

NIOD STUDIES ON WAR, HOLOCAUST, AND GENOCIDE



Edited by Uğur Ümit Üngör

# Genocide

New Perspectives on its Causes,  
Courses and Consequences

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

Genocide

# NIOD Studies on War, Holocaust, and Genocide

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*New Perspectives on its Causes, Courses,  
and Consequences*

*Edited by  
Uğur Ümit Üngör*

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# Preface

## The Dark Side of Humans

*Ton Zwaan*

Hardly a day goes by without the international media confronting us with news about mass atrocities, war, civil war, and genocidal events. Given the mass media's penchant for topicality, sensationalism, and the spectacular, the bulk of this news usually remains highly superficial. It may also result in serious misrepresentations, for instance in the recent gross overemphasis placed on terrorism especially by ISIS and other Islamic fundamentalist groups as well as the comparative underreporting of the far more massive, lethal violence of states – for example by the Syrian regime in Syria or by Russia in Ukraine. Often the media only offers its audience snippets and fragments of gruesome realities, which are presented as 'facts'. But the lack of contextualization, continuity in reporting, and sound analysis frequently impede real comprehension and understanding. Therefore, the daily stream of bad news tends to leave the public quite often dumbfounded.

None of these criticisms apply to this book. In the separate chapters, carefully selected and introduced by the editor, a team of young, international scholars make thorough and profound efforts to describe, understand, and explain diverse aspects of the causes, courses, and consequences of genocidal events and processes. To be sure, each case is different from the next one, and it requires specific knowledge to be able to answer the questions these scholars come up with. But any reader who is alert not only to the differences but also the similarities and who is willing to use his/her imagination may also gather valuable comparative knowledge and insights into the nature of genocide and related mass atrocities. Violence between people, individually and especially collectively, belongs to the core of such phenomena. Understanding the manifold preconditions, the workings and the diverse effects of collective violence in and between state-societies is thus essential to gain more insight into mass atrocities and genocide.

One of the most frequently asked questions in this context is how we can understand the callous, ruthless, and cruel ways in which some people may treat other people in situations of war, civil war, and genocide. This question about the dark side of human beings seems to be the most troubling for the general public and many academic specialists alike. It also looms large in the background of this book. A promising starting point in looking for an

answer may be found in the powerful words written by Sigmund Freud in 1930 in his small book on *Civilization and Its Discontents*:

[M]en are not gentle creatures, who want to be loved, who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him... As a rule this cruel aggressiveness waits for some provocation or puts itself at the service of some other purpose, whose goal might also have been reached by milder measures. In circumstances that are favorable to it, when the mental counterforces which ordinarily inhibit it are out of action, it also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals man as a savage beast to whom consideration towards his own kind is something alien.<sup>1</sup>

When Freud wrote these words he was already in his seventies, and his statement might be seen as a general conclusion reached after a long life of studying people and societies. This observation combines valuable psychological insight about people with a clear sociological awareness of the impact of the wider circumstances under which they are bound to live. People are complex beings with often contradictory affects and impulses, and – knowingly or unwittingly – full of ambiguity and ambivalence. They long for acknowledgement, respect, and love. They have a disposition for cooperation; they are constructive; they may like and love each other. But they also possess a disposition for competition and conflict; they may be aggressive and destructive; and they may despise, hate, and destroy each other. Which dispositions, affects, and impulses will dominate and in what sort of combinations largely depends on the larger historical, social, and cultural conditions. Freud suggests that the darker side of people will come to the surface under circumstances in which the mental counterforces which normally act as inhibitions no longer function.

Much could be said about these circumstances, but three suggestions will have to suffice here. First, the capacity of people for empathy and identification with others is limited. Although it can be argued that the

1 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (New York: Norton & Co., 1961), pp. 58-59.

'circles of identification' for many people have expanded in the course of the history of humanity, positive feelings towards all others as fellow human beings are still flawed, highly fragile, and vulnerable. Moreover, under general conditions of crisis – serious polarization in and between groups and societies, war, and civil war – such feelings will diminish for many. Instead, desensitization, disidentification, and hate may grow. A second dark side of people resides in their capacity to believe in, or even become hypnotized by, all sorts of unfounded illusions and delusions. One may think here of the grand religious delusions and utopian political ideologies such as national socialism and fascism, communism and nationalism. At the same time, one should also keep in mind the countless conspiracy theories and collective hate-fantasies that flourish in large parts of our present world. Such fantasies impede empathy and often facilitate the third dark side of people: the inclination to use violence instead of milder means to solve existing differences and disputes.

It would be naive to believe that these closely interrelated dark sides of people can easily disappear. But it does not seem naive to believe that empathy between people may be fostered, that hate-fantasies may be disputed, and that the use of violence may be further reined in. The essays in this book, each in their own way, point in that direction.



# Introduction

Genocide, an Enduring Problem of our Age

*Uğur Ümit Üngör*

Baniyas is a breezy town of 50,000 inhabitants, perched on the slopes of the mountain range that lines Syria's Mediterranean coast. The town and surrounding countryside is famous for its dates, olives, citrus orchards, and timber, which the region exports to foreign markets. The population of Baniyas mostly consists of middle-class Sunni, Christian, and Alawi bureaucrats and business owners, as well as industrial laborers, whereas the poorer countryside lives off subsistence farming and seasonal labor. In the past two decades, rapid industrialization, the development of the harbor, and the construction of an oil refinery have led to increased air and water pollution. In the summer of 2006, after a month-long tourist trip through Syria, I visited Baniyas and found a cozy and welcoming environment. Whereas the atmosphere in Damascus and Homs had been tense just a week before due to the Israeli assault on Lebanon (the 'July War'), in Baniyas young men were smoking water pipes, joking, drinking tea, and playing backgammon in the cafés along the boulevard. Baniyas seemed enjoyable for the young crowd due to an apparently permissive, secular consensus that gave the coastal town a feeling like any other Mediterranean city. I had a long-held aspiration to move to Syria for a year to learn Arabic. When I left Baniyas in August 2006, I was strongly inclined to return, settle, and follow my ambition. But that never happened.

In Syria, the mass protests called the 'Arab Spring' unfolded quite differently from Egypt or Tunisia. Until March 2011, Syria could still safely be considered part of the non-violent phase of contentious politics. No civil war was pre-determined, and it was entirely possible for the government to avert the catastrophe. In March 2011, a local uprising erupted in the southern town of Deraa as a response to the arrest and torture of fifteen children by the regime. Local authorities responded to the demonstrations by shooting into a crowd of unarmed demonstrators chanting relatively moderate slogans. Social media allowed the images of the protests and violence to spread across the country, sparking mass demonstrations across the country, including very early on in Baniyas. As the protests widened, the government's violent response became more extensive and intensive. This was followed by a period of mass desertion of Syrian soldiers who refused

to shoot at non-combatant demonstrators. A critical transformation was depacification, i.e. the relationship between the state and society crossed the threshold of violence. As desertion increased, clashes began to erupt between the deserters and security forces, and by early 2012, daily protests were eclipsed by the spread of armed conflict. The International Crisis Group argued that “by seeking to force entire communities into submission, they pushed them toward armed resistance; the protest movement’s militarization was a logical by-product of heightened repression.”<sup>1</sup> The violence escalated at breathtaking speed, and within three years, the body count had exceeded 120,000. The course of the civil war fluctuated like the ebb and flow of the tide: the regime lost territory and the Free Syria Army gained ground in 2012, but the tables turned in 2013, reaching a military and political stalemate and territorial fragmentation. The war devastated economic and civic life, and conditions in some neighborhoods reached Leningradesque dimensions. In 2012, the United Nations Special Adviser on Genocide, the NGO Genocide Watch, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum issued warnings to Syria.

Most public discussions during the Syrian uprising and the ensuing escalation of asymmetric and symmetric violence focused narrowly on four issues: exotic atrocities, chemical warfare, foreign intervention, and Islamist terrorism. All of these topics are interesting enough, but none were central to the dynamic of the violence itself. The first issue emerged when the daily killings of dozens of protestors across the country gradually disappeared from the front pages and only specific, remarkable atrocities were reported and received disproportional attention. A good example was the case of Abu Sakkar, a Free Syrian Army commander who cut open the corpse of a Syrian soldier and ripped out his lung and heart, biting in one of the organs. The second issue revolved around the aftermath of the 21 August 2013 chemical attack on the eastern suburbs of Damascus (‘Eastern Ghouta’), which killed more than 1,000 people in twelve different localities. Even though the attack killed a fraction of the total number of victims, it received disproportional attention and international public debate. A third question followed from the chemical attack: its aftermath saw increased diplomatic traffic and American preparations for an aerial attack on the Assad regime, foiled by stubborn Russian resistance. The prospect of military strikes against Syria galvanized the British and American public across the political spectrums into demonstrations against intervention. Finally, the involvement of radical

1 International Crisis Group, *Syria’s Mutating Conflict* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2012), p. 3.

Islamist armed groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Jabhat al-Nusra sparked discussion about the proliferation of terrorism and the supposed threat it posed to European societies. The media's narrow focus on these four topics and the public's short attention span and "compassion fatigue"<sup>2</sup> distracted the international community's attention away from the core issue: the silent but unrelenting regime violence against the civilian population of Syria. What do genocide studies have to offer for a better understanding of the Syrian crisis?

On 2 and 3 May 2013, Syrian security forces murdered at least 459 unarmed civilians including 106 children in the twin villages of al-Bayda and Ras al-Nabaa, just south of Baniyas.<sup>3</sup> According to a comprehensive field report by the Syrian Network for Human Rights based on survivor testimony and eyewitness accounts of activists, the security forces first cut off all electricity and communications to the village, after which the army indiscriminately shelled the village for several hours. Then, security forces along with paramilitary auxiliaries from neighboring villages, and a pro-Assad militia headed by Mihraç Ural, stormed the village and began systematically killing people.<sup>4</sup> Unarmed civilians were herded together on street corners and shot at close range with semi-automatic firearms, especially Kalashnikovs. The video footage shot by the perpetrators and by the survivors in the aftermath confirm these findings. It shows the perpetrators armed with Kalashnikovs, marching off columns of men with their hands above their heads or behind their backs, moments before their execution. In the video footages, the perpetrators are dressed in military fatigues, triumphant and defiant, strolling through the town, each clearly carrying out a task. They are not particularly emotional and carry out the routine procedures of dragging bodies into a shed and burning houses in an undemonstrative manner. According to one eyewitness, some perpetrators were motivated by sectarian hatred and did chant Shiite slogans and committed passionate atrocities. The victims, all dressed in civilian clothes, are young and old women and men, including very young children and infants.<sup>5</sup> The massacre was accompanied by large-scale looting and burning of the victims' property.

2 Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 221-307.

3 Human Rights Watch, *"No One's Left": Summary Executions by Syrian Forces in al-Bayda and Baniyas* (New York: HRW, 2013).

4 Syrian Network for Human Rights, *Baniyas Massacre: Blatant Ethnic Cleansing in Syria* (London: Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2013).

5 See the video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fiKC6floyM>.

Why were al-Bayda and Ras al-Nabaa targeted? According to which logic was this massacre carried out? Mihaç Ural (1956), a veteran Turkish left-wing militant hailing from neighboring Antakya province, gave two interviews in the aftermath of the massacre. In an online Arabic-language interview, he argued that he fulfilled his Syrian patriotic duty by assuming responsibility for the “liberation and cleansing of the coast” (*tahrir wa tathir al-sahil*). In a later Turkish-language television interview, he denied his involvement in the massacre, blamed Israel and the West, and censured the Turkish government for undermining Syria’s autonomy and sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> As all violent conflicts take on territorial dimensions, this massacre could possibly be explained by looking at the logic of territorial control and settlement patterns. The regime employed indiscriminate shelling and sniping against areas where demonstrations occurred – what it considered ‘unreliable territory’. The strategic locations of some villages and towns have made them particularly vulnerable to state violence. The dynamic of the military conflict in the spring of 2012 magnified the strategic importance of the Orontes valley for troop movements and supply lines. This might explain the string of massacres running from Houla (situated directly on the vital Latakia-Damascus road) to Al-Qubeir and Tremseh. The Assad regime could not risk having large opposition villages in this strategic strip between the Sunni heartland and the Alawi coast. Well-placed massacres, as one expert argued, “drive fear into the local populations so that they discontinue their dissidence”.<sup>7</sup> But the Baniyas massacre may have been the result of a more nefarious development. The killings on the coast seemed to follow a pattern of destroying Sunni enclaves in the Alawi heartland. Recurring massacres against Sunni communities in areas deemed vital to the regime’s interests and survival suggest that the Baniyas massacre may have been an effort of ethnic cleansing in these mixed coastlands.

## Genocide and the Structure of This Book

The civil war and genocidal massacres in Syria are nothing special or unique. This relatively small Mediterranean country may have its particular history of Ottoman domination, European colonization, post-colonial instability,

6 For the Arabic interview, see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoP4rhRjR9I>; for the Turkish interview: *Yol TV*, 14 May 2013, 26 September 2013.

7 Stephen Starr, “Shabiha Militias and the Destruction of Syria”, in: *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 5, (2012), p. 12.

Cold War dictatorship, and post-9/11 challenges. But inside the minds of individual Syrians and their collective acts of violence, we can discern aspects that appear in many other genocides that occurred in different times and spaces. Syrians do not kill in a historical or cultural vacuum, but neither are they psychologically any different from the Germans on the eastern front, the Cambodian villagers in the killing fields, and the Rwandan peasants on those bloody hills. The themes that run through the chapters in this book, such as ethnic nationalism; 'othering'; totalitarianism; sexual violence; and struggles over truth, justice, and memory have all been relevant to the causes and course of the Syrian civil war.

Genocide can be defined as a complex process of systematic persecution and annihilation of a group of people by a government. In the twentieth century, approximately 40 to 60 million defenceless people have become victims of deliberate genocidal policies. The twenty-first century has not begun much better, with genocidal episodes flaring up in Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, and Syria. Genocide can best be understood as the persecution and destruction of human beings on the basis of their presumed or imputed membership in a group rather than on their individual properties or participation in certain acts. Although it makes little sense to quantify genocide, it is clear that a genocidal process always concerns a society at large, and that genocide often destroys a significant and often critical part of the affected communities. It also does not make much sense to discriminate between the types of groups that are being targeted: ethnic, religious, regional, political, sexual, etc. It can be argued that genocidal processes are particularly malicious and destructive because they are directed against all members of a group, mostly innocent and defenceless people who are persecuted and killed regardless of their behavior. Genocide always denotes a colossal and brutal collective criminality. For this reason, genocide is a phenomenon that is distinct from other forms of mass violence such as war, civil war, or massacre.

Genocide is a complex process through and through. First of all, it can be approached from at least three analytical perspectives: macro (international), meso (domestic), and micro (local/individual). The macro level refers to the external, international context: interstate structures and the context of geopolitical power relations that could lead to war. In recent years, an increasing body of research has looked at foreign intervention, wartime alliances, and the influence of the Cold War on the "outbreak" of genocides. For example, Martin Shaw has argued that politics at the international level profoundly influences the domestic level, and increasingly so in the twentieth century. The Cold War exacerbated this existing, structural

problem as the United States and the Soviet Union fought proxy wars and even committed proxy genocides.<sup>8</sup> Harris Mylonas has presented convincing evidence that governments' treatment of minorities is a reflection of their relations with perceived external patrons. This goes a long way in explaining how and why some wars can escalate into genocide but others do not.<sup>9</sup> Genocide scholars have also given much thought to how the international society has reacted to genocide, including the United Nations, the European Union, the OSCE, and NGOs. The picture here is quite bleak: the UN has received harsh criticism in several examinations of its policies in Central Africa,<sup>10</sup> and European institutions are seen as rather vapid and ineffectual in facing the mass violence of brutal regimes on Europe's periphery.<sup>11</sup> Recent examinations of genocide have also looked at the phenomenon from a broader, regional or transnational perspective – including issues such as refugee flows, transmission of ideologies, and interventions.<sup>12</sup>

