." To translate the term "society," they borrowed a kanji word from Japanese, which literally means "altar and association."

Weber's sociological methodology differs significantly from Durkheim's. Unlike Durkheim, Weber denies society's objectivity and emphasizes the importance of understanding the actions and motivations of individual social members. He argues that the behaviours of social actors can be driven by various rationalities, including tradition, values, emotions, and instrumental reasoning. The primary task of sociologists, according to Weber, is to comprehend the subjective causes that underlie the actions of social members (Weber, 1978, pp. 24-26). While Weber's theoretical framework does not treat society as a mysterious object to be felt, it encourages scholars in subsequent generations to focus on social actors and their agency. This emphasis has led some sociologists and anthropologists to observe that collective identities and group boundaries often emerge through the interactions and perceptions of social actors.

Edmund Leach, whose studies on highland Burma significantly informed James Scott's examination of the nonstate societies in Zomia, was the first to emphasize the interactive nature of social boundaries. Leach observed that the communities in highland Burma use inconsistent criteria to define their collective identities. For instance, the main distinctions between the Shan and Kachin peoples are their habitats and agricultural practices. All Shan communities are located in valleys and primarily engage in rice cultivation, whereas the Kachin inhabit mountainous areas and practice shifting cultivation (Leach, 1954, pp. 29-40). Within the Kachin, the sub-groups in different regions speak distinct languages. Additionally, many communities that share a cultural identity can exhibit vastly different social structures, ranging from anarchism to centralism. In this area, some collective identities are defined by language, while others are associated with religion and political systems (Leach, 1954, pp. 41-61).

Local communities often recognize various differences during interactions between groups, but they only select certain distinctions to define their ethnic boundaries. These indicators are not

universally applicable; each one specifically differentiates a pair of interacting groups. For example, the Palaung people distinguish themselves from the Shan by their mountainous communities and shifting cultivation practices. However, these characteristics, which are common among all mountain residents, are overlooked when they separate themselves from the Kachin based on Buddhism, the religion shared by the Palaung and the Shan. Similarly, the Atsi people speak a unique language, but they are classified as a sub-group of the Kachin due to shared social institutions. Although the Maingtha people also speak the Atsi language, they practice Buddhism and thus identify more closely with the Shan (Leach, 1954, pp. 56-58). This shows that the indicators that define collective identities vary depending on the interactive context.

Influenced by Leach's earlier studies in Burma, Fredrik Barth, who conducted fieldwork in Pakistan's Swat Valley to explore the political life of the Pathan, concludes that ethnicity serves as a cognitive tool that people use to distinguish "Us" from "Others." The establishment of ethnic boundaries depends on specific contexts of interaction. On one hand, different groups may share similar cultural characteristics, yet these similarities can be overlooked. On the other hand, a group might have considerable internal distinctions, but its members may still identify themselves as one collectivity (Barth, 1969a, pp. 9-38). For example, Pathan communities in different regions exhibit significant variations in their lifestyles and professions; nevertheless, they all share the same ethnic identity. In the area bordering Iran, the western Pathans and their neighbouring Hazaras both practice pastoralism, but this does not make the two peoples the same ethnic group. The Pathan identity is defined by certain traditional values that their neighbours do not share, despite the similarity in lifestyle (Barth, 1969b, pp. 125-126).

Barth emphasizes that people often select certain distinctions to define collective identities while overlooking many common characteristics shared by groups, suggesting that ethnic

identification is a context-oriented practice. He attempts to reconcile the paradigms of Durkheim and Weber, proposing that ethnicity is a subjective category shaped by cultural construction. This argument does not dismiss the objectivity of human collectives; rather, it highlights the interactive process that leads to the institutionalization of subjective categories. In other words, the interaction between actors is a process of cultural construction, but its consequences are a set of stable social facts (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pp. 47-62).

The demarcation of ethnic boundaries involves a process of categorization, similar to creating ontological distinctions between different interaction participants within an environment. According to Descola's examples, human dwellers of a specific environment interact with non-humans, identifying both similarities and differences among the participants. They then select one or a few indicators to define what constitutes a category of persons, and these indicators can vary from group to group. In this sense, the processes of forming collective categories in a human-exclusive society and an environment shared by humans and non-humans follow the same pattern. The difference is only a matter of scale, as many collective categories that Indigenous Peoples establish for their worlds are broader, including both humans and non-human persons. It is important to note that these Indigenous ontologies differ from our biological taxonomies; their collective categories are not simply classifications like phyla and genera of species. Instead, they include relational categories equivalent to concepts like "society" and "culture," as all agents within these categories are participants in social interactions and carry social and moral significance. This is why Indigenous Peoples in North America refer to buffalo as a "nation."

