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Cultural Homogenization, Ethnic Cleansing, and Genocide

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Introduction

Cultural homogenization, ethnic cleansing, and genocide can be seen as part of a continuum. Throughout the modern era, states have forced their citizens to conform to common standards and cultural patterns. The goal has often been to seek congruence between ethnic and political boundaries; that is, to forge cohesive, unified communities of citizens under governmental control. *Cultural homogenization* is defined here as a state-led policy aimed at cultural standardization and the overlap between state and culture. As the goal is frequently to impose the culture of dominant elites on the rest of the citizenry, it consists basically of a top-down process where the state seeks to nationalize “the masses.”

Modern history abounds with examples of discriminatory legislation directed against specific cultural practices and minority languages (see [Fishman 1997](#); [Romaine 2002](#)). These have often verged on “linguistic genocide” or *linguicide* ([Skutnabb-Kangas 2000](#)).

Cultural homogenization needs to be distinguished from homogeneity. Whereas cultural homogenization is a historically documented occurrence, *homogeneity* per se is an ideological construct. The idea of human *homogeneity* presupposes the existence of a unified, organic community and does not describe an actual phenomenon. In the eyes of many leaders, conformity and standardization meant not only functionality and efficiency, but also obedience to common laws. In the early twentieth century many governments began to see assimilation as an inadequate measure. Plans for population transfers and the physical elimination of communities were conceived. They were conjured up by “nationalizing” states, particularly in times of war. Typically, this process has been facilitated by totalitarian rule. Majoritarian democracies have also embraced assimilationist agendas, sometimes endorsing population transfers.

Genocide and ethnic cleansing can be described as a form of “social engineering” and radical homogenization. This is supported by evidence that the elimination of entire communities was often accompanied by the destruction of their cultural heritage. Terms like *eliminationism* (see also [Carmichael 2009](#)) or *eradicationism* are used to encompass various forms of state-led homogenizing practices.

Definitions

Raphael Lemkin was a Polish Jew who lost over 50 relatives during the Holocaust. As a lawyer, he understood that a new term was required to describe the horror to which he bore witness. Lemkin coined the term “genocide” while acting as a key player in the shaping of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Lemkin 1944:19). This term was embraced in 1948 in Resolution 260(III)A of the UN General Assembly and ratified by most countries, with the notable exception of the United States. Lemkin addressed the issue from a universalistic viewpoint, considering not only the Jews, the Roma and other victims of the Holocaust, but the broader Nazi agenda for the demographic restructuring and cultural demolition of Europe (Moses 2008a). The Convention itself defines genocide as the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national/ethnic group” (emphasis added). The word genocide assumes thus a modernist, state-centered and “intentionalist” connotation.

Despite deep, often acrimonious, dissent over the meaning of terms like “genocide,” Lemkin's original usage was sophisticated enough to become widely accepted. The concept retains a universal character, despite the peril of overextension or hijacking by unscrupulous or populist leaders. Sometimes, past genocides have been used to justify retributive or “preemptive” genocidal responses. Serbian accounts of the Jasenovac concentration camps in Croatia (1941–5) were broadcast by Belgrade TV and other nationalist media between 1989 and 1992 to justify the first wave of ethnic cleansing on European soil since World War II (Okey 1999). This forms part of a broader pattern of “particularization,” “deuniversalization” and subduing of the original word “genocide.” In the heat of the moment, even the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington DC were described as “genocidal acts” (see Jones 2006a). More worryingly, the term has been abused to conceal atrocities against minorities, while sheltering oppressive regimes from indictment.

Genocide is also a legal concept describing “the crime of crimes.” As a legally binding notion, it has its own sanctions, penalties, and procedures for prevention. This legal status makes it less pliable to theoretical or terminological adjustment and, to a certain extent, scholarly introspection. Alternative terms are often used to describe more general phenomena, such as eliminationism, eradicationism, “massification” and, most notably, homogenization.

The term “ethnic cleansing” is a more recent coining, being first recorded in the 1990s as a verbatim translation of the Serbian *etničko ciscenje*. Initially used in news coverage as a euphemism for the genocide taking place in Croatia and Bosnia, it now occupies the middle ground between genocide and homogenization, and includes any policy aimed at the eradication of an ethnic group from a given territory whether physically (by relocation or murder) or culturally.

The term *ethnocide* is more occasionally utilized to mean the cultural destruction of a group (Palmer 1992). However, this creates a conceptual confusion between ethnicity and culture. In most cases, the term “cultural homogenization” should be preferred over ethnocide and similar terms. This does not necessarily involve death, but it often implies the “intent to destroy [...] a national/ethnic group.” The destruction of the sustainability and lifestyle of a group is often indicated as *ecocide* or environmental genocide.

The Historical Roots of Homogenizing Attempts

Before entering into a broader analysis of eliminationist policies, we need to ask whether these are an entirely modern phenomenon or if they have been preceded by similar policies in the premodern or early modern era. Did anything vaguely similar to homogenizing state-building take place before the modern age?

The interdisciplinary field of nationalism studies has been characterized by an opposition between *perennialists*, who argue that nations are premodern entities emanating from antiquity, and *modernists*, who argue that nations could only be conceived in modern times (Smith 1998; 2004). Most scholars are modernists (see Conversi 2006a). Among perennialists we often find nationalists themselves, insofar as their political career rests on a capacity to paint their nation as an immutable and everlasting given, hence as an uncontestable entity. As a “third way,” Anthony Smith (1998) adopted a more nuanced *ethno-symbolist* approach, dissociating himself from allegations of perennialism. This allows for a certain degree of continuity in communitarian patterns of coexistence, but it also recognizes that only modern conditions could transform these preexisting entities, labeled *ethnies*, into fully institutionalized frameworks for governance. This section shifts the terms of the debate to the study of the history and breadth of state-led eliminationist strategies.

Some scholars see genocide as a perennial, nearly inevitable human phenomenon recurring periodically or cyclically. Nationalist “historiographers” describe patterns of perpetual persecution affecting their nation at the hands of its hated enemies. Others define “ancient and medieval genocides” like Carthage's destruction in the Third Punic War as a case of “genocide” (Smith 1991:31; Kiernan 2004). This is true even though Carthage was a city, not an ethnic, racial or national community, and inflicting exemplary forms of punishment was common in that era (see Kiernan 2007). Occasionally, military historians and international relations scholars invoke the Athenian execution of every Melian man of military age as “genocide,” misinterpreting Thucydides' description in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Others portray conquerors like Genghis Khan,

Attila the Hun, or Timur as enacting genocidal policies. Genghis Khan razed Baghdad, Samarkand and several Iranian cities, decimating their populations. Attila's epithet, *flagellum Dei* ("curse of God"), evokes the scorched earth policy he inflicted upon vanquished peoples. After 1385, Timur (Tamerlane) massacred almost all inhabitants of several Iranian cities, then ransacked Delhi, in India, executing in a single day over 100,000 Hindus, including women and children. His legendary passion for pyramids of human skulls accompanied his conquests, leading to an estimated 17 million murders (Rubinstein 2004:28). Timur's enemy Tokhtamysh and his Golden Horde destroyed Moscow, killing 24,000 people. But the occasional use of the term "genocide" to indicate these acts of brutal conquest may reflect "Orientalizing" views of non-Western peoples as destroyers of civilization, a vision advocated by Enlightenment philosophers (Said 1995). The same conquering leaders figure prominently in the nationalist pantheons of their respective homelands: Genghis Khan became a national hero in post-Communist Mongolia, Attila is a common name in modern Hungary, and Timur's statues punctuate Uzbekistan's urban landscape. A new generation of scholars has reverted to the pre-Enlightenment vision of the Mongols as bearers of civilization. Although Genghis Khan eliminated the cultural and economic elites of the conquered peoples, he simultaneously respected the lower classes' culture, customs and traditions (Weatherford 2004). His actions might better be described as *eliticide* rather than genocide. The wealthy and ruthless Asian empires that emerged in Safavid Iran, China, Mughal India, and the Ottoman Middle East proved resistant to Western encroachment and could safeguard local cultures against expanding Westernization (Hobson 2005; Darwin 2008).

