6-2018

Editors' Introduction

Christian Gudehus
Ruhr-Universitat Bochum

Susan Braden
Cardozo Law Institute in Holocaust and Human Rights

Diana Popescu
University of London

Roland Moerland
Maastricht University

JoAnn DiGeorgio-Lutz
Texas A&M University at Galveston

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Christian Gudehus, Susan Braden, Diana Popescu, Roland Moerland, JoAnn DiGeorgio-Lutz, Brian Kritz, and Lior Zylberman

Due the multidisciplinary nature of genocide studies, this field employs innumerable approaches to understand the genesis and consequences of genocide, as well as the work necessary for its prevention. Therefore, developments in the field are often rather different in nature and scope. This issue of *Genocide Studies and Prevention* strongly proves this point. The articles in Issue 12.1 engage with a wide-range of questions and methods used in the field.

Paul N. Avakian deals with the consistent problem of widespread genocide denial. He explores this lesser researched area of denial by painstakingly documenting the juridical process of prosecuting the extreme violence in Guatemala. This is not about arguing that certain violence did not take place or was something other than genocide. Rather, his argument is about the set of methods used to slow down and hinder the prosecution procedure. He highlights examples of installing incompetent prosecutors or blocking those that are competent, bribing individuals involved, refusing to release records, disqualifying trials, and authorities not fulfilling necessary responsibilities so that the whole process ends in nothing.

Laura Blackie and Nicki Hitchcott apply positioning theory to a concept that appears to be gaining more traction in sociological theory. The focus is on the spoken word, the term discourse comes up regularly, and how these are used to regulate social relations. The authors discuss contradictions and negative consequences of the strict discourse control by the Rwandan Government regarding the national reconciliation process.

Maria Cheung, Torsten Trey, David Matas, and Richard An address an extremely interesting concept on a case of persecution in the context of collective violence. Referring to the concept of cold genocide, which has also recently gained more attention, the authors take the case of how the Chinese government violently suppresses Falun Gong practitioners as an example for this type of violent political oppression. The interesting concept here is that Falun Gong was, and probably still is, not a group that would be covered by many traditional definitions of genocide; especially within the legal perspective. Falun Gong has no membership system, no hierarchy, and no institutional structure. It contains spiritual and philosophical elements (not unlike qi gong). Only when it became popular was it perceived as a threat by Chinese institutions who then began to limit the activities of individuals in the movement. Effectively, the initial and continued persecution has led to a politicization of the group, and as a consequence, a gradual intensification of measures against those who practice Falun Gong. These measures include mass incarceration, torture, and organ harvesting.

Duco Heijs presents a perfect example of the benefits of comparative research by studying state repression of ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union and Turkey in the first half of the Twentieth Century. By reconstructing the reasons that specific groups were targeted, Heijs demonstrates that perceived ethnic belonging, as well as geographic location are key factors. He discusses how the perceived threat level varies depending on where groups were located. Geography also played a role in those projects of demographic engineering through the availability and location of appropriate, in these cases meaning hostile, environments. Heijs further argues that neither the Kemalist nor the Soviets decided on a complete physical destruction of the targeted groups (among them Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, Cossacks, Germans, and Poles), but instead opted for the destruction of their cultural identity.

Gerard Saucier and Laura Akers have analyzed texts from 20 cases of what they call democide. As a result, the authors have constructed a mind-set, which they argue is a prerequisite for mass violence and may therefore be used as a predictor in efforts for prevention, including genocide. The main argumentative patterns identified in this article have been in discussion for a while, and some have come under criticism. The authors list among others: dualistic beliefs, categorizing individuals by the (stereotypical) characterization of the group they are considered to belong to, the exclusion from moral considerations, identification with impurity, and depiction as a dangerous and conspiratorial enemy.

With such a wide selection of topics in this issue, the potential is high for sparking new ideas and frames to use in considering research questions. The Editorial Board welcomes submissions

engaging with unique perspectives on known topics, as well as submissions on innovative topics that have not been as well researched.

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