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1983) reveals that nations, which are the largest collective categories in modern international politics, are fundamentally a cultural construction. The rise of mass media helps people imagine a nation's territory, population, and

history, enabling them to form connections with fellow nationals whom they may never meet. When Anderson refers to "imagined communities," he does not imply that nations and nation-states are mere illusions. Instead, these collective categories have many tangible representations, such as governments, laws and regulations, social institutions, symbols, and ceremonies. What Anderson wants to illustrate is that nations are a product of nationalism, a modern ideology that drives individuals to construct their national identities and strengthen their sense of national solidarity. This process ultimately leads to the emergence of hundreds of nations in today's international community (Anderson, 1983). His theory suggests that a nation is not a physical entity that can be touched or seen; rather, to understand this collective category, one must engage intellectually, creating a mental image that fosters a sense of comradeship with others who share the same nationality. Durkheim argues that society is a force that needs to be felt; likewise, nation is a concept that one has to perceive. While Leach and Barth focus on the identification of traditional ethnic groups, Anderson explains the mechanism through which modern national identities are constructed. All these studies indicate that collective categories, such as people, nations, and "us," are created and sustained through perception.

Scholars in genocide studies are familiar with the story of how Raphael Lemkin (2008) coined the term "genocide" by combining the ancient Greek word "genos" with the Latin root "cide" (p. 79). Lemkin developed his theory of genocide during the period between the two World Wars, when nationalism and the ideology of nation-state were dominant in Europe. As a result, his concept of genos primarily refers to national groups. In *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin's study focuses on two kinds of groups. The first category includes nations with established independent sovereign states, such as Poles, Dutchmen, and Germans. The second category comprises ethnic groups within a sovereign state, including Jews and Flemings (Lemkin, 2008, pp.

80-81). Thus, in Lemkin's early theory, nations and peoples are the primary forms of genos. Lemkin's understanding of genos incorporates two dimensions: demographic composition and cultural spirit. He emphasizes national patterns in his definition of genocide, suggesting that he views the essence of genos as a group's cultural attributes and institutional achievements, including its political systems, religion, and moral values. However, this emphasis does not imply that he sees genocide as an atrocity that targets culture alone. By clarifying the distinction between genocide and the Germanization process applied to occupied nations like the Poles, Lemkin (2008) underscores that the victims of genocide are attacked both physically and culturally (pp. 79-80). In this sense, the genos in Lemkin's theory refers to both population, the key physical component of a nation, and the social and cultural practices of national members, which he calls the national pattern.

Since no one can see a nation's complete picture or touch its entity, everybody has to comprehend the collective category through imagination, participating in interactions, and observing specific details like physical attributes and cultural traits. Lemkin was no exception to this process. Undoubtedly, Lemkin developed his understanding of collective categories through perception. I believe Lemkin's comprehension of European nations and peoples was based on two main sources of information. First, he drew on his knowledge of the history and current conditions of each country, which he gained through extensive reading in his youth and from media coverage of international affairs. This learning process aligns with what Anderson describes as imagining a community, as publications and mass media provide vivid descriptions of various nations' histories, populations, territories, and customs. With this information, Lemkin and his contemporaries visualized different national groups by imagining their geographic locations, territory sizes, physical appearances, and daily lives. The second source of information came from Lemkin's

personal experiences interacting with the nationals from various countries during his studies, work, and travels. Through these interactions, he observed distinct national characteristics in people's behaviours, social environments, and artistic styles. These experiences provided concrete examples that enriched his understanding and imagination of nations, thereby solidifying his concept of genos.

The experience of perceiving different nations and peoples may explain why Lemkin presents a multi-dimensional theory of genocide. He suggests that genocide can be carried out in eight distinct dimensions, many of which, such as culture and morality, are part of the spiritual realm that needs one to perceive to understand (Lemkin, 2008, pp. 82-90). Lemkin's focus on national patterns also illustrates his sensitivity to the abstract aspects of genos. In other words, it was through engaging in cross-national interactions and comparisons that Lemkin was able to recognize the spiritual essence of genos amidst its physical manifestations. Douglas Irvin-Erickson argues that Lemkin's understanding of nationalism was influenced by German philosopher Johann Herder's historicism. Herder's appreciation for the unique achievements of each nation in the realms of thought and art inspired Lemkin's advocacy for cultural relativism and his critique of European colonialism (Irvin-Erickson, 2017, p. 200). Lemkin never took culture as an independent field. Instead, he saw culture as a binding force that helps integrate a nation, creating what he calls a "family of mind." Nonetheless, genocide's goal is not to destroy culture but the destruction of the nation. This goal can be achieved through destroying the national group's culture (Irvin-Erickson, 2017, p. 222).

Lemkin's later studies on colonial genocides, including the Spanish invasion of South America, the German colonization of Southwest Africa, and the French genocide against Algerians, enabled him to move beyond the framework of European nationalism and gain a deeper

understanding of genos. In his postwar writings, he began to view genos from a sociological perspective, considering it a product of the human psychological need for belonging. In his autobiography, Lemkin comments:

> The "genos" is thus a primary and universal institution of mankind, whatever its actual evolution may be, and it is clear that mankind spent most of its history within the framework of this social unit. It was here that the original esprit de corps, the way of life, the traditions, the forces of cohesion and solidarity were born. It was also here that the spirit of exclusiveness, suspicion, and hatred of other groups was bred…This spirit of the "genos" is deeply entrenched in the psychology of mankind. It finds expression in the pervasive feeling of superiority of one group over all others. (Frieze, 2013, pp. 181-182)

His explanation of genos suggests that it serves as a fundamental social unit, representing an organizational category of people. The individuals classified within this category are connected by shared spiritual attributes and common behaviour patterns. This understanding indicates that the concept of genos encompasses not only nations but also various social organizations, ranging from communities to political groups. Additionally, Lemkin recognized the potential dangers of genos, particularly the threats posed by the nations that are preoccupied with the idea of racial superiority.

It is well known that Lemkin's advocacy for genocide prevention faced a significant setback during the diplomatic negotiations of the UN Genocide Convention. Due to pragmatic considerations, he was compelled to make strategic compromises, resulting in the removal of content related to cultural genocide, colonial genocide, and the purging of political groups from the draft of the Convention. This ultimately led to a narrow and ambiguous definition of genocide

in the UN documents (Irvin-Erickson, 2017, pp. 180-189). Many scholars in genocide studies, particularly those in sociology, have sought to restore Lemkin's holistic concepts of genos and genocide. For example, Helen Fein (1991) argues that genos is essentially a collectivity, whose identity can be constructed with different criteria, including people's class, ethnicity, gender, and political consciousness (pp. 23-25). Fein's viewpoint aligns with this study's focus on the perception process that leads to the formation of collective categories, for she believes that collective identities are rooted in individuals' awareness of shared cultural characteristics. Likewise, when introducing the theory of politicide, Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr pointed out that genocide's victim groups are always defined by their communal characteristics, such as ethnicity, religion, and nationality. Through the concept of politicide, they aim to draw attention to the groups defined by shared political positions (Harff and Gurr, 1988, p. 360). These studies suggest that the establishment of collective categories relies on the perception and understanding of the attributes of those involved in interactions. Shared attributes form the basis for collective identification, while distinctive attributes create the boundaries between groups.

Naturalism and Genos' Decolonization

As discussed earlier, demarcating human social groups resembles the process of establishing ontological boundaries within an interactive environment that includes both humans and non-humans. Indigenous people engage with the objects and events in their surroundings, perceiving the similarities and differences among all participants in these interactions. From the many attributes they observe, they select one or a few key indicators to define categories of persons, with this selection varying from one world to another. This study aims to demonstrate that the commonly used collective categories in genocide studies, such as people, society, culture, and

nation, are rather narrow and Eurocentric. They primarily reflect the anthropocentric cosmology and naturalist ontology of the West.

Naturalism is one of the four ontology types that Descola identifies through his structuralist methodology. Although there are various ontologies in the world, Descola asserts that all must address the question of interiority and physicality. He defines "interiority" as the immaterial properties often described with terms such as mind, soul, consciousness, feeling, intentionality, subjectivity, reflexivity, speaking, and dreaming. In contrast, "physicality" refers to a being's observable characteristics, including its external form, behavior, constitution, and the specific processes by which it is perceived. Importantly, physicality should not be equated with material properties, for this concept encompasses a being's visible traits that arise from the "morphological and physiological characteristics that are intrinsic to it" (Descola, 2013, p. 116). Descola argues that every ontology includes a formula for combining the interiorities and physicalities of existing entities, and these combinations can be classified into four types: totemism, analogism, animism, and naturalism. In totemism, humans and non-humans share identical interiorities and physicalities. Analogism posits that humans and non-humans have different interiorities and physicalities. In animist ontologies, there is a similarity in interiorities between humans and non-humans, but their physicalities differ. In contrast, naturalism maintains that while the physicalities of humans and non-humans may be analogous, their interiorities are entirely distinct (Descola, 2013, p. 121).

This chapter primarily discusses animism and naturalism, as these two types of ontologies are relevant to the examples provided. The Western ontology can be characterized as a form of naturalism, which recognizes physical continuity between humans and non-human animals. This view is supported by many scientific theories suggesting that human and animal bodies share similar biological attributes and physiological mechanisms. However, this ontology regards many

interiorities, such as reflective consciousness, subjectivity, and the ability to signify, as properties exclusive to humans, and therefore argues a discontinuity of interiority between humans and non-human animals. As a result, naturalism recognizes humans' animality but denies animals' humanity. This leads to a common misconception in the West: the collective categories like society and culture are seen as solely human domains, while all non-humans are categorized under the domain of nature (Descola, 2013, p. 277). Descola criticizes naturalism for being anthropocentric, as it suggests that human society and culture have no parallel in the worlds of non-humans. Since the late eighteenth century, many thinkers in Europe and America have assumed that collectivity and sociality cannot exist in the "lawless nature," where animals and other non-humans are believed to lack agency, soul, and morality (Descola, 2013, pp. 178, 257).

In contrast to naturalism, animism allows individuals to recognize that non-humans possess many qualities and abilities similar to those of humans. This perspective maintains that there is a continuity of interiority between humans and non-humans. As a result, individuals can perceive and choose these attributes to define the category of persons. This recognition is influenced by the contexts of interactions. For example, the Achuar and Makuna peoples, through their intensive interactions with the non-humans in their environment, understand that non-humans are also capable of communication and can exhibit social and moral behaviours. Thus, animals, plants, and spirits can be included in the groups of persons or categorized collectively in ways that resemble human communities (Descola, 2013, pp. 247, 277). By encompassing animals, plants, and other non-humans within the conceptual framework of humanity, animist perspectives widen the scope of collectivity, allowing non-humans to be viewed as integral members and active participants in various social interactions.