The meso level consists of all intrastate developments relevant to the genesis of the political crisis and, later, the genocide: the ideological self-hypnosis of political elites, complex decision-making processes, the necessity and logic of a division of labor, the emergence of paramilitary troops, and any mass mobilization for the segregation and destruction of the victim group. How do otherwise neutral and technocratic institutions, organizations, and agencies in a given state and society collaborate in genocide? How do otherwise apolitical families make decisions, conduct business, and comport themselves in a genocidal process? How do coexisting villages and neighborhoods turn on each other? How are city administrations taken over and steered towards genocidal destruction of some of their fellow citizens? Many Holocaust experts have successfully focused on these questions,<sup>13</sup> but in recent research some of their most helpful approaches have been

8 Martin Shaw, *Genocide and International Relations: Changing Patterns in the Transitions of the Late Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

9 Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

10 Adam LeBor, *Complicity with Evil: The United Nations in the Age of Modern Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

11 Knud Erik Jørgensen (ed.), *European Approaches to Crisis Management* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997). See also the fascinating if depressing memoirs of the former Chechen Foreign Minister of the fledgling post-Soviet republic: Ilyas Akhmadov, *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

12 See e.g. Mark Levene, *The Crisis of Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2 volumes.

13 Among the vast literature on this subject, one recent study was Mary Fulbrook, *A Small Town near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

cross-pollinating cognate fields. For example, Christian Gerlach, in a thorough examination of several cases of genocide, emphasizes the importance of popular participation and initiative and the relative absence or fluidity of state involvement in his set of cases.<sup>14</sup> In a similar vein, Raymond Kévorkian has written a mammoth chronicle of the Armenian genocide, structured by province, using explanatory factors that include the personal whims of the local power holders (governors and district governors), the conduct of local social elites, and structural factors such as proximity to the front.<sup>15</sup> Lee Ann Fujii's study of the Rwandan genocide in two villages sheds light on how the genocide could develop significantly disparate courses due to social stratification, settlement patterns, poverty and unemployment, the population density of the victim group, opportunity structures, and pre-existing conditions of state power. Her use of network analysis will prove useful in the study of future genocides.<sup>16</sup>

The micro level, then, is about the lowest level: how do individuals become involved in the genocidal process, either as perpetrators, victims, or third parties? How can we better understand the changing sociological relationships between the perpetrator group and the victim group? Following Christopher Browning's famous book, *Ordinary Men*, another book that has become one of the cornerstones of perpetrator studies is Scott Straus' *The Order of Genocide* in which Straus dismisses ethnic hatred as the main explanatory factor and instead focuses on ethnic categorization, private interests, coercion, and in-group competition.<sup>17</sup> Comparative research on perpetrators is still in its infancy,<sup>18</sup> but many studies of genocide have convincingly demonstrated the central role of paramilitaries in the perpetration of genocide. Throughout the twentieth century, paramilitaries have been responsible for widespread violence against civilians. Genocidal regimes are thought to spawn paramilitary units as a covert augmentation of state power for special purposes such as mass murder.<sup>19</sup> Although not

14 Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

15 Raymond Kévorkian, *Le génocide des Arméniens* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006).

16 Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

17 Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

18 One notable exception is Olaf Jensen & Claus-Christian Szejnmann (eds.), *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

19 Among the vast literature on this subject, mostly on Latin America, see: Alex Alvarez, "Milicias and Genocide", in: *War Crimes, Genocide, & Crimes against Humanity*, vol. 2 (2006),

strictly an academic work, a recent gem that has immensely elucidated perpetrators are Joshua Oppenheimer's twin documentaries *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence*. Both shed light on the ordinary Indonesians that were activated and vastly empowered in death squads by the Suharto regime for the special purpose of mass murder in 1965.<sup>20</sup>