In the meantime, Europe became engulfed in religious wars. Religious persecution had periodically tainted European history, sometimes leading to the elimination of entire communities like the Cathars and Albigensians in France (Costen 1997; Weis 2000) and the Bogomils in the Balkans (Obolensky 2004). The targets were not cultural differences per se but "ideological" opposition and dissent, as these communities were considered dangerous by ruling elites.

Religious persecution acquired an ethnic dimension in early modern Spain. Spain's identity was based on an enduring civilizational quest for military expansion (Kamen 2008). Once the Reconquista ended, it turned inward. The year 1492 signalled both the end of Iberia's last Muslim kingdom (Granada) and the expulsion of the Jews, as well as the beginning of Spain's genocidal expansion into the Americas. Religious intolerance turned into ethnic cleansing once those converted from Judaism and Islam (*conversos*) became the targets of further persecution. For the first time, racial laws were applied against the "new Christians" simply because of their ethnic descent. Spain's intolerance remained a fairly unique case. Portugal's expulsion orders in 1497 took place only after considerable pressures from Princess Isabel of Spain.

In the wake of the Reformation, religious conflict engulfed large swaths of the continent. After the Peace of Augsburg (1555), the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (where the religion of a country followed that of its ruler) could not prevent the wars of religion. The wars took place in part to make the state's territory more congruent with the ruler's religious creed. They constituted attempts at ideological, rather than cultural, homogenization and resulted in the expulsion and massacre of religious minorities. Still they lacked the obsessive and systematic quality of modern state-building endeavors because states did not possess the bureaucratic-policing apparatus necessary to carry out "massifying" policies thoroughly (Conversi 2007).

The St. Bartholomew's Eve massacres in Paris (1572) subjected the local Huguenots to appalling pogroms (Carmichael 2009). The Huguenots had been rapidly expanding into a militant force that incorporated significant portions of the nobility, and the Valois dynasty felt threatened. The massacres started in Paris and were then emulated in other provinces. Following the Battle of Lepanto (1571), anti-Muslim bigotry had spread in several European regions, but it reached a particular climax in countries like France and Spain that established their self-identity as bulwarks of Western civilization. French elites were keen to seize on these feelings and organize them into an anti-Protestant crusade. Although non-Christians were the first to be attacked, Protestants soon became the target of a new intolerance and fanaticism.

Both Spanish and French rulers, including powerful clergymen, believed that differences in faith would lead to social unrest. In Spain, conspiracy theories about Huguenot infiltration in Catalonia combined with deep-seated anti-Catalanism and a fear that Catalonia's resistance would turn it into a Protestant enclave (Kamen 1993; Elliott 2002:234-5). Simultaneously, the presence of Moriscos in the south was seen as a possible "fifth column" for an imminent Moorish invasion (Hess 1968:13; Elliott 2002:235-48). This put the Protestants and other nonorthodox groups on the same level as the Muslims, and then the Jews (Kamen 1993).

The linkage between the initial anti-Islamic feelings and the Protestant persecutions suggests a broader European pattern. Attacks on an ethnic or religious minority extend sooner or later to others. In Spain, centuries of anti-Muslim propaganda and wars against the *taifas* could be easily turned into anti-Judaic and then anti-Semitic policies. The interstate geopolitical context can be recognized as setting the scene and stirring up the emotions leading to massacres. Finally, Oliver Cromwell's Irish policy (1649-53) has often been described as "genocidal," leading to the massive removal of Catholics from eastern Ireland (Clifton 1999; Levene 2005:55-7).

With the possible exception of post-Islamic Spain, the above-mentioned massacres never constituted attempts to establish cultural or ethnic homogeneity or "massify" populations in their entirety. As we shall see, cultural homogenization on the whole remains a modern occurrence. On the other hand, the less advanced military technology and bureaucratic control made

the very idea of national social engineering on a vast human scale hardly viable before the twentieth century.

Among the early modern genocides, colonial and imperial genocides should be considered as a category in its own right. This will relate genocide to overseas Western expansion, so that colonial genocides may be conceptually distinguished from modern genocides (Moses and Stone 2007; Moses 2008b).

Colonial and Imperial Genocides

Historically, genocide occurred in the wake of both imperial expansion and disintegration. Even before the conquest of the Americas, the fate of the indigenous Guanches in the “Fortunate” (Canary) Islands anticipated a pattern of European expansion leading to cultural destruction, environmental collapse, and physical extermination (Crosby 1986).

Eliminationist policies in the colonies included a variety of collateral procedures such as the destruction of home or *domicide* (Porteous and Smith 2001), the forced abduction of children from aboriginal peoples (Moses 2004), the destruction of their environment as “ecocide” (Barsh 1990; Stannard 1992) or “eco-catastrophe” (Ehrlich 1971), the systematic wreckage of vital supplies, provisions, and goods (Adelstein and Pival 1971), and the devastation of the entire ecosystem. This is still occurring throughout the world, for instance in the oil-rich Niger Delta region under the control of international corporations (Human Rights Watch Africa 1999).

Colonial genocide outlasted the demise of empire. In the Americas, national independence allowed the new postcolonial elites to pursue eliminationist campaigns unrestrained, while maintaining slavery. Vast regions were entirely “cleansed” of their indigenous elements. Southern Argentina became *terra nullius* after white settlers pursued a *tabula rasa* policy (Andermann 2002; Rock 2002). Chile nearly succeeded in the same goal, bar surviving exceptions like the Mapuches (Ray 2007). The complete annihilation of Tasmania’s Aborigines was allegedly pursued out of the sight of imperial authorities (Mann 2005:70–110), but official knowledge and “inaction despite clear warnings and high mortality rates suggests that population decline was government policy” (Madley 2004:176; Moses 2004; 2008b). According to David Stannard, “the destruction of the Indians of the Americas was, far and away, the most massive act of genocide in the history of the world” (1992:x). Because of imperial rivalries, indigenous peoples were not the only victims of colonial rule. French-speaking Acadians in Nova Scotia were deported en masse by the British, while the genocide of the native Mi’kmaq could proceed (Plank 2001). A similar fate befell other preexisting settler communities displaced by new immigrants who enjoyed the protection or complicity of central authorities.