Descola provides a vivid example of Indigenous worlds in northern Canada. Although the number of species in the forests from Labrador to Alaska is fewer than those in the Amazon, the primary animals of subarctic Canada, such as bison, deer, and beaver, often appear in large numbers. This behaviour pattern allows observers to easily recognize the animals' social interactions and human-like qualities. Indigenous communities often learned principles of social organization and legal systems by observing animals (Mamers, 2019, pp. 18-19). For instance, the Cree people notice that the animals live a social life resembling that of human groups, as the animal collectivity is also sustained by solidarity, friendship, and deference toward elders (Descola, 2013, p. 13). Many Blackfoot communities exhibit a non-hierarchical organizational structure, which is inspired by the non-coercive collectivity found in bison herds. This collectivity is rooted in the kinship among individual animals, their mutual responsibility, and a balance between male and female buffalos (Mamers, 2019, p. 20). Likewise, anthropologist David Posthumus points out that the *thiyóšpaye* lodge-group system of the Lakota people mirrored the social organization of small herds of bison (Posthumus, 2016, p. 283). Since Indigenous people's perception of their environment is not clouded by naturalist assumptions, they do not draw an ontological line between nature and culture. Instead, they extend personhood not only to animals but also to the entire world around them. This includes rivers, mountains, the sky, wind, and thunder, all of which are seen as possessing personality (Descola, 2013, p. 14). In essence, within the Indigenous perspectives of Canada, the concept of nature as a separate domain does not exist; every being, whether human or non-human, is connected through social and moral relationships.

Descola's examination of Canadian Indigenous ontologies highlights Andrew Woolford's study on how several Indigenous communities understand group destruction. In these communities, the concept of humanity encompasses the entire environment, meaning that human societies are

not separate from their surroundings. Consequently, any harm to the land, animals, and plants is viewed as a violation of the collectivity to which Indigenous People belong. This perspective represents their understanding of genocide (Woolford, 2009, pp. 81-97). This example shows that the definition of "cide" (destruction) relies on the notion of "geno" (collectivity). Redefining collectivity calls for a re-evaluation of the violence directed at groups. Since Indigenous People do not distinguish between nature and culture, the concept of "cultural genocide" is not applicable. By the same token, the term "ecocide," which refers specifically to damage inflicted upon ecosystems, is unnecessary when discussing the environmental destruction faced by worldwide indigenous groups during the expansion of colonialism and capitalism. For the communities that do not maintain a nature-culture dualism, the attacks on their environment equate to the destruction of the group itself. In other words, the diversity in the perception of collectivity suggests a broader understanding of genocide.

This study examines three cases involving bovine animals to emphasize the diversity of collectivity, rather than suggesting that all human groups must include non-human members, though this is the case for some communities. There is no evidence indicating that Rwandans view their cattle as equivalent to themselves, while the Ankole actively engage in local political processes and social activities. This participation implies that the traditionally assumed boundary between human society and non-human world is not so clear-cut. The agency of animals also challenges the reasonableness of naturalism. Additionally, the affordances present in an environment question the Cartesian dualism of body and mind. As Descola notes, we must recognize the contingency of the nature-culture dualism (Descola, 2013, p. 91). In simpler terms, we need to understand that the concepts like "society" and "culture" are often collective categories defined by Western ontology. These concepts may work well in studies related to the genocidal

events in the Western world, where groups and societies are organized in a manner that aligns with the nature-culture dualism. However, when genocide studies address colonialism and extend beyond European cases, it is crucial to recognize that non-Western groups have diverse definitions of collectivity that vary not only in content but also in scope. Since humanity, sociality, and morality are not exclusive to humans, many Indigenous collective categories demonstrate a greater inclusiveness than Western notions of collectivity, often using terms like "world," "persons," and "land" to describe the communities of all beings within the environment.

The acknowledgment of the diversity of genos may reshape our understanding of genocide, guiding us to properly address the damage caused by this atrocity and advance the decolonization of genocide studies. As Woolford (2019) argues, true decolonized justice for Indigenous groups in North America involves unsettling land (p. 278). Within this study's framework, we should not view this de-occupation simply as returning land to Indigenous Peoples. Instead, this action represents a restoration of the entirety of Indigenous collectivity. For many Indigenous communities, "land" is their concept of genos, as this collective category includes all human and non-human persons who share similar interiorities. Therefore, recognizing the contingency of Western group definitions and the diversity of genos serves as the starting point for decolonizing genocide studies.