Viewed in its coherence, these three contextual layers are not simply piled on top of each other; instead, the largest contexts are often preconditions for the smallest ones. Without the macro context of interstate crisis, there cannot be an internal radicalization of the political elites; and without that radicalization, the violent measures against the victims would not be taken and countless individual perpetrators would not murder innumerable individual victims in micro situations of killing. In other words, we should not look solely at the complexity of each level in itself, we must also bear in mind the relevant connections between the three levels.<sup>21</sup>

Second, the temporal complexity of genocide is possibly *the* major concern in genocide studies. How do genocidal processes begin, develop, and end? Mass violence of the scale that unfolds in genocidal societies generally develops through three fairly distinct phases: the pre-violent phase, the phase of mass political violence, and the post-violence phase. The pre-violent phase is often rooted in a broader economic, political, and cultural crisis that vexes the country internally and aggravates its external relations with neighboring states. Such a crisis between political groups and social movements can polarize into non-violent confrontations such as mass protests, boycotts, or strikes. At the local level, it can be characterized by fragile, even hostile, but still non-violent coexistence between political or ethnic groups. Occasionally, however, a local pogrom or a political assassination can occur, and often the state can gradually become engaged in a low-intensity conflict. The main precondition for extreme violence such as massacres or genocide is (civil) war. During wars, violence is exercised on a large scale, first exclusively between armies in legally sanctioned military hostilities but later potentially also in illegal paramilitary operations against civilians.

The transition from crisis to mass violence is often a point of no return where serious moral and political transgressions occur in a rapid process

1-33; Bruce Campbell, *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

20 Joshua Oppenheimer (dir.), *The Act of Killing* (2012); *The Look of Silence* (2014).

21 Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (London: Hurst, 2007).

of violent polarization. Comparative research on mass political violence demonstrates that, once unleashed, it can develop its own dynamic and become nearly unstoppable by internal forces – reaching ‘relative autonomy’. This dynamic consists of a routinization of the killing and a moral shift in society due to mass impunity. Two other key variables are the political elite’s decision-making and the organization of violence. The first is often conducted in secret sessions, develops in shocks, and becomes visible only retroactively, when the victims are killed. Indeed, violent conflict exposes the criminology of violent political elites, who often begin operating as an organized crime group with growing mutual complicity developing among them. Second, the organization of the violence is another major analytical category to be examined. The violence is often carried out according to clear and logical divisions of labor: between the civil and military wing of the state, but also crucially between the military and paramilitary groups. The killing process has the dual function of at once annihilating the victim group and constructing the perpetrator group. The destruction of the Other is the validation of the Self.

Finally, the transition to a post-genocidal phase often overlaps with the collapse of the violent regime itself. The main perpetrator groups within the regime will attempt to deny their crimes, while traumatized survivor communities will mourn and demand justice or revenge. In this phase, these groups often struggle to propagate their own memory of the conflict by attempting to straitjacket the complexity of the conflict into a single, self-serving view. The term ‘transitional justice’ often proves to be a wishful concept: sometimes a fragile democracy develops, and sometimes a different dictatorship takes over. In either case, impunity has proven to be the rule and punishment the exception in post-violence societies. This is a genuine dilemma because often an enormous number of people are involved in crimes, and there are often no clear, premeditated, written, and circulated orders of particular massacres. The direct victims and often even their offspring can continue to suffer for years, even decades. The best example of the obduracy and irreversibility of genocide’s consequences is the Turkish-Armenian conflict. A full century after the 1915 genocide, relations between the two groups are hostile: the countries have no proper diplomatic relations, the diasporas in Europe and North America often clash, and within Turkey the Armenian community lives in apprehension, even fear.

Together, the above approach generates a dynamic model that has three analytical dimensions and three temporal dimensions. It is primarily a political-sociological model: its focus is centered on the power relationships between groups of people, especially between perpetrators and victims

but also within the perpetrator group – between high-ranking architects and low-ranking killers. But this is also an explicitly historicizing approach in which genocides are seen, fundamentally, as *processes* with a beginning, development, and end. How that process has functioned in different genocides is the main focus of this book. The three sections follow the developmental model of the genocidal process, and the contributions are written with a conscious awareness of the complexity of modern genocides.

