

CHAPTER 2. MODERN SOCIETIES AND COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE: THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERDISCIPLINARY GENOCIDE STUDIES

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If discussions on the topicality of research regarding processes of state violence and genocide are still necessary today, does this not imply that we have failed with respect to a decisive challenge raised by National Socialism, namely the imperative to ensure that such atrocities are not repeated, the commitment to a "never again"?

The fact that the study of the murder of Jews and specific other minorities in Europe can stimulate important orientations for a democratization of social structures was an important point of departure, and not only for post-1945 German politics. However, primarily on the basis of the changes in international politics following 1990, in particular the new proximity of violent clashes, it has become more clearly evident that the collective phenomena of violence cannot be treated as historical mistakes. It is not sufficient to describe the violence in the Balkans or the genocide in Rwanda as escalated reactions or as aggressive eruptions motivated by hatred.

Is it possible to determine similar or even identical courses for individual incidences of violence? What consequences does the obvious repetition and repeatability of state violence, even after National Socialism, have for measures of early recognition and prevention of grave human rights violations?

The search for explanations as to why the global society is also marked by acts of violence is currently concentrated on attempts to determine particular

potential risks. Trans-state violence potential, for instance in the form of international terrorism, is not the only important factor in this context. Categorizations such as "Fallen States" or "High-Risk States," which have found their way into present-day political theory, are coming to increasingly mark certain state characteristics as presenting possible dangers to the world system. Multi-ethnic states or states with limited bureaucratic centralizations in particular are attributed as having an increased tendency towards violent conflicts. Other discussions focus on regional tendencies, which stand in opposition to leading industrial states.

The talk of "global wars" and "world order wars," and the distinction between "high-intensity" and "low-intensity" civil wars, is also testimony to current efforts to standardize global potential crises. In view of this, the question of which *specific* social or political structural characteristics impose increased risks of state violence tends to be pushed into the background. Accordingly, the reflections outlined below, which examine the relevance of the study of processes of collective violence for an interdisciplinary genocide research, based not least on an attempt to stimulate a critical analysis of the perspectives that determine the approaches of explanation involved in the study of massacre, persecution, war and genocide. An interdisciplinary approach does not convey here a mixture of theoretical methodological perspectives, but rather implies different disciplines complementing and verifying one another through their explicit disciplinary positions. It is also precisely through a confrontation with disciplinary historical perspectives that those central guiding questions need to be developed that are to be studied in detail by interdisciplinary genocide research. The object of such research, particularly its motives and motivations, emphasizes that institutions and structures of genocide should be placed within processes relating to the whole of society — and it should be viewed neither as belonging to the specific politics of an isolated perpetrator group nor as a the general phenomenon of a particular epoch.

FRAMEWORK

For a long time, research on collective violence and genocide has been restricted almost exclusively to historians. Only recently have interdisciplinary approaches been developed with contributions from sociological, social-psychological and literary research. Historical analyses of persecution, genocide,

massacre and war tend to focus on unique historical contexts. The historical approach highlights an attempt to grasp the *historical results* of war and genocide, aiming at sketching an overall process and classifying the single event within the general course of history. According to this view, the Holocaust has already become the characteristic of a specific epoch. More recent debates on the relationship between genocide and modernization have also led to the assumption that there are typical patterns of events of genocide processes, creating schemes of interpretation which emphasize periodical lines and basic structures, and permit more general interpretations. In contrast to sociological paradigms, which will be sketched out later, historical approaches survey the course of "world history" and concentrate primarily on tracking down so-called "anomalies."

Historical research on societal developments has long been dominated by the postulate that every epoch has its own history and thus develops its own historiography, as well as evolutionary concepts of society and bipolar analytical categories: dictatorship versus democracy, fascism versus totalitarianism, the principle of leadership versus the party state, and especially "intentionalism" versus "functionalism." Historical research on Nazism has long highlighted the concept of the "acting leader" as the only acting subject; this concept has recently been extended by research on the "acting small groups" such as special agencies. Recent approaches to the history of everyday life that concentrate on the tacit support of individuals, especially studies based on political science, usually cause highly controversial reactions, e.g., the reaction to the so-called Goldhagen-thesis.