The main point is that we should avoid inflicting epistemological violence (Woolford, 2019, p. 272) on victims of genocide by assuming their collective categories align with Western naturalist paradigms like "society" and "culture." Several scholars have observed that during a genocide, the identity of the target group is often defined by the perpetrators. For example, the Nuremberg Laws categorized Jews as a "race," while the Khmer Rouge referred to certain individuals as "New People." These imposed identities differ significantly from how the victims self-identify (Chalk &

Jonassohn, 1990, p. 25). If we continue to apply the naturalist definitions of genos indiscriminately in various cases of genocide studies, we risk replicating the harm inflicted by the genocidists.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis explores the mass death of bovine animals during genocides that have affected human populations. It highlights the suffering of Ankole cattle, yaks, and buffaloes within the framework of anti-representationalism, emphasizing the ontological significance of these animals in local societies. The Rwandan case shows that cattle are agents that shape their interaction with humans and the dynamics of human politics. In the Tibetan case, yaks are an integral part of the environment, just like the human nomads, which explains why both humans and animals were affected by the state project aimed at reshaping local lifestyles and landscapes. In the context of North American Indigenous Peoples, the close interactions between humans and non-humans allow buffaloes to be recognized as possessing humanity and leading a socialized life. The dehumanization of bison was not only a dire consequence of the buffalo genocide but also an integral aspect of the genocide against Indigenous Peoples. The conclusions drawn from the three case studies embody the major aspects of anti-representationalism, including the agency of things, human-environment integration, and practice-generated ontologies.

The diverse ontological properties of bovine animals prompt us to reconsider the narratives that simply depict them as mere natural resources or private property. The characteristics highlighted in the case studies reveal that these non-humans possess qualities that Western ontologies typically regard as exclusive to humans. Their deaths should be viewed as more than just damage to property, ecocide, or vandalism. In the context of genocide studies, it is important to recognize them as victims as well.

A deeper exploration stemming from the case studies focuses on how narrow and anthropocentric the collective categories used in Western thought can be. This study's analysis of practice-generated ontologies reveals that collectives can include various types of members, not just humans. Moreover, the roles of non-human agents within human communities can be diverse; their agency allows them to influence how human social members interact with them and how human social life develops. This influence is so significant that many non-humans act as participants in interactions, similar to human actors. Traditional sociological paradigms have only recognized humans as actors and agents within interactive networks, which overlooks the complex effects of non-human participants.

The concept of collectivity is diverse, and the boundaries of personhood extend beyond just human beings. It is essential to recognize that the naturalist division between nature and human culture is quite subjective, as this perspective often prevents people from perceiving the behavioral patterns and dispositions shared by humans and many non-human entities. Reflecting on Western ontologies is particularly relevant to genocide studies, as a specific notion of "genos" is always closely linked to how a group perceives and classifies the agents they encounter in daily interactions. Since interactions always occur within specific contexts, the ontologies, classifications, and definitions of objects vary from one environment to another. Likewise, the collective categories of social members are also context-dependent, indicating that the meanings of genos vary across different situations. The Western worldview's understanding of "genos" is too narrow to provide scholars with a full picture of the collectives that define humanity through a non-naturalist lens. Consequently, the genocide studies theories grounded in naturalism may struggle to fully comprehend the dynamics of destruction occurring within these groups.

One may wonder how this study's perspective on ontological diversity differs from traditional cultural relativism and constructivism. Anti-representationalism emphasizes that ontologies are not solely products of human perception; rather, their formation begins with various stimuli present in the objects and events within environments. In this sense, anti-representationalism rejects the dualism of nature and culture. The environment is rich with affordances and non-human agents, suggesting that the development of ontologies should be viewed as a cooperative outcome rather than an independent achievement of the human mind. Recognizing the physical environment's role in shaping ontologies helps explain why Indigenous communities around the world have more complex understandings of personhood compared to Western notions of humanity. This complexity arises from Indigenous groups' extensive and ongoing engagement with their environments.

Using anti-representationalism to understand non-Western ontologies and concepts of collectivity has significant ethical implications. This research paradigm emphasizes that the essence of the human-non-human relationship lies in the relational practices that involve all participants in the environment, rather than being solely defined by human cognition. Within this explanative framework, we cannot dismiss non-Western ontologies and related behaviors as merely superstition, fantasy, imagination, or cultural construction. Instead, we must recognize that ontological properties are deeply rooted in the physical environments where different groups reside. This understanding prompts a re-evaluation of Indigenous claims regarding the importance of their lands. Their relationships with the land are not just cultural or spiritual connections; they are substantial bonds shaped by various agents and elements within their environments. Scholars of genocide studies should carefully analyze the ontological properties of objects and events within

these contexts to determine the nature of the damage inflicted on Indigenous communities and their environments.

Appendix 1: The Great Kazakh Famine

The Great Kazakh Famine was a man-made disaster that occurred during the first five-year plan of the Soviet Union (1929-1933). It is estimated that between 1.3 and 1.5 million Kazakhs died during this famine (Sabol, 2017, p. 47). Although the Kazakh Famine and the Ukrainian Famine occurred around the same time, the former is less well-known than the latter. Sarah Cameron suggests that there are two main reasons for the greater attention given to the Ukrainian Famine in the West. Firstly, the Ukrainian Famine resulted in a higher death toll, estimated at between 2.6 and 3.9 million. Secondly, the Ukrainian diaspora has worked hard to raise international awareness of the Ukrainian Famine. After the collapse of the USSR, the Great Ukrainian Famine began to be commemorated as a significant historical event tied to the collective identity of the Ukrainian nation (Cameron, 2018, pp. 4-5). In addition, Niccolò Pianciola points out that the Kazakh and Ukrainian famines were essentially different in that Kazakhstan was not a major grain-producing region. The traditional Kazakh society was nomadic, and during the famine, the primary cause of starvation was the loss of livestock (Pianciola, 2001, p. 238).