## Genocide and the Content of This Book

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (CHGS) in Amsterdam was established in 2003 as a center combining academic research, university teaching, and public awareness. Many such research centers with this particular focus (and name) already existed in the United States, and the trend to look beyond the Holocaust to other genocides and explore commonalities was beginning to yield fresh insights. From the first year of its inception, the CHGS offered a unique Master's program in 'Holocaust and genocide studies', which, by 2015, had educated over 200 graduate students from a range of disciplinary backgrounds: history, anthropology, sociology, political science, media studies, international law. For their graduate theses, the majority of these graduate students conducted primary research on one case of genocide, including for example oral history, ethnography, and archival investigation. Several students won impressive awards with their research and pursued an academic career; others continued their work dedicated to a more practical type of work in NGOs or government; and most kept a connection to this wretched topic in one way or another. This book offers some of the fruits of the large pool of excellent research successfully conducted by these young researchers.

In the growing, interdisciplinary field of genocide studies, much useful research has been conducted into the evolution of separate genocides such as the destruction of Ottoman Armenians in 1915, the Holocaust, and the genocides in Cambodia from 1975-79, Rwanda in 1994, and Bosnia during the Yugoslav civil wars. Much is known on specific aspects of genocidal processes as well. There is a body of research on the turn from a fairly "normal" civic society to a persecutory society, the motives of the ordinary killers, the power and effect of charismatic leaders, the gender aspects of violence, etc. As fast as the scholarship on mass violence is developing, much of it has been purely historical and rather inward-looking, also in terms of geographic or temporal specialization. This book departs from this trend by

crossing over disciplines and bringing together a range of insights in a single volume. There are shortcomings to any edited volume, such as diverging vocabularies, approaches, and specializations. But the value of this approach is that it tries to challenge governing conventions in the scholarship through primary research, and it unites analogous but not near-identical cases and types of genocide. The objective is to make a modest contribution to the scholarship on mass murder by bringing together an interdisciplinary collection of studies.

The first section deals with the pre-genocidal phase, which can encompass a variety of processes that contribute to societal polarization and radicalization. Chapter 1, written by political scientist Diana Oncioiu, examines comparatively genocidal impulses in Serbian and Romanian nationalism. It aims to answer how and why nationalism became the central element in shaping political elites' perceptions of minorities, politics, and religion. Oncioiu bases her analysis on the hitherto relatively unstudied writings of Romanian and Serbian nationalist intellectuals. She concludes that even though ethnic characteristics prevailed in Romania and Serbia throughout the long and arduous process of nation formation, it was only during the comprehensive crises of 1940-1945 and 1985-1995 that ethnic nationalism triggered genocidal policies. The chapter offers the best of comparative history by examining similarities, differences, parallel biographies, and analogous structures. The twin questions of how and why 'ordinary people' are capable of committing extraordinary evil remains one of the core issues in genocide studies. Christoph Busch contributes to this debate in his chapter on the origins of perpetrator behavior. His criminological perspective focuses on key factors that recruit, motivate, and incite especially individuals but also small groups to commit acts of collective violence. Busch develops a model of transitions that influences involvement in a continuum of destruction and Otherization. He emphasizes the interactions within and between the individual level and the group level that shape the bounded rationality needed to perpetrate mass murder. Kjell Anderson's criminological perspective in chapter 3 complements Busch's chapter by developing the concept of 'state deviancy' and expanding the perpetration of mass murder from the individual to the group. Genocide is not only a *mass* process (in that many people are simultaneously involved in it) but also a *collective* process (in that many people form various structures in committing it). Anderson examines some of the foundational legal and criminological concepts relating to genocide to examine how sovereignty can be used by states to sanction benign and malevolent acts. The relative

autonomy from external interference that sovereignty bestows on states produces a profound paradox: state power is needed to bring an end to genocide, yet it is state power itself that can be the cause of genocide.

