GENOCIDE AND MASS ATROCITIES AS A DISEASE:
EARLY DETECTION AS COMPLEMENT TO EARLY WARNING

DR. BIRGER HELDT (HELDTB@YAHOO.COM)
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EARLY WARNING GENERATIONS

- 1st generation
  - mid-1990, onwards: HQ based, conflict indicators, qual and quant
- 2nd generation
  - 2000 onwards: first generation + field monitors
- 3rd generation
  - 2003 onwards: conflict areas based, field monitors, qual and quant
- 4th generation
  - Recent: crowd sourcing/crowd seeding, qual and quant, Big Data

All generations are currently co-existing and active
THE STATE OF RISK/EARLY WARNING TOOLS

• Focus on data, violence volume: data the problem?; volumes a clue?

• The analysis tools of data as such has not really changed

• Early Warning is often early detection/diagnosis: violence on-going

• Difficult to get really good at forecasting genocides
  • Rare events (50), small empirical learning basis: less EW accuracy
  • Many moving parts: valuable, but complicated to apply

• Easier to get really good at forecasting mass atrocities
  • Common events, large empirical learning basis: more EW accuracy
  • Many moving parts: valuable, but complicated to apply
RECONCEPTUALISATION: G/M AS A DISEASE

• Is there a complement to current Early Warning practice, that…
  • Has small data requirements: no need for Big Data?

• Is consistent and easy to apply?
  • Does not require understanding the causes/drivers?
    • Does not require that causal models are developed?

• Does not focus on the volume of violence?

• Requires fatality data only? Uses nifty analysis tools?

• Involves early detection approaches with resemblance to tried and tested principles within epidemiology?
LEARNING FROM DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

- Originated in manufacturing industry; now common in epidemiology
- Automated early detection mechanisms in a number of countries
  - SARS, leukemia, flue, food poisoning, malaria, crime (“hotspots”), …
  - Advanced approaches, refinements last 15 years: extensive literature
- Unifying principles of current epidemiology early detection mechanisms
  - 1. Identify a baseline
  - 2. Surveillance: add continuous data feeds from various sources
  - 3. Look for anomalies: set warning levels; apply nifty analysis tools
    - Not technologism; just consistent analysis
  - 4. Experts assess validity of alarms before action is taken
A 5th Generation Early Warning?

- Early detection with only 1 moving part: fatality data, and only little of it
- No need for “Big Data”: limited forensic data is sufficient; cost efficient
- Removes the warning-response gap: government/IGO run analysis
  - Responder has own analysis capability; direct line of communication
- Complement – not replace - current risk/early warning practices
- Learn from national/international disease control architectures for adding contents to a genocide/atrocity prevention architecture
  - Actors?
  - Policies?
  - Practices?
  - Institutions?
  - Processes?
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION