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1 Genocide and Violence: An Introduction

Genocide is, in many ways, a dogmatic concept. It has, therefore, recently been criticized as too narrow or limited[1] because it excludes numerous victim groups and their respective genocide-related identities not covered by the definition of the UN Genocide Convention (1948). This is to be considered "an unprecedented progressive step in the history of international law"[2] but requires adjustments and a broadened scope to include so far unprotected victim groups.[3] Furthermore, especially with regard to Germany, discussions and reflections about genocide are very much centered on the experience of the Holocaust. The relationship between colonialism and National Socialism was already addressed by contemporaries such as Raphael Lemkin, Hannah Arendt, and Aimé Césaire.[4] After the turn of the millennium, the question has been raised in a historiographical context. Jürgen Zimmerer and others have addressed connections, structural parallels, and direct continuities from European colonialism and imperialism to the Holocaust, especially with regard to the German genocide against the Herero and Nama in what was then German Southwest Africa in 1904–1908.[5] Michelle Moyd recently also emphasized that "studying

1 A. Dirk Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), 50. The debate about Achille Mbembe's *Politiques de l'inimitié* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2013) in Germany in 2020 is another example of the discussions related to the interpretation of the Holocaust in relation to the history of colonialism. See also Matthias Böckmann, Matthias Gockel, Reinhart Kößler and Henning Melber, eds., *Jenseits von Mbembe: Geschichte, Erinnerung, Solidarität* (Berlin: Metropol, 2022).

2 Matthew Lippman, "The Drafting and Development of the 1948 Convention on Genocide and the Politics of International Law," in *The Genocide Convention: The Legacy of 60 Years*, eds. Harmen van der Wilt et al. (Leiden/Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 2012), 16.

3 "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)," accessed February 13, 2023, https://tinyurl.com/bdhdws59.

4 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 1951); Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme* (Paris: Éditions Réclame, 1950).

5 Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Berlin: LIT, 2011). See also Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, eds., *Genocide in German South-West Africa: The Colonial War (1904–1908) in Namibia and its Aftermath* (Monmouth: Merlin Press, 2008); David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber & Faber 2010). For an overview of this discussion, see Thomas Kühne, "Colonialism and the Holocaust. Continuities, Causations, and Complexities," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15 (2013): 339–362. It is also necessary to remark that while some forms of colonial violence are considered genocidal, others are

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genocide from the perspective of colonial warfare enhances analytical possibilities for understanding their entanglement."[6] Although many German historians rejected the thesis that direct continuities from "Windhoek to Auschwitz" exist[7] and that Nazi Expansion eastward could be analyzed as a colonial project, it was met with approval by numerous international scholars. Over the past few years, a consensus has been established that essential aspects of National Socialism and, in particular, of the genocidal war and occupation of Eastern Europe can only be fully understood through their relationship to imperialist colonialism.[8] Since 2020, this scholarly debate has been transformed into a heated debate in the broader public sphere and has come to be known as the "Historikerstreit 2.0."[9] This is deliberately mentioned here, prior to presenting theoretical considerations about genocidal violence, because a comparative perspective on questions related to this particular form of violence will highlight the value of a broadened perspective and the historical comparison as a method.[10] Historical comparisons are not equations. Compari-

not. See Michelle Moyd, "Genocide and War," in *Genocide: Key Themes*, eds. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 226.

6 Ibid., 225.

7 Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2003); A. Dirk Moses, "Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the 'Racial Century': Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust," *Patterns of Prejudice* 36 (2002): 7–36; Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008); Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press 2011). For the rejection of the thesis: Birthe Kundrus, "Von den Herero zum Holocaust? Einige Bemerkungen zur aktuellen Debatte," *Mittelweg* 36, no. 4 (2005): 82–92; Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, "Der Holocaust als 'kolonialer Genozid'? Europäische Kolonialgewalt und nationalsozialistischer Vernichtungskrieg," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 33 (2007): 439–466.

8 Frank Bajohr and Rachel O'Sullivan, "Holocaust, Kolonialismus und NS-Imperialismus: Wissenschaftliche Forschung im Schatten einer polemischen Debatte," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 70, no. 1 (2022): 191–202.

9 Susan Neiman and Michael Wildt, eds., *Historiker streiten: Gewalt und Holocaust – die Debatte* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2022). See also Urs Lindner, "Die Singularität der Shoah und die postkoloniale Herausforderung der deutschen Erinnerungskultur," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 48, no. 2 (2022): 272–300. A. Dirk Moses talked of the problem of a "German catechism," which limited the chances for broader perspectives on the "crime of all crimes." However, the constructive criticism of the concept of genocide, which was related to this debate, led to a somewhat heated debate about genocide in general and the Holocaust in particular. A. Dirk Moses, "Der Katechismus der Deutschen," *Geschichte der Gegenwart*, May 23, 2021, accessed February 2, 2023, https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/der-katechismus-der-deutschen/.

10 For theoretical reflections about the historical comparison, see, among others, Hartmut Kaelble, *Historisch Vergleichen: Eine Einführung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2021).

sons do not relativize or trivialize historical phenomena; rather, they highlight similarities and differences, thus providing clarifications and better understandings. While the "singularity of the Holocaust"[11] shall not be contested from an ethical or moral point of view, the comparison of genocidal violence seems vital to further enhance the theoretical concept as such and gain a better understanding of related questions.

When we talk about genocidal violence, there are many aspects of interest, and the present volume is only an attempt to bring together some scholarly reflections about it, especially related to concepts as well as the forms and impacts of violent actions that can be perceived and understood as genocidal. However, a reflection on the interrelationship of genocide and violence is first required to offer some insight into this particular relationship. In *Geschichte der Gewalt* (*History of Violence*), Karl Heinz Metz argues that

> In history, there is always violence – and always a longing for peace. The question of violence is probably the seminal question of the human being. From violence, all religion and all politics evolve: religion as the attempt at a symbolic answer to the question of why humans are unable to abolish violence, politics as the attempt to overcome violence practically by rule that might tame it. And yet, violence never disappears, neither in the state, which cannot secure inner peace without the threat of violence, and which often uses excessive violence, like war, against those external to it, nor in religion, which also becomes violent against heretics and pagans, as soon as religion begins to wish to order society according to its own values.[12]

As Arendt emphasized, violence seems to be a natural and instrumental element within human relations.[13] However, especially with regard to genocidal violence, violence has to be committed due to and in consequence of a form of ideological predetermination. Human beings will probably never be able to overcome violence as an element of their lives entirely,[14] but we must understand that genocidal violence differs from other social acts of violence. To use genocidal violence means to have the *intent* to harm or utterly destroy a certain individual or group and to base its use on a preset or narrated *legitimization* that allows pain or

11 Michael Wildt, "Was heißt Singularität des Holocaust?" *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 19 (2022): 128–147.

12 Karl Heinz Metz, *Geschichte der Gewalt: Krieg – Revolution – Terror* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010), 7.

13 Hannah Arendt, *Macht und Gewalt*, 20th ed. (Munich: Piper, 2011 [1970]), 63.

14 Zygmunt Bauman, "Alte und neue Gewalt," *Journal für Konflikt- und Gewaltforschung* 2 (2000), 28–42; Michaela Christ, "Gewaltforschung: Ein Überblick," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 67, no. 4 (2017): 10.

death to be inflicted on those who fit the necessary identity profile, i.e., that of a possible victim to be targeted by the perpetrator group.

The modern period is very often considered less violent than the past,[15] but this is a rather Eurocentric perception, one that also considers the Cold War to have actually been cold,[16] neglecting the violent wars and conflicts it created and the genocidal violence committed in this period.[17] When (genocidal) violence erupts in modern—sometimes those even considered post-modern—states, there is an even more pressing demand to explain why this is possible,[18] especially when "ordinary men"[19] commit crimes so cruel that one can hardly speak of them. Often a "collective crime"[20] related to group dynamics and shared perpetrator identities,[21] genocidal violence can nevertheless appear in different forms and therefore needs to be analyzed with regard not only to its context but also to its actual form of appearance.[22] Peter Imbusch emphasized this diversity concerning violence when he offered the following scheme to divide micro- and macro-violence.[23]

However, according to Raphael Lemkin's definition of genocide, one might consider only violence on the macro-level to be genocidal. Lemkin argued that genocide "does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, ex-

15 Teresa Koloma Beck, "(Staats-)Gewalt und moderne Gesellschaft: Der Mythos vom Verschwinden der Gewalt," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 67, no. 4 (2017): 16. Such arguments were made, to name just one example, in publications like Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York: Viking, 2011).

16 Immanuel Wallerstein, "What Cold War in Asia? An Interpretative Essay," in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, eds. Hong Liu, Michael Szonyi, and Yangwen Zheng (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 15–24.

17 See Frank Jacob, ed., *Peripheries of the Cold War* (Würzburg: K&N, 2015); Frank Jacob, *Genocide and Mass Violence in Asia: An Introductory Reader* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2019).