In the nineteenth century, Russia conquered the steppe of Central Asia, bringing the 4.7 million Kazakh population under the czar's control (Sabol, 2017, p. 44). As mentioned earlier, Kazakh was a typical nomadic society. A father and his sons constitute an *aul,* the smallest nomadic unit. Kazakh nomads typically resided in yurts, which are round tents designed to house single nuclear families (Sabol, 2017, p. 48-49). Horses are the most important livestock for the Kazakhs, with horse meat and milk serving as primary food sources for the nomads. The wealth of a yurt was largely measured by the number of horses owned. In addition to horses, Kazakh nomads raised

sheep, goats, and camels and traditionally relied on trade to obtain grains, vegetables, and fruits (Sabol, 2017, pp. 53-54). The Kazakh livestock, especially horses, require expansive pastures. Therefore, the nomads needed to migrate long distances to pasture their livestock. They followed good grass and used distinct pastures in different seasons. Since the nomads usually slaughter considerable numbers of livestock in autumn, the summer pastures are extraordinarily crucial for their subsistence needs. The animals must graze sufficiently and gain weight before being slaughtered. After this, the remaining livestock are moved to winter pastures, which provide shelter from the harsh cold (Cameron, 2018, pp. 31-39). Before the Russian invasion, the local people had practiced this nomadic lifestyle for over 4,000 years (Cameron, 2018, p. 2).

The Russian colonization of the steppe began shortly after the czar seized control of Kazakh land. The main objective of this colonization was to sedentarize the local nomadic groups. To achieve this goal, Russia promoted agriculture and relocated a significant number of Slavic peasants from the European part of the empire to the steppes of Central Asia. Among the 1.5 million agricultural migrants were many Cossacks and Ukrainians who had lost or did not possess farming land in their home regions (Cameron, 2018, p. 19; Kindler, 2018, p. 17). Although the climate of the steppe is harsh for farming, Russia substantially transformed the local landscape and economy through its agricultural projects. After half a century of colonization, the northern steppe had developed into a grain-producing region by the early 20th century. Many nomads lost their traditional pastures and became engaged in semi-agricultural and semi-pastoral production; the poorest among them had to work for the Slavic migrants and adopted farming practices (Pianciola, 2004, p. 141). Russia expected this effect to spread to all nomadic communities. Most Kazakhs, however, managed to maintain their nomadism by adaptation. For example, they shortened their migratory distances and spent more months in winter pastures. Additionally, they reduced the

number of horses and sheep, opting instead for cattle, which require less extensive pastures. Some Kazakhs also altered their diets by consuming more grain and less meat and dairy (Cameron, 2018, pp. 37-40; Pianciola, 2004, p. 141).

The czar was overthrown during the October Revolution in 1917, and a few years later, the USSR became the successor to the Russian Empire. The Soviet government did not begin to implement significant reforms in Kazakhstan until 1929, the year the first five-year plan started. When the top officials of the USSR conceived these reforms, they had very little familiarity with the vast Kazakh steppe. Initially, it seemed that only the grain-producing regions of Kazakhstan were deemed valuable by the party-state, as the economic plan heavily focused on grain requisition from this area. The extensive pastoralist region and the nomadic populations living there were largely ignored. This approach reflects the communist officials' disdain for nomadism, as they viewed the traditional Kazakh lifestyle as archaic and an obstacle to modernity.

Kazakhstan's local officials were assigned unrealistic grain-collecting targets. If they collected large amounts of grain from grain-producing areas, the Slavic settler peasants would be left without seeds for next year's production, which would harm agriculture. To address this, the officials decided to protect the settler farmers by transferring the high grain-requisition quotas to the Kazakh nomads, who did not cultivate grain but purchased it for daily consumption. Since these quotas were significantly higher than the actual amounts of grain that the Kazakhs possessed, the nomads were compelled to sell their livestock to purchase additional grain to meet the quota, which severely impoverished them and ultimately led to famine (Cameron, 2018, p. 13; Pianciola, 2001, p. 244). However, the communist officials were largely indifferent to these consequences. At least in the initial phase, their primary concern was fulfilling orders from their superiors. They believed this approach would ultimately benefit both the state and local society, as it was assumed

that after losing their livestock, the nomadic Kazakhs would settle down and transition to farming. This would free up land for agriculture, thereby eliminating the challenges posed by the steppe societies to the state (Pianciola, 2001, p. 245; 2004, p. 155).

In official documents, the plans to exploit Kazakh livestock and transform the nomadic population into settled farmers were concealed beneath the policies of collectivization and sedentarization. In theory, these were two consecutive projects, with collectivization being the primary goal. However, in practice, sedentarization was automatically realized through the implementation of collectivization. The radical grain-requisitioning policy forced many impoverished Kazakhs to relocate to settlements, leading them to abandon their nomadic lifestyle and become sedentary farmers (Pianciola, 2001, p. 245). Ostensibly, the Soviet government appeared to be adjusting the social and economic structures of the Kazakh people in order for them to "catch up" with other peoples of USSR republics. However, fundamentally, the USSR inherited the legacy of the Russian Empire and continued its colonial policies, attempting to integrate Kazakhstan into the communist state. In this process, the traditional Kazakh society was completely destroyed (Pianciola, 2001, p. 246).