Environmentally, British rule was marked by cyclical “holocausts” (Davis 2001), during which settlers and the imperial core saw an opportunity to weaken the indigenous peasantry while increasing the latter’s dependence on empire. Rubenstein (1983) shows how demographic pressure and overpopulation became primary reasons behind the targeting of unwanted “surplus” populations, focusing on the Irish Famine, the Nazi Holocaust and, on a class basis, Tudor England’s enclosure movement. For Rubenstein, the process originates neither in the state’s homogenizing impulse, nor in its attempts to redefine boundaries along ethnic lines. It rather commences with “benign” expulsion schemes or “encouragement to emigrate” as implemented in early nineteenth century England, when several parishes sent their paupers and “undesirables” to North America. Australia’s colonization followed a similar logic. More recently, the extermination of nearly four-fifths of the Herero and Namaqua in German South West Africa (present-day Namibia, 1904–7) has been recognized as a late colonial genocide (Silvester and Gewald 2003; Gewald 2004).

An exclusive focus on the state could miss the “unintended” consequences of events like environmental destruction. Thus, *ecocide* and “ecological genocide” can refer to forms of environmental damage leading to the degradation and elimination of vulnerable communities. Some of these resulted in unprecedented forms of genocide, as with the American and Australian native populations. Tragic examples of eco-genocide included the extinction of the Guanches in the Canary Islands following Spain’s “ecological imperialism” (Crosby 1986), and the radical extermination of Tasmanians (Madley 2004; Curthoys 2007). In the age of modern imperial expansion, acts of genocide and mass murder were ostensibly carried out beyond direct state control through laissez-faire politics. Global liberalization, environmental depredation, droughts, floods, and imperial expansions resulted in mass famines, the advance of diseases, and regional climate change (Davis 2001).

After the Chinese invasion and the exile of the Dalai Lama in 1959, Tibet epitomizes the link between policies of cultural homogenization, demographic engineering, and physical elimination (Shakya 1999). The final invasion of Tibet coincided with the notorious “Great Leap Forward” (1959–62), the Stalin-inspired plan for massive industrialization during which up to 43 million Chinese perished and hundred of millions were compelled to flee, some to Tibet. The Tibetan case also has elements of colonial and settler genocide (Jones 2006a:94–8).

On the other hand, withdrawing or shrinking empires spawned genocides as forms of “securitization” and “preemptive” removal of supposedly disloyal populations (Levene 2005:277–335; Lieberman 2006). With its indiscriminate use of torture, France’s war against Algeria (1954–62) led to 1.5 million dead, the “*regroupement*” of over 2 million Algerians and 1.4 million

refugees flowing into France (Branche 2004). Most famously, the demise of the Turkish/Ottoman Empire brought historically unprecedented genocidal waves against most of its ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities (Melson 1992; 1996). In turn, these were preceded by massive displacement and the large-scale ethnic cleansing of Turks and other Muslims fleeing Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and various countries whose new elites were bent on “homogenizing” their subjects (McCarthy 1983; 1996; 2001; Lieberman 2006). Decades later, the final days of the British Raj evidenced massive atrocities against the Kikuyus and other tribes in Kenya (Elkins 2005), while the entire population of Diego Garcia (Chagos islands) was secretly deported and their land given to the US Air Force in 1968 (Curtis 2003:414–30).

The link between imperial genocides and cultural homogenization can be found throughout the history of Western colonial expansion, but it becomes clearer once colonies achieve independence. Thus, while the genocide of Native Americans proceeded, a systematic policy of destruction of indigenous culture or “Americanization” was applied through the introduction of compulsory education (Hoxie 1984), so that the boarding school experience has been defined as “education for extinction” (Adams 1995). The demographic displacement and cultural assimilation of Hawaiians has sometime been defined as “genocidal” (Bushnell 1993; Kinzer 2007).

In terms of mass murder and social engineering, the demise of empires can hardly compare with the more brutal and all-pervasive advent of the modern centralizing state. Its legitimizing ideology was both ethnically predicated and anchored in the notion of “unlimited progress,” which included the eradication of various opponents and minorities. In its totalitarian version, this meant the promise of a new society inhabited by a “new man” and permeated by the “sense of a new beginning” (Griffin 2007). The more rapidly modernization was imposed by ruling elites upon their constituencies, the more genocidal its tendencies.

The Jacobin Matrix

The ideal starting point in the history of systematic cultural homogenization is the French revolution. Most historians (i.e. Hobsbawm 1990) and political scientists (i.e. Connor 2004) agree that a popular sense of national self-abnegation and sacrifice could only be harnessed by political elites in a post-1789 scenario. Although it may be arduous to single out a precise inception for the homogenizing process, various forms of social, human, and cultural engineering were brought together for the first time under Jacobin rule. The revolutionary use of terror to suppress entire collectivities represents a “paradigm shift” (Levene 2005:101–211).

With the French Revolution, the physical elimination of ideological-cultural opponents was pursued, together with a broader drive to “nationalize” the masses. This mobilizing-homogenizing thrust was widely shared by the usually fractious French revolutionary elites. Opposing factions such as the Herbertists and Girondins had conflicting ideas about how to achieve unification, and different visions about the final product of any homogenizing practice, but they shared the goal of leading the masses into the national revolutionary process, while restraining the feared “excesses of the mob.” This sprang up largely from the appeal of nationalism, the French Revolution's dominant ideology. But it also derived from the increasing insecurity felt by Parisian elites, who feared treason and “reactionary” fifth columns. As revenge and paranoia decimated the revolutionary leadership, waves of massacres followed, accompanied by hunts for ideological opponents. Those evidencing cultural differences became easy targets. Hence the revolutionary abbot Baptiste-Henri Gregoire (1750–1831) argued for eradicating all linguistic differences. On the other hand, the stress on common symbols and culture transcended literary skills, so that illiterate peasants could be more easily mobilized: the cult of the *tricolor* flag and the chanting of the *Marseillaise* soon came to represent loyalty to the body-nation. For the revolutionary leaders, this appeared to be a partial guarantee of obedience.

Nationalism, homogenization, and the militarization of society were all simultaneously pioneered in France. Although there are still disagreements over whether genocide or similar phenomena could occur in the premodern era, the French Revolution did establish a crucial precedent: the Vendée Uprising (1793–6) has been identified as the theater for the first “root-and-branch” genocide of modern times (Jones 2006b). French historians have debated whether this can be described as the first modern genocide, “classicide,” or rather “*populicide*” (Lebrun 1985). According to Secher (2003), at least 14 percent of the Vendéans (117,257 people) were exterminated between 1792 and 1802. More controversially, the late Catholic writer Michael Davies (1997) talks about 250,000 massacred. Mark Levene (2005:103–62) discusses how the Vendée condensed the same quest for total homogeneity of nation, state, people, and ideology that would be shared by twentieth-century totalitarian “democracies.” For Simon Schama (1989) “Nowhere, as much as in the area of the Vendée [...] did the [revolutionary] terror fulfill Saint-Just's dictum that the ‘Republic consists in the extermination of everything that opposes it.’” The Vendéans' anti-Parisian resistance was a widely popular struggle fought in the name of individual freedom against state oppression and dispossession (Secher 2003). “Horrific mass executions by grapeshot fired from cannons and group drownings” characterized state repression in the Vendée, Lyon, and elsewhere (Scurr 2006:256). Paris counterattacked “in the name of the people,” such that France can also be identified as the birthplace of modern *populism*, with Robespierre at its head (Scurr 2006:21–4, 170). In general, the rule of terror and terrorism pioneered the genocidal policies that became tragically common thorough the twentieth century. These included “depopulation” and quasi-eugenics programs intended to “disinfect” the countryside from “ideological conservatism”

and “cultural backwardness.”

The Jacobins inherited both centralism and militarism from French absolutism, although the latter's centralizing aims were limited to state and provincial elites. Early attempts at linguistic standardization had scarcely any consequence on the way people actually spoke. As early as 1539, the edict of Villers-Cotterêts simply aimed at imposing the use of written French in printed legislation, while the bulk of the population remained illiterate (Hagège 1996:83–4). Without the all-pervasive force of nationalism, these early standardization attempts did not contemplate full-blown cultural homogenization. They more modestly illustrated embryonic attempts to concentrate powers into the hands of the monarchy and its associated elites (Conversi 2007; 2008b).

The Apogee of Homogenization

There is broad consensus that the period lasting from about 1915 to 1945 was crucial for both cultural homogenization and genocide. This is the age dating from secular Turkey's genocidal policies (Rae 2002:124–62; Mann 2005:111–78; Lieberman 2006:80–150) to the end of World War II. Various dramatic definitions apply to this era: “Age of extremes” or the “short twentieth century” (Hobsbawm 1994), the “century of total war” (Aron 1981), “the most bellicose century in human history” (Tilly 1990:67), the “age of genocide” (Alvarez 2001), and the “century of genocide” (Levene 2000; Weitz 2003; Carmichael 2005). In central, eastern and parts of southern Europe, the peak of homogenization policies was also reached between the two world wars, when cultural difference and variation were seen as threats to “national security.” Tilly (1990) estimates about 275 wars and 115 million deaths in battle, and at least as many civilian deaths, during this period. This still excludes hundreds of millions killed by the state, through “democide” (Rummel 1994), “politicide” (Harff and Gurr 1988; Harff 2003), “classicide” (Mann 2005), population transfers, economic manipulation, and massive starvation.

The twentieth century was also the time when state nationalism peaked. This was the century of “mass politics” with the “entrance of the masses into history” and the beginnings of mass political participation (Mosse 1975; 1985; Nairn 1977:340; Hobsbawm 1990). Finally, all these developments were accompanied, and preceded, by cultural homogenization and the destruction of minorities either by assimilation, forcible removal, or mass murder. Never before had these methods been carried out simultaneously, in such a coordinated, systematic manner, and to such a degree. The Shoah epitomizes the peak of eliminationist policies for its unprecedented coordination, bureaucratic management, and technological administration of human suffering. Holocaust studies has traditionally been the most prolific area in genocide studies and in fact stands as a separate field on its own. The uniqueness of the Holocaust has been suggested by many (see Rosenbaum 1996; Hilberg 2003). Following the success of his magnum opus *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Raul Hilberg famously argued: “No literature could serve me as an example. The destruction of the Jews was an unprecedented occurrence, a primordial act that had not been imagined before it burst forth. The Germans had no model for their deed, and I did not have one for my narrative” (1996:84). The Shoah's uniqueness has not prevented its comparative study with other genocides (Rosenbaum 1996), but anticipated it (Bartov 1996).

The Nazi racial state played a central role in the Holocaust (Mosse 1985), yet the precipitating “opportunities” offered by war have probably been the chief catalyst. Neither cultural homogenization nor war can be fully explained without taking into account the nationalist buildup which preceded World War I, particularly from 1870 (Franco-Prussian War and advent of the Troisième République) to 1914. World War I was the real European apocalypse, ushering in Fascism and Communism with their totalitarian homogenizing policies, including genocide.

War and Genocide

There is further consensus that interstate wars provide an ideal circumstance for carrying out atrocities which would be unthinkable otherwise (see Melson 1992; Bartrop 2002; Fettweis 2003; Shaw 2003; Levene 2005). Bartov's (1996) work on Hitler's war in the east anticipated much of this war-centered approach. Under the aegis of total war, pressures toward ethnic and cultural homogenization reach their peak. Yet homogenizing practices can persist long after wars end. They were pursued under Soviet rule to the late 1980s, and continue in subtler ways in several liberal democratic regimes till today. Although extreme measures became less common, assimilationist policies persist.

When the Anglo-French allied forces landed at Gallipoli in 1915, Turkey's military authorities began a “securitization” campaign against the entire Armenian population, whom they perceived as the West's “fifth column.” “What turned a war crime into a genocidal act was the context of total war [...] that translated deportation swiftly into the mass slaughter, abuse, and starvation of an entire ethnic group potentially troublesome to an authoritarian regime at war” (Winter 2003:208). Under siege by the “West,” Turkey's elites ended up imitating the West. As a consequence, their military nationalism bred a “culture of hatred” that demonized Christians and non-Turks. The Shoah was also carried out during the peak of war.

Might indiscriminate aerial bombing during wartime be classified as a genocidal act as well? Some authors regard the

intentional bombing of civilian populations just short of genocide (i.e. [Shaw 2003](#)). Examples include Saddam Hussein's chemical strikes on Iraqi Kurds ([Jones 2003](#)), the US attack on neutral Cambodia ([Owen and Kiernan 2006](#)), the Luftwaffe's carpet bombing of the Basque market town of Guernica ([Conversi 1997](#)), the Italian army's use of mustard gas against Libyan and Ethiopian civilians in the years prior to World War II ([Walston 1997](#); [Del Boca 2005](#); [Conversi 2009](#)) and, controversially, the Anglo-American bombing of Dresden and other German cities during World War II, which nevertheless followed the Nazis' carpet bombings of cities like Coventry, London, Warsaw, and Rotterdam ([Langenbacher 2004](#)). Some authors warn against confusing war crimes with organized plans of extermination as "a political and intellectual mistake, symptomatic of our culture of sensationalism" ([Hatzfeld 2005](#):105–6). However, most approaches recognize that the inhumanity of war and the unaccountability of wartime leaders provide the key to understanding both genocides and related tragedies. Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been called the first instances of a "nuclear holocaust" ([Alperovitz 1995](#)). The long-term impact of both international war and local wars on defenseless civilians remains difficult to assess. As [Ghobarah et al. \(2003\)](#) remind us, "civil wars kill and maim people long after the shooting stops." Indeed, in Afghanistan and Cambodia the devastating legacy of land-mines has led to massive human displacement, especially in the countryside.