18 Stefan Kühl, "Gewaltmassen: Zum Zusammenhang von Gruppen, Menschenmassen und Gewalt," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 67, no. 4 (2017): 22.

19 Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992).

20 Larry May and Robert Strikwerda, "Men in Groups: Collective Responsibility for Rape," in "Feminism and Peace," special issue, *Hypatia* 9, no. 2 (1994): 134–151.

21 Thomas Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship: Hitler's Soldiers, Male Bonding and Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

22 Trutz von Trotha, "Zur Soziologie der Gewalt," in "Soziologie der Gewalt," ed. Trutz von Trotha, special issue, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 37 (1997): 14.

23 Peter Imbusch, *Moderne und Gewalt: Zivilisationstheoretische Perspektiven auf das 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005), 31–35.

Tab. 1: Categorization of violence.

Categories	Micro-violence	Macro-violence
Phenomenology	Isolated act, punctual event	Violence as part of an organized collective
Type	Individual and direct use of physical or psychological violence	Collective state violence, especially in totalitarian regimes
Perpetrators	Individual from a small group	State or its organs, larger group of perpetrators involved
Victims	Individual	Designated group, identified according to specific factors

cept 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."[24] Genocidal violence is often closely linked to wars, as "[w]ar, or the threat of war, creates conditions that political or military regimes use as justification for planning and carrying out mass violence against their enemies."[25] Wars as an ordered form of violence committed by trained collectives, according to certain acceptable patterns of use legitimized through official decisions at the state's political level, are supposed to "function" in specific ways. However, they can either lead to genocidal eruptions of violence that were not initially planned or be instrumentalized to use violence against particular minorities or out-groups that had intentionally been pre-defined as "war enemies." In this regard, on the one hand, one can observe specific violent continuities; the "[t]urn-of-the-century genocidal colonial wars against indigenous peoples in Africa, North America, Australia, and other colonized spaces presaged genocides that occurred later in the twentieth century."[26] On the other hand, every war in itself possesses the potential to create genocidal violence, especially in relation to the experience of a somehow determining time-space continuum that provides the possibilities for genocidal violence.[27] According to

24 Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.
25 Moyd, "Genocide and War," 225.
26 Ibid., 226.
27 On these aspects see, among others, Shannon O'Lear and Stephen L. Egbert, "Introduction: Geographies of Genocide," *Space and Polity* 13, no. 1 (2009): 1–8.

Martin Shaw, genocidal violence as a social practice is very similar to war due to the following aspects that the former "borrows" from the latter:

1. The identification of a social group as an enemy in an essentially military (rather than political, economic, or cultural) sense, i.e., it is justified to use violence against this group in a comprehensive and systematic way.
2. The intention to destroy the real or imagined power of the enemy group, including its economic, political, cultural, and ideological power, together with its ability to resist this destruction.
3. The deployment and threat of violence to destroy the power of the enemy group through killing and physically harming a significant number of its members, as well as economic, political, and ideological coercion.
4. A fundamental struggle for existence between the attacked group and the genocidal power, which often forms part of a larger conflict in which third parties directly or indirectly ally with the former against the latter.[28]

However, this close relation to war should not omit the possibility that acts of individual violence can be considered genocidal as well. Without any doubt, "genocide is primarily if not exclusively an act of mass killing."[29] However, Shaw also emphasized that "genocide is a structural phenomenon in a double sense. First, it is a recurring pattern of social conflict; second, it is deeply connected to other structures of conflict as well as to more fundamental structures of power in modern society."[30] He further points out that "genocide should be understood as a framework concept for analysing a large variety of empirical situations."[31] These, of course, can but do not have to be linked to war, although they can be considered "a form of war"[32] that can be prepared and waged on a daily basis in peacetime as well. Nevertheless, genocidal violence seems to be at least somewhat structured. Adam Jones has pointed out that

1. structures and institutions, by definition, are created and perpetuated by the collective actions and agency of human beings;

28 Shaw, *What is Genocide?*, 293–294. See also Martin Shaw, *War and Genocide: Organised Killing in Modern Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003).

29 Benjamin Meiches, *The Politics of Annihilation: A Genealogy of Genocide* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 109.