In August 1928, Filipp Goloshchyokin, the head of the Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic, initiated a campaign aimed at dismantling Kazakh society by attacking and eliminating traditional authorities and elites. This campaign, commonly referred to as "Little October," drew its name from Russia's October Revolution, as Goloshchyokin believed that Kazakhstan had not experienced a genuine revolution and was in need of one. As most early Soviet officials were not familiar with local affairs, many traditional elites had been serving in different institutions to help administer the new government. However, these individuals soon became viewed as enemies and were purged. The party cadres analyzed Kazakh society through a Marxist

lens, applying class theory to personal relationships. The primary targets of this campaign were *bai*, who were relatively wealthier livestock owners, often serving as clan leaders and members of the Kazakh aristocracy.[91] The government claimed that *bai* constituted only 6% of the Kazakh population but owned half of all livestock in the region. They were accused of exploiting other herdsmen and preventing them from settling on the land. Consequently, the properties of *bai* households were confiscated, and their families were disempowered and relocated to remote areas to prevent any connection to their original communities (Cameron, 2018, pp. 73-90). Revolts occurred in some areas but were soon put down. The persecution of *bai* people served as an experiment of the larger movement that followed Little October and targeted the entire nomadic society (Kindler, 2018, pp. 79-86).

The Little October campaign of 1928 had a devastating impact on Kazakh society, resulting in the loss of a significant number of livestock and wealth. In addition, the exile of *bai* led to a rapid decrease in the local population. The survivors of this campaign were primarily those who were not wealthy to begin with, but they soon faced another challenge. In the same year, the Soviet Union initiated a military draft that further reduced the Kazakh population (Pianciola, 2001, p. 239). Even more impactful, the USSR's first five-year plan started in the following year. The underlying ideology of this plan aimed to transform peasants and pastoralists into agricultural workers dedicated to the development of the state. Local officials pressured nomadic communities to move into collective farms (kolkhozes)[92] to produce grain and meat, as the Kazakh region was assigned high food requisition quotas to support Moscow and other major cities (Cameron, 2018,

[91] In nomadic regions, the households owning over 400 livestock were identified as *bai* class; in semi-nomadic regions, the criterion was 300 livestock; in the agricultural area, it was 150 farm animals (Cameron, 2018: 90; Kindler, 2018, p. 79).

[92] The official name of the Collective Farm is the Association for the Joint Cultivation of the Land, abbreviated as TOZ.

pp. 101-102). During this period, many herdsmen lost their livestock, as numerous nomads were forced to sell their animals to purchase grain and pay agricultural taxes. The sudden influx of Kazakh livestock into the market led to a steep decline in prices. Due to the large volume of distressed sales, most herdsmen received significantly less than the true value of their animals, which further impoverished the Kazakh people (Kindler, 2018, p. 100).

Evidence from official documents indicates that Kazakh party leaders intentionally pressured nomads to sell their livestock to facilitate the settling of nomadic communities. The party's ambitious goal was to settle 65% of all nomads, including 540,000 households and two million people, by the end of the first five-year plan. They envisioned that extensive sedentarization would transform the majority of Kazakhstan's territory into productive agricultural land and convert the nomadic population into a large group of industrial and agricultural workers, thereby forming the backbone of the Kazakh proletariat (Kindler 2018, p. 106-107).

As Moscow also imposed meat procurement quotas on the pastoral areas, many nomads were ordered to send their animals to the collective and state farms (sovkhozes). Some herdsmen were reluctant to hand over their livestock to the state and chose to slaughter most of their animals before moving to the farms. The livestock in the farms also died quickly because the new environment could not provide sufficient fodder and winter shelters for animals that relied on migration to find pastures. In addition, the overcrowded conditions in the farms also allowed epidemics to spread among the herds (Pianciola, 2001, pp. 241-242). According to Cameron (2018), from 1929 to 1931, the total number of livestock in Kazakhstan, comprising horses, cows, camels, sheep, goats, and pigs, dropped from more than 40 million to less than 12 million (p. 109). Other data indicate that livestock numbers plummeted from 35.82 million to 4.39 million between 1929 and 1934; in nomadic and semi-nomadic regions, 97.5% of the livestock perished during the first

five-year plan (Kindler, 2018, p. 101; Pianciola, 2004, p. 165). While many sick and dying animals were slaughtered and butchered, the meat often went to waste due to poor transportation. In addition to livestock losses, many Kazakhs also lost their land. During the collectivization period, Moscow continued relocating Slavic peasants to the steppe to appropriate land previously owned by local nomads (Cameron, 2018, pp. 108-120).