The chapters in section II deal with mass murder proper. Sociologist Alex de Jong's painstaking examination of the inner dynamics of the Communist Party of the Philippines sheds light on how intra-elite competition and radicalization can generate violent impulses that may radiate outward. For Nazism and Stalinism this has been researched quite thoroughly, and De Jong's chapter fits well within the global history of communist crimes. De Jong explores how the dynamic of paranoia within the conspiratorial CPP sparked a collective anxiety and atmosphere of denunciation. He also concludes that not only radical ideology per se but also the search for ideological purity functioned as a major impulse for political violence in the Philippines. Even though the Filipino case never reached genocidal proportions, this dynamic within the political elite was certainly prone to it. Chapter 5, written by historian Sandra Korstjens, stays in Southeast Asia and investigates a thoroughly genocidal communist regime, the Khmer Rouge. The chapter discusses the heart of the matter, namely the Khmer Rouge's organization of mass murder during its catastrophic four-year rule in Cambodia. Based on recently translated regime documentation and her own interviews, she argues that the development of the killings depended on the definition of the 'enemy', of which she identifies four distinct categories. This original contribution corroborates the emerging consensus in genocide studies that the victim group does not have to be 'real', merely imagined in the perpetrators' fantasy. Karpinski and Ruvinsky's chapter on sexual violence in the Nazi genocide is based on a detailed analysis of recently declassified primary documents and focuses on an understudied theme in Holocaust studies: the Nazi perpetrators' crimes of sexual violence against not only women but also men. According to the two historians, sexual violence during the Nazi genocide occurred because concepts of masculinity and femininity were reconstructed. The Nazi regime redefined masculinity by emphasizing the heterosexuality, vitality, and militarization of all men. The chapter also examines how Nazis justified having sex with Jews despite strict racial laws.

The chapters in section III attempt to unravel the tangle of the post-genocidal phase in three different countries. The aftermath of genocides offers a wide variety of subjects to study: conflicts over memory, narrative, and identity; forms of transitional (in)justice, punishment, and impunity. The Yugoslav wars of dissolution saw at least four genocidal episodes: against the Krajina Croats, against Bosnian Muslims in general, against the

Dalmatian Serbs, and against the Kosovo Albanians. The collective memory of these conflicts is hotly contested, especially in hopelessly divided Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on thorough fieldwork, historian Laura Boerhout assesses how and why various groups in that fledgling state employ narratives of victimhood. She concludes that this trend results in different forms of denial concerning their own culpability during the war, while at the same time excluding the victimhood of others. Whereas Serbs in the Republika Srpska tend to equivocate when it comes to crimes against Muslims, in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina there is a clear inclination to sacralize and prioritize Muslim suffering. Every genocide generates countless perpetrators that have to be dealt with once the killing campaign stops. Rwanda is one of those few cases in which large numbers of perpetrators were arrested by a new government. Anthropologist Suzanne Hoeksema's chapter deals with the way the Rwandan government has interned some of these perpetrators in camps and subjected them to *ingando*, or 're-education' that will supposedly lead to re-integration. Her in-depth interviews with both perpetrators and re-educators demonstrate a firm belief on the part of Rwandan officials that the perpetrators are redeemable, that Rwanda is reconcilable, and that the Rwandan Patriotic Front's political transition has been successful. Hoeksema thus revises the myth that the RPF government is merely carrying out blind revenge. Finally, the last chapter, similar to the first, is a comparative study. Historian and international law scholar Thijs Bouwknecht analyzes how transitional justice and history have taken quite different paths in the aftermaths of the Rwandan genocide and Sierra Leone civil war. Bouwknecht examines how legal findings relate to the production of knowledge and the construction of historiography in the context of mass atrocities in the two cases. The chapter is based on a close examination of the legal trials of Théoneste Bagosora and Charles Taylor. It details how prosecutors at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) struggled to unveil the rationales behind the Rwandan genocide and civil war in Sierra Leone, and offers an understanding of how these discrepancies come about and impact the historical record. As the chapters offer more than enough food for comparative thought, the last word is to Professor Philip Spencer of Kingston University. He offers a comparative synthesis of the chapters and proposes topics for future research.