30 Ibid., 287.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 291.

2. as "background" features of social relations, structures and institutions influence individual actions, whether consciously or unconsciously;
3. all violence is the product of human agency; and
4. such agency therefore underpins "structural violence" by maintaining the structures and institutions that channel and facilitate violence.[33]

This, however, also raises questions with regard to acts of individual violence and their potential to be considered genocidal. Ultimately, the individual acts of a critical mass can turn individually committed acts of violence into a larger genocidal structure. Nevertheless, if hate crimes are committed by individuals, according to a larger ideological system, i.e., when single killers believe they are serving a larger cause that demands the use of violence against a particular victim group determined by ethnic, political, or religious aspects, would we not have to apply the term 'genocide' here too? Would it have to describe numerous incidents of micro-violence that, in their totality, should be considered a form of genocide? To answer these questions, a more detailed and probably comparative look into the history of genocidal violence is urgently required. The present volume can only offer some theoretical considerations and highlight case studies showing some of the forms genocidal violence can take.

Birgitta Nedelmann has previously proposed a systematic approach to the study of violence based on five methodological steps:

1. Development of a conceptual frame of reference (actors, interpretation of violence, analysis of situation, description of forms of violence used, consequences for perpetrators, victims, and bystanders);
2. Conceptual limitation of the specific form of violence analyzed;
3. Analysis of reciprocal processes of meaning (*Sinnvorgänge*);
4. Methodical pluralism for a longue durée approach (e.g., biographies of perpetrators, victims' post-violence perspectives); and
5. Development of a theory of the constitution of social subjectivity toward the use of violence.[34]

Before taking these steps into consideration for the further study of genocidal violence, it is essential to address the first two steps, as the concept is often considered too narrow. These aspects are dealt with in the first section of the present volume

33 Adam Jones, "Genocide and Structural Violence," in *New Directions in Genocide Research*, ed. Adam Jones (London: Routledge, 2012), 133.

34 Birgitta Nedelmann, "Gewaltsoziologie am Scheideweg: Die Auseinandersetzung in der gegenwärtigen und Wege der künftigen Gewaltforschung," in "Soziologie der Gewalt," ed. Trutz von Trotha, special issue, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 37 (1997): 72–83.

when *Dirk Moses* and *Frank Jacob* discuss the concept of genocide according to problems caused by its narrow understanding in relation to "unwanted shortcomings" related to the UN Genocide Convention. While Moses discusses the consequences of theoretical and legal insufficiencies, Jacob highlights the origin of the latter in relation to Lemkin's work and the political context in which the convention was drafted and accepted. After these initial reflections on debates in the field of genocide studies and the history of the concept as such, *Khushboo Chauhan* and *Anja Titze* discuss the concept further and highlight that questions about "cultural genocide" as well as gender and genocide are pressing and demand adjustments to the way we think about the latter as a scientific and legal category.

The second section of the volume deals with concrete forms of genocidal violence and offers in-depth studies of different cases, ranging from the analysis of violence in Nazi Germany as a "socially integrative force" (*Christopher Goodwin*) and the "persecution of Sinti and Roma" under the National Socialist regime (*Théophile Leroy* and *Verena Meier*) to a comparative analysis of genocidal violence against women in Armenia and Rwanda (*Kristin Platt*). Two other chapters broaden the analytical perspective: *Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe* reconstructs the historical use of genocidal violence by the Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army during the Second World War, while *Mohamed Adhikari* takes a closer look at "the genocide of the Beothuk people of Newfoundland." The variety of case studies in this section aims to stimulate a comparative perspective on genocidal violence. Accordingly, it also hopes to show that such comparisons can stimulate a more critical and broader approach toward genocide and a debate about the concept in relation to actually committed violence.

The third and final part of the volume is dedicated to questions about the impact of genocidal violence, thereby fulfilling the demand for a longue durée approach with regard to the chronological contextualization of genocide. Even at a historical distance from the actual violent events, genocidal violence always has a past and undoubtedly leaves multiple forms of impact. In this section, *Alexander Williams* provides a "spatio-temporal analysis of Eddie Weinstein's *17 Days in Treblinka*" and shows how memory related to genocidal violence is formed and expressed in the genre of "survivors' memoirs" or "atrocity testimonies."[35] Last but not least, Kaitlin P. Reed shows how genocidal violence is still impacting Native American communities in California, where "settler colonialism, genocide, and healing" constitute a triad that is closely related to the violence experienced in this specific space.

35 For a broader analysis of such genres, see Katherine Wilson, "Genocide Genres: Reading Atrocity Testimonies" (PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013).

All in all, the editors hope that the variety of the present chapters and their easy accessibility will help to enhance the debates about genocidal violence while broadening the concept as such to reach a more comparative approach toward a crime still being committed against numerous victim groups. The latter could be better protected if the violence used against them and the sorrows thereby created were to be understood as genocidal in nature. In this regard, science has an obligation to lead the way and address the previous shortcomings of a concept that, as a legal category, was related more to political than scientific considerations.

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