Forced/Involuntary Migration, Mass Population Transfers, and Refugees

There is a vast literature on involuntary migration and forced human transfers. Refugee studies has become an independent discipline. A brief mention is necessary to relate mass population transfers to state-led homogenization and eliminationism. Not all refugees seek to escape from a similar fate, but the origin of most involuntary migrations ultimately resides in the state's incapacity to deal with ethnic and cultural diversity. Dramatic cases include the Soviet Union's Tatars, Chechens, and others under Stalin. In ethnonationalist terms, the so-called population "exchanges" between Turkey and Greece set a horrific precedent. When millions were forcibly deported under the pretext of "protecting" their safety, the overall issue was actually framed in terms of "national security" and "securitization." Arnold Toynbee and other historians argued that the advent of Turkish ultranationalism in 1922 was largely a reaction to Greece's occupation of Izmir/Smyrna in 1919, and its subsequent invasion of Anatolia (1920–1). Toynbee famously accused Lloyd George and other Philhellenes within the British establishment of instigating the mass displacement of both Greeks and Turks ([Toynbee 1922](#):311–14).

A supplementary distinction should be made between the mass deportations practiced under Stalin, Mao, and other communist regimes, and those operated by nationalizing states. For instance, the Turkish-Greek expulsions were meant to homogenize the respective expelling homelands both ethnically and culturally. Both were accompanied by massacres. Mass expulsions from Greece were part of a broader campaign of Hellenization ([Mazower 2004](#):301–4), which included the ban on wearing specific "foreign" (i.e., Turkish) dress. Similarly, "Turkification" accompanied the expulsion of minorities from Turkey ([Bjørnlund 2008](#)). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk mimicked the Greek homogenizing zeal, consigning to oblivion the very *fez* whose ban the Greek authorities had implemented over a decade before ([Mazower 2004](#):301–2). The largest single population movement in modern European history was the exodus of Germans from central and eastern Europe at the end of World War II ([Lieberman 2006](#):221).

Mass population displacements have occurred throughout the twentieth century. Sedentarization programs targeting nomadic peoples may be considered "inverted" forms of forced migration, involving substantial population transfers and the confinement of previously roaming populations into segregated areas. In Somalia, forced sedentarization resulted in acute conflict ([Schraeder 1986](#)), leading inexorably to the country's breakup after the fall of the Western-backed Siad Barre's dictatorship ([Diriye Abdullahi 2004](#)). The involuntary sedentarization of Israeli Bedouins in the Galilee and Negev has led to the loss of a unique cultural repertoire via homogenization. Lasting for about 400 years, the transatlantic slave trade was a peculiar form of mass population transfer, involving at least 2 million deaths in the immediate wake of the process. The final step in the eliminationist strategy of the modern state has been the killing of "incongruous" (i.e., minority) groups, whether they were fully assimilated into the mainstream culture, as in the cases of Jews in Germany, the Hutus in Rwanda, and the Bosniaks in former Yugoslavia, or whether they maintained a distinctive culture, as in the cases of the Romani/Gypsies' *Porrajmos*/Holocaust ([Huttenbach 1991](#); [Hancock 1996](#)) or, partly, the largely unassimilated Armenians in 1915.

Genocide, Modernity, and Westernization

Cultural standardization and genocide share a similarly modern trajectory. The correlation between nationalism and modernity depends on how the latter is defined. Whether we identify modernity entirely within the philosophical (Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment), the political (French Revolution), the economic (ascent of the bourgeoisie), the scientific (Darwinism), or the technological (Industrial Revolution) sphere, we can find each of these senses well represented within radical nationalism, particularly Nazism. The latter was indeed inconceivable without, or outside, modernity as intended in any of the above senses. It can be associated with the spread of Jacobin-inspired centralism and state idolatry, the protection of bourgeois interests, the diffusion of "only the fittest survive" racialism, and, finally, massive industrialization.

Key members of the Frankfurt School, notably Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, were among the first to identify genocide as an intrinsic feature of modernity ([Kaye and Strath 2000](#)). Zygmunt Bauman described the Holocaust as "a rare, yet significant

and reliable, test of the hidden possibilities of modern society” (1989:12). [Hannah Arendt \(1958\)](#) has similarly related the Holocaust to modernity, with its massive human dislocations. For [Richard Rubenstein \(1987:284\)](#), the Holocaust “bears witness to the *advance of civilization*” (as noted by [Bauman 1989:9](#)) and conveys some of “the dominant trends in contemporary civilization.” The process leading to the Holocaust accompanied the rise of rapidly modernizing nation–states in the West and followed the demise of multiethnic empires ([Lieberman 2006](#)). It began “in the late Eighteenth century and [is] still continuing” ([Bartov 1996:70](#)). For [Levene](#) “the issue goes to the heart of the evolution and crystallization of the modern world as we know it and, not least, the current international system of nation–states which emanated from it” (2005:10). Indeed, it can be described as a “product of the most ‘advanced’ stage in the development of the modern state” ([Naimark 2001:8](#)). According to [Edward Said](#), modernity’s quest to dominate the planet was predicated on a drive “to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index, and record everything in sight (and out of sight); to make out of every observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law” (1995:86). This modern obsession with ordering, studying, documenting, measuring, and hierarchizing was first experimented on the West’s colonial subjects. It was already discernible in the pre–Enlightenment methods by which Spanish elites had attempted to classify Native Americans between 1512 and 1724 ([Pagden 1986](#)). Later, fingerprinting technology was pioneered in the British Empire, as Britain was reluctant to apply these measures of surveillance and control at home ([Sengoopta 2003](#)).

According to [Porter \(2000\)](#), eliminationism is the way modernity was perceived by Poland’s elites as they aspired to “tame” the masses via exclusionary nationalism. Poland’s early romantic intellectuals espoused a voluntarist, “Renanian” concept of the nation, in which the “deed” (*czyn*) for the new Polish state played a central role ([Porter 2000](#)). This initially open project failed, turning into an authoritarian ethnicism just when literacy was expanding and linguistic Russification was identified as a major threat. Polish elites manipulated public opinion into hatred against “non–Poles.” The subsequent destruction of the “Yiddish nation,” mostly within Poland, has been the focus of a fresh wave of investigation ([Weinstein 2001](#); [Gottesman 2003](#); [Kriwaczek 2005](#)).

By most historical standards, the first modern *genocide* was perpetrated at the hands of westernizing Turkish nationalism during the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire ([Alvarez 2001:11–14](#); [Rae 2002:124–62](#); [Power 2003:1–23](#); [Weitz 2003:1–7](#); [Mann 2005:111–78](#); [Jones 2006a:101–23](#); [Carmichael 2009](#)). However, the Armenian genocide was preceded by massive episodes of ethnic cleansing throughout the Balkans. In Russia, pogroms against Jews and Muslims had been carried out with unprecedented ferocity. More Jews were killed in Russia between 1903 and 1906 than in Nazi Germany’s *Kristallnacht* (in 1938). With a hint of revenge, the “lesson” was quickly learned in Turkey, where massive numbers of Chechen, Circassian, and Bosnian refugees from these areas had fled, uncovering horrific stories of ethnically based mass brutality. The entire post–1864 *Muhajir* (exodus) is a still neglected area of research ([Levene and Roberts 1999](#); [Shenfield 1999](#)).

Many forms of ethnic cleansing accompany, or follow, waves of cultural Westernization. Israel’s attacks on the Palestinians expanded in tandem with the country’s self–description as a bulwark of the West, particularly the US, and Serbia’s ethnic cleansing of Muslims and other nationalities has been justified as an attempt to protect the West against the “Islamic threat.”