The symptoms of famine began to emerge in the winter of 1929-1930, marked by a significant increase in malnourishment within collectivized communities. By the summer of 1931, a drought further deteriorated the situation, leading to widespread food shortages and starvation across Kazakhstan. As the last remaining livestock were killed and consumed, a devastating famine struck the steppe. Reports indicate that many people resorted to eating grass to survive, and a large number of children were abandoned or left orphaned. Incidents of gang looting and violence became common, with numerous cases of cannibalism documented. The party leaders and officials did little to alleviate the famine, as they prioritized the goals of grain procurement, collectivization, and sedentarization (Kindler, 2018, pp. 159-168).

Stalin's collectivization campaigns sparked widespread rebellion in various regions of the USSR, including the western part of Kazakhstan (Pianciola, 2001, p. 239). In the first half of 1930, more than 80,000 Kazakhs participated in revolts against collectivization and sedentarization (Cameron, 2018, p. 110). As famine loomed, the violence escalated. Many desperate Kazakhs attempted to flee, but Soviet forces tried to intercept them, resulting in combat and massacres. Most refugees followed the paths taken by the exiled *bai* households, seeking safety in the regions surrounding Kazakhstan, such as China, Siberia, and Central Asia. It is estimated that over 1.5 million Kazakhs emigrated from their homelands after the drought of 1931. Among these refugees,

more than 200,000 crossed the border into China's Xinjiang region (Pianciola, 2001, p. 242).[93] Some even traveled further and settled in Qinghai, one of the Chinese provinces that are discussed in this thesis.

According to Pianciola (2001), the first five-year plan led to a population decrease of 1.7 million in rural Kazakhstan (p. 237). Although the exact number of famine victims is uncertain, estimates suggest that between 1.3 and 1.5 million Kazakhs died from starvation (Sabol, 2017, pp. 46-47). This means that the famine victims represented approximately 38% of Kazakhstan's total population (Pianciola, 2001, p. 237). While the Great Chinese Famine, which occurred 30 years later and resulted in the deaths of over 30 million people, is widely recognized as the deadliest famine in human history, the Kazakh Famine resulted in the highest proportion of deaths among all nations affected by famine. The Kazakh Famine was the first man-made disaster inflicted upon nomadic populations and their animals due to the collectivization policies of a communist regime. In many ways, the famine that occurred in the Tibetan regions mirrored the Kazakh Famine. A recurring theme in such events is the significant loss of animal life that occurs alongside political movements targeting human populations.

[93] Today, the Kazakh people are the third largest ethnic group in Xinjiang, after the Uygur and Han Chinese.

Appendix 2: Abbreviations of Some Chinese Titles

Abbreviation	Title
ABPG	*Aba Zhouzhi* (Ngawa Prefecture Gazetteer)
ABPO	*Aba Zangzu Qiangzu Zizhizhou Gaikuang* (Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture Overview)
ABSL	*Sichuansheng Abazhou Zangzu Shehui Lishi Diaocha* (The Social and Historical Survey of the Tibetans in Ngawa Prefecture, Sichuan Province)
BTCG	*Batang Xianzhi* (Batang County Gazetteer)
DGCG	*Dege Xianzhi* (Dêgê County Gazetteer)
GNAG	*Gannan Zangzu Zizhizhou Xumuzhi* (Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Animal Husbandry Gazetteer)
GNPO	*Gannan Zangzu Zizhizhou Gaikuang* (Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Overview)
GZMG	*Ganzi Zangzu Zizhizhou Junshizhi* (The Military Gazetteer of Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture)
GZSL	*Sichuansheng Ganzizhou Zangzu Shehui Lishi Diaocha* (Social and Historical Survey of the Tibetans in Garzê Prefecture, Sichuan Province)
HAPG	*Hainan Zhouzhi* (Hainan Prefecture Gazetteer)
HAPO	*Hainan Zangzu Zizhizhou Gaikuang* (Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Overview)
HNPG	*Huangnan Zangzu Zizhizhouzhi* (Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Gazetteer)
KDDD	*Kangding Daofu Danba Diaocha Cailiao* (Kangding, Daofu, and Danba's Survey Data)

LGKP	*Litangsi, Dajinsi, Ganzisi, Babangsi Diaocha Cailiao* (Lithang Monastery, Goinqên Monastery, Kandze Monastery, and Palpung Monastery's Survey Data)
QHMG	*Qinghai Shengzhi Junshizhi* (Qinghai Military Gazetteer)
QHSL	*Qinghaisheng Zangzu Mengguzu Shehui Lishi Diaocha* (Social and Historical Survey of the Tibetans and Mongolians in Qinghai).
QHXS	*Qinghai Xumuye Jingji Fazhanshi* (The Development of the Animal-husbandry Economy in Qinghai)
SCMG	*Sichuan Shengzhi Junshizhi* (Sichuan Military Gazetteer)
SCMZ	*Sichuan Shengzhi Minzuzhi* (Annals of Sichuan Province: Ethnographies)
YLCL	*Yulong, Sexu, Changtai, Tagong, Datangba, Zongde deng Muqu Cailiao* (Yulong, Sexu, Changtai, Tagong, Datangba, Zongde, and Other Pasturing Regions' Data)
YSPO	*Yushu Zangzu Zizhizhou Gaikuang* (Yulshul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Overview)
ZNHD	*Ruoergai Aba Hongyuan Diaocha Cailiao* (Zoigê, Ngawa, and Hongyuan's Survey Data)

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