The Young Turks’ annihilation campaigns were the first of their genre and inspired other genocidal killers, most notoriously Adolf Hitler (see [Hovannisian 1988](#); [1998](#); [Dadrian 1996](#); [Melson 1996](#); [Power 2003:23](#); [Winter 2003](#); [Jones 2006a:101](#)). In turn, Lemkin’s career as an international lawyer was deeply shaped by his youth years reading of the Armenian genocide ([Power 2003](#)). Armenian nationalists claim that these campaigns were part of a recurring pattern of persecution (see [Dadrian 1996](#)). However, a comparison between the pre–1915 anti–Armenian pogroms and the fully fledged genocide carried out once Turkish nationalists seized power shows a radical shift in strategy. The intent was to “solve” the Armenian question by eliminating the group as a whole. [Bloxham \(2003\)](#) identified the unfolding of events as resulting from a process of “cumulative radicalization,” more than as a centrally planned and coordinated eradication effort. However, the responsibility of Turkey’s military elites has been ascertained by international scholars beyond any realistic doubt (see [Mann 2005](#); [Üngör 2008](#); [Carmichael 2009](#)). Although it is difficult to identify any starting point for the Armenian genocide ([Kaligian 2008](#)), two “points of no return” can be identified. The first was the general arrests of April 1915, when the “secular” Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti (Committee of Union and Progress) began to deport the bulk of the Armenian elite, including those who were assimilated and loyally serving the state. A second irreversible step was the general deportation order of May 1915 affecting all Armenians and leading directly to the death by torture, famine, and assassination of most deportees ([Üngör 2006](#)). Both events occurred in the midst of World War I and affected non–Armenians as well. In fact, over 100,000 Christians of all denominations became victims of the massacres ([Schaller and Zimmerer 2008](#)), along with hundreds of thousands of Arabs and Kurds. Government fears were largely unfounded, since until the very last moment even Armenian and Kurdish “nationalists” continued to envision themselves as loyal members of a multinational Ottoman Empire ([Klein 2007](#)), an outcome that became then impossible.

Social Engineering, Ethnogenesis, and the Destruction of Community

Ethnic and cultural engineering are entirely modern phenomena and belong to the broader practice of social engineering, with its positivist faith in the capacity to mold humans through state policy. “Anthropogenesis,” the creation of brand new societies

inhabited by “new men” under Stalin, Mao, and other totalitarian regimes, was underpinned by cultural standardization, population transfers, and mass murder. State socialism evidenced these outcomes more often than other forms of government, while ultranationalist regimes transformed social engineering into ethnic engineering. For instance, in their rush to emulate the West's nation–state model, Turkish nationalists engaged in social, demographic, and ethnic engineering from at least 1913 (Üngör 2008). The alleged rationale was commonly to “modernize” the country and develop its economy. In the cutthroat world of interstate competition, particularly in the years preceding the two world wars, demands for rapid industrialization grew, exacting a tribute of human blood and displacement. A “developmental” rationale has been widely used, and may still be seen in both democratic and totalitarian regimes. This has proven particularly detrimental when combined with nationalism's “modernizing” frenzy.

Modern citizenship has been usually defined by exclusivist, ethnically based criteria (Wimmer 2002; 2006; Connor 2004; Mann 2005). Practices of cultural engineering have often been transformed into “demographic engineering” (Zarkovic Bookman 1997). The state played a key role and, within the state, institutions like the military provided a congenial environment in which to further cultural homogenization on an oft–acquiescent or powerless public (Conversi 2008a).

State–Building and Centralization

The responsibility of state institutions in mass murder is not easily appraised. We noted how imperial and colonial genocides were carried out in remote areas where the central state barely exercised control. In more modern times, the role of the state has been central, although some scholars have been skeptical and turned their attention to ordinary citizens (Gerlach 2006; see Wolfe 2007 for a critique). Pierre van den Berghe defines the state as “a killing machine” (1990:1). Tilly (1985) famously described the modern state as a “protection racket.” Leo Kuper (1990) delineates various types of genocidal states.

In genocide studies we find a “strong state” thesis (Horowitz 1980; Harff and Gurr 1988; Rummel 1994, Harff 2003) and a “weak state” hypothesis (Mommsen 1997; Bloxham 2003; Mann 2005). The former argues that genocide is rooted in the absolute concentration of power into the hands of elites. The latter diagnoses its emergence in the collapse of empire, state disintegration, and political chaos. One view concentrates on the intention to kill, the other on the chain of circumstances as they unfold independently of governmental control. The search for causative agent(s) leads often to an emphasis on intentionality. In reality, these two approaches are perfectly compatible. For instance, “paranoid” leaders, such as Saddam Hussein, Stalin, and the Young Turks, tended to radicalize their oppressive policies out of fear. The French Revolution's “Reign of Terror” could be seen as a sign of either state weakness or paranoid leadership. At the very peak of its “weakness,” state power was emboldened by nationalist fervor, leading in 1793 to the first *levée en masse* (when civilians were drafted into military service). The impact of state–led nationalist terror on ordinary people was devastating. Hence, it is not the state's alleged “strength” or “weakness” that matters, but the perception of personal threat experienced by state elites. Yet, in all of the documented cases of genocide, the power of even the “weakest” states was unmatched in comparison with the inadequate, futile means of self–defense available to isolated rural communities and other hapless targets. Rwanda's genocide commenced as an urban elite “conspiracy” (Melvern 2000; 2004), which then irradiated via the media (Power 2003:329–90). In general, this essay's focus on political power requires bypassing those theories advocating mass participation as part of a relatively “spontaneous” outburst of popular hatred (Gerlach 2006).

The study of state repression and its sociopolitical consequences has expanded over the last 35 years. Recently, a distinction between “civil liberties restrictions” and “personal integrity violations” has been advanced, with the latter directly threatening human life (Davenport 2007a:77–82). Substantial differences remain between these two political strategies, but “comparable processes underlie the two coercive strategies” (Davenport 2007b:488).

Ernest Gellner (2006) famously described cultural homogenization as the inescapable product of industrialism. Following the destruction of ancient agricultural lifestyles, nationalism provided a new form of social cohesion (see also Hobsbawm 1994). Industrialism required a standardized “high” culture as an essential prerequisite. The only institution capable of sustaining and organizing this “high” culture was the modern state. Gellner's homogenization tenet defines nationalism as “a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent” (2006:1). Uprooted ex–peasants constituted the recruits of a new industrial hierarchy as wholly replaceable labor, hence as dispensable “modular men” “capable of performing highly diverse tasks in the same general cultural idiom” (Gellner 1994:102). This process was carried out together with an increasing regimentation and militarization of society (Foucault 1979; Conversi 2008b).

Militarism and Uniformity

Since acts of mass homogenization took place during, or in the immediate aftermath of, wars, the consequences of militarism are relevant to the study of policies of human standardization. Once more, the idea that all citizens should be conscripted en masse in the name of an abstract homeland idea began in France. The most influential military thinker of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries before von Clausewitz was the noble Jacques, Comte de Guibert. His *Essay on Tactics* (1770) argued in

substance that future wars would be fought by massive conscript armies fighting in the name of nationalist ideology. As Simon Schama observes, by March 1788 “it was Guibert, a figure cut from the cloth of the ‘old regime,’ who was (as Napoleon would freely acknowledge) the real architect of French military ascendancy in the years to come” (1989:214). Interestingly, Guibert was born in the Occitan town of Montauban (Montalban) in southwestern France, whose historical pedigree of persecution included the ravages of the Albigensian crusade in the thirteenth century, the ensuing Inquisition, then mass conversion to Protestantism with the demolition of its cathedral, a Huguenot rebellion (1621), the razing of its walls and main buildings by Cardinal Richelieu, and the expulsion of its inhabitants after Louis XIV's Edict of Fontainebleau in 1685 (Prestwich 1988; see also Le Roy Ladurie 1975). After Guibert, Schama describes the *levée* of 1793 as

an institution created in a fit of Romantic enthusiasm evolving into a professionally organized and highly disciplined arm of the state [...] The *levée* was born in desperation: an attempt to mobilize the population in areas immediately threatened with being overrun by the invader [...] Peasants were given rudimentary drills and armed (sometimes with nothing more than their pitchforks and hunting knives) to fall on the Austrians. [...] In its original incarnation, then, the *levée* was meant to be a spontaneous explosion of material enthusiasm involving large numbers of men, loosely organized and separated from the professional army.

(Schama 1989:646–7).

Interestingly, while Robespierre initially opposed the war, fearing its use by the Girondins to eliminate the “true revolutionaries” (Scurr 2006:165–97), people like Danton began to embrace Guibert's concept of a general call to arms. An unprecedented amount of propaganda was needed to convince the peasantry to join in. This included open threats, scaremongering, and calls to “self–defense” against foreign “hordes.” The mere prospect of losing the war announced a certain return to slavery. Finally, the coming of the “anthropophagi” “would exact a terrible revenge, seizing the peasants property,” enslaving their children, and raping their women (Schama 1989:648).

During the French revolutionary wars it was possible to observe *in vitro* the emerging intensification of the military–educational linkage. Whereas military trends anticipated broader social developments, nationalism played a crucial role in the militarization of society. The extraordinary mobilization provided the first example of incipient “nationalization of the masses.” But those armies defeated by the French ended up imitating the victors. Prussia engaged in a military buildup and gradual centralization by means of ethnic patriotism. The first army uniforms in modern European history appeared in Prussia in 1718. The goal was to foster a sense of unity through “uniformity” (Purdy 1998:197). After that, militarism spread to the wider society, both as discipline and as patriotic symbolism. For instance, an estimated 30,000 blue coats were “recycled” annually into the civilian population until “the blue coat became a standard rural male dress” (Krause, cited by Purdy 1998:200).

The stress on uniformity gained impetus under Napoleon, then spread eastward from Russia to Japan, where the Meiji technocrats (1870–81) transformed the samurai system into Japan's Imperial Army (Harries and Harries 1994). Rulers deliberately developed conscription as an instrument for boosting the “social cohesion and political docility of the masses” (Bond 1998:32).

In global terms, Napoleon's vision of a “nation–in–arms” had the deepest impact. It was emulated via Germany in places as far away as Turkey, where the “military–nation” became the education–based “foundational myth of Turkish nationalism” (Altinay 2006), and Japan, where school teachers were trained in barracks, while primary and secondary schools acted as indoctrinating agencies (Harries and Harries 1994). “War itself became an homogenizing experience as soldiers and sailors represented the entire nation and the civilian population endured common privations and responsibilities” (Tilly 1990:116).

France and Prussia formed the centrepiece of an all–devouring Westernization, whose offerings included homogenization, genocide, and the purging of “anti–entropic” differences. Thus, because Greek nationalism emerged in a highly heterogeneous terrain, “homogeneity” could only be achieved by a combination of violence and historical forgery. Greekness was equally enforced via the army and the educational systems, with specific attention to the university where new elites would be shaped (Kitromilides 1989; Mazower 1999:41–3). The obliteration of non–Greek memories and cultures continued well into the late 1990s (Karakasidou 1997; Mazower 2004). In post–1878 Serbia, de–Turkification meant the systematic destruction of the Ottoman heritage, most significantly its rich architectural legacy and religious institutions (Sells 1996). Serbian nationalists still see the Bosnian genocide of 1992–5 as a continuation of the purification campaign begun with Serbia's independence (Carmichael 2005; 2009; Ramet 2006). In Turkey, radical homogenization accompanied demographic displacement, mass population transfers, and genocide among minorities (Mann 2005:111–78; Lieberman 2006). The militarization of secular education conflated national identity with militarism: while the school functioned as a coach for army life, the army “became the school of the nation” (Altinay 2006).

Imperial expansion coevolved with European nation–building. Massive human rights abuses could be carried out by rival imperial powers far away from domestic scrutiny. Rapid economic growth, bureaucratization, mass education, industrialization, and militarization galvanized politics until all was let loose in World War I. Throughout this period, a constant goal of state–

builders remained the moulding of ordinary citizens in the name of national development and progress. European states led the way by “building up fearsome coercive means of their own as they deprived civilian populations of access to those means,” relying mostly on capital and capitalists to organize coercion (Tilly 1990:68–9). Their impact was so far-reaching that a new global order emerged in their image.

Mass Media, Homogenization, and Genocide

As soon as a “mass society” came into sight, the mass media became the key homogenizing tool. The broader the audience, the more pervasive the media’s homogenizing impact. During the French Revolution the media, notably factional journals, played a central role, each vying for its public space. New outlets opened as soon as previous ones fell into disgrace or were closed down (Lynn 1996; Scurr 2006). Revolutionary journals indirectly played a pivotal role in getting previously apathetic or neutral peasants to join the *levée*. An astounding 7 million copies of various revolutionary journals were purchased for distribution in the French army between 1791 and 1794 (Lynn 1996:127). Most conscripts could not read or write, so military and civilian authorities provided public readings and civic performances. Mass media became increasingly controlled by the state, rendering any opposition invisible. Under the minister of education Jules Ferry (1832–1893), the Frenchification project was supported by all public media (Weber 1979).

There is a vast literature on language shift and linguistic assimilation dating back to Jacobin efforts (see Fishman 1997; Skutnabb–Kangas 2000). However, broader comparative and theoretical studies on the role of the media in homogenizing processes are still lacking. In contrast, the role of media “filtering” in genocide and ethnic cleansing has been relatively well covered (see Cohen 2001:170–3, 290–3; Power 2003:276–8, 430–5). The central place given to the mass media in both the Soviet Union and the Third Reich can hardly be overlooked (see Conversi 2006b). Yugoslavia’s collapse was also ushered on by hate-filled television broadcasts (Thompson 1999; Ramet 2002; 2006). Finally, the “developmental” ideology of Hutu extremism could lure followers only through those media which were in the reach of most ordinary citizens, above all the radio (Kellow and Leslie 1998; Chalk 1999; Li 2004). As Alvarez remarks, “No matter which genocide we examine, whether the Armenian, Rwandan, or Bosnian, all similarly required widespread cooperation from large segments of society” (2001:22). Such “teamwork” is facilitated whenever ultranationalists seize the mass media.

Globalization and Genocide

The era of neoliberal globalization has led to new, largely understudied waves of mass displacements and killings. Only speculative data are available. Everywhere globalization has created tiny pockets of ultrarichness and new roaring middle classes, but also masses of miserable, destitute peoples. Pauperization has become the other face of globalization. The economic “boom” in China, India and other fast-growing countries has claimed countless lives. The level of human suffering may remain unquantifiable for a long time, while unreliable estimates highlight the scarcity of data on the extent of globalization-induced suffering. Both genocide and globalization scholars will need to do a lot of research on the subject. The reintroduction of “slave” labour in China and the dispatching of convicts into distant “colonies” have only recently been revealed. For instance, by early 2008 over 100,000 Chinese forced labor, often political opponents, religious dissidents, or petty “criminals” sentenced for minor offenses, had been sent to Angola to provide human fuel for Africa’s first “tiger economy.” In India alone, the lives of millions of people have been devastated by globalization-related conflicts. Mass casualties included over 100,000 farmers who have committed suicide after being strangled by mega-corporations (Shiva 2000), as well as Christian and Muslim minorities cleansed by Hindu nationalist mobs. The adoption of US-dictated neoliberal policies has led to massive misery in Russia (Gray 1998). With some guesswork, Stephen Cohen claims that 100 million Russians have been murdered by extreme poverty and exploitation to the benefit of “American investments, loans, and reputations” (Cohen 2000, cited in Jones 2006a:37).

In the meantime, Western mega-corporations have ransacked the African continent, bringing back new forms of slavery, where humans are considered a valuable resource, and ethnic cleansing, where they are not. Environmental destruction and ecocide have outlasted dictatorship. Even after the demise of General Sani Abacha (November 1995), whose military tribunal had ordered the execution of the poet Ken Saro-Wiwa (1941–1995) and nine other Ogoni ecologists, environmental devastation has continued unabated in the Niger Delta, still under the control of Western oil companies.

Finally, in the era of globalization, homogenizing practices take place both at global and “national” levels. While globalization has brought about unprecedented uniformity, state-led patterns of homogenization remain in place locally, most often under authoritarian and totalitarian regimes as in China or Uzbekistan. The atrocities brought upon Falun Dafa practitioners by the Chinese Communist Party or the persecution of non-Uzbeks and religious believers in Uzbekistan under the guise of the “war on terror” replicated forms of cultural homogenization with dramatic potential implications. While globalization flattens cultures and erodes state sovereignty on many levels, state repression and centralization continue and, more than occasionally, increase.

Future Directions of Research

Whereas genocide studies has expanded greatly in recent years, the study of cultural homogenization has only just begun (see [Rae 2002](#)). Likewise, despite the unmistakable links between cultural homogenization, discrimination, xenophobia, and nationalism, the area is still undertheorized in ethnic, racial, and nationalism studies as well.

Historically, the state's homogenizing drive has most often been escorted by militarism and warmaking via nationalism. War acted as the ultimate homogenizer, while the politics of cultural homogenization both anticipated and followed modern mass conscription, peaking in times of war. Twentieth century episodes of massive human destruction are profoundly related to broader patterns of state-led cultural homogenization.

Finally, we need to look at the discernible impact of anthropogenic climate change. This has given rise to interrogations as to whether major genocidal outcomes can be expected during the twenty-first century ([Levene 2004](#); [Cromwell and Levene 2007](#)). Scientific discoveries regarding the unprecedented impact of human consumption upon the ozone layer and other essentials to the continuation of life on earth are evolving so rapidly that in the last two to three years at the time of writing predictions of unforeseeable mass migrations of environmental refugees have become the norm ([Ward 2007](#); [Wright 2007](#)). No area of the planet is expected to remain unaffected by the consequences of climate change. Global corporations and capitalist greed have been regularly indicted ([Jarman 2007](#)); however corporate interests have largely adopted patterns of denial through media manipulation, supervision and censorship ([Theobald and McKiggan 2007](#)). All this might turn genocide into more than speculation, with the tangible possibility that a worst-case nightmare scenario could make the mass crimes committed in the twentieth century look pale in comparison.

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Online Resources

International Network of Genocide Scholars. At www.inogs.com, accessed Feb. 2009. Founded in 2005 in Berlin, the Network – together with the *Journal of Genocide Research* – is hosted by the Centre for the Study of Genocide and Mass Violence established at the University of Sheffield in 2007. The emphasis on mass violence concerns both the past and the contemporary world, with ample space dedicated to the consequences of environmental catastrophe, particularly climate change.

Genocide Studies Program, Yale University. At www.yale.edu/gsp, accessed Feb. 2009. Among various initiatives, the program provides “training to researchers from afflicted regions, including Cambodia, Rwanda, and East Timor.” This includes the award-winning Cambodian Genocide Program. Research projects cover colonial and indigenous genocides, the Nazi Holocaust, Bosnia, and Darfur. It is affiliated to the Yale Institute for Biospheric Studies.

Crisis Forum. At www.crisis-forum.org.uk/, accessed Feb. 2009. This “forum for the study of crisis in the twenty-first century” comprises three major projects: on climate change and public opinion; on history and climate change (“Rescue! History”); and on climate change and violence, which offers a dense research agenda on genocide and ethnic cleansing. It also organizes the workshop series on Climate Change and Violence.

Cultural Homogenization. At <http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/conversi/ch>, accessed Feb. 2009. Dedicated to cultural homogenization, this website provides links to scholarly research on its varieties, shapes and aspects: from cultural homogenization's historical roots to its association with modernity and industrialization, from its full implementation and institutionalization under totalitarianism to the deeper-level impact taking place under the aegis of global mass consumerism. The site considers the linkages between cultural and physical standardization in the form of ethnic cleansing, mass murder, politicide, and genocide.

Prevent Genocide International. At www.preventgenocide.org/, accessed Feb. 2009. This is a transnational network of global civic engagement and action established in 1998. Through the internet, it aims “to cultivate well-informed and articulate voices in many nations able to speak out in the emerging global civil society against the crime of genocide.” The global network at all levels (local, national and international) is potentially ready to mobilize the world's public opinion against possible instances of genocide *before* they occur: “concerted action can prevent or halt an escalating attack on a threatened population group, thereby averting or mitigating an outbreak of genocide.”

Center for Holocaust and Genocide. At www.chgs.nl/index_eng.html, accessed Feb. 2009. The Center was founded in 2002 by the University of Amsterdam and the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, which is part of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Its primary activities are university teaching and scholarly research in Holocaust and genocide studies.

Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence. At www.massviolence.org, accessed July 2009. This encyclopedia project, initiated by Jacques Sémelin, Centre d'Études et de Recherches Internationales (CERI), Paris, aims to create a regularly updated electronic database focusing on massacres and genocides of the twentieth century.

United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. At www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genoci.htm, accessed Feb. 2009. Text of the Convention approved by General Assembly resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948; shown on the site of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Geneva, Switzerland.

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Daniele Conversi's most recent research incorporates the comparative study of nationalism, state-making, militarism, and cultural homogenization. He received his PhD at the London School of Economics and has taught in the Government departments at Cornell and Syracuse universities, as well as at the Central European University, Budapest. He is presently at Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV/EHU), in the Basque country. Among his books are *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain* (1997) and the edited *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World* (2002).

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