Apart from these basic biases, historical research is influenced by two analytical debates: the controversy concerning the singularity or comparability of genocides and the distinction between "understanding" and "explaining" the past. Apart from these, there is also a third issue: the concept of objective science itself, which prides itself on its validity and its adherence to universal categories, is challenged by perspectives related to "ethical demands," in that it restricts the perspective of "those affected" or the "perspective of the victim" and points to a collective, universal victim.

Whereas historical approaches still dominate the analysis of genocide, the sociological approach begins with a demand for a political sociology, as formulated by Irving Louis Horowitz (Horowitz 1997, Horowitz 1998). As in the case of history, a critical examination of sociological approaches to genocide research reveals fundamental difficulties in the social sciences. As a result, one is faced

with a discipline that until now has been extremely cautious in its analysis of issues such as persecution, terrorism, war and genocide. It has also emphasized the dilemma of personal involvement, which supposedly hinders the creation of objective categories. Since the sociological approach to a subject requires the establishment of a sufficiently detached perspective, a positivist social science denies members of a victim group any potential for scientific objectivity — a tacit yet apparently valid assumption. The sociological perspective tends to distance itself from the concept of experience; it prefers standardized models rather than interpretation, and it is primarily interested in those social facts that illustrate the social *typology* of the individual and society. As a result, the victim as such cannot be taken into account. In contrast to its extensive preoccupation with the perpetrator,¹ sociology usually avoids the analysis of processes which create victims and with the victims themselves, since this might possibly involve emotions and ethics. In contrast to research on socially acting perpetrators, reflections on socially 'suffering' victims cannot be typified; the victim is not only a marginalized phenomenon but also an anomaly and does not exemplify the ideals or the norms of a society.

Sound sociological genocide research needs to break with these traditional concepts: instead of considering genocide to be a mere reaction to economic and technological developments, sociological research must acknowledge the status of genocide as an independent social phenomenon. In this context, however, approaches to a "sociology of violence" (Trotha ed. 1997; Gay 1993; Lichtenberger and Lüdtke eds. 1995; Röttgers and Saner eds. 1978) must also be critically examined. An analytical approach to violence that regards it as a general phenomenon pervading the entire history of mankind denies the existence of specific characteristics of violence as well as the singularity of each occurrence. For this reason, the analytical distinctions between genocide and other forms of mass extinction — for example, natural disasters, arbitrary killings, war and other symbolic or cultural acts of violence (Horowitz 1998) — made primarily by genocide researchers who use a sociological perspective must be subject to criticism. Interdisciplinary frameworks for genocide research make use of analytic models proposed by historical research on epoch-making issues (Bell-Fialkoff 1996) and systems of power (Horowitz 1997, Kuper 1981, Chalk and

1. The study of perpetrators' biographies and generational transmissions of the perpetrators' memories is currently booming (cf. Roberts 1998, Welzer, Montau and Plaf 1997).

Jonassohn 1990)¹, and they also incorporate influences from research on sociological and historical minorities (Melson 1992), social conflict (Dobkowski and Wallimann eds. 1998) and prejudice (Lerner 1992).

Comparative Genocide Research

In more recent times it appears that with the definition of conflict, in particular the establishment of an "ethnic conflict," an explanation for the courses of modern-day violence has been found. To speak of conflict is to assume opposing partners, *action and reaction*, failed communication relationships, points of escalation or turning points of actions. However, in the analysis of modern politics of violence as the result of competing group relationships or escalating conflicts, it is difficult to take into account endeavors to achieve national self-determination, nationalistic movements or national homogenization politics. To what extent, if any, in inter-ethnic or intercultural conflict, are there two opposing groups that can be defined in the same way? Can it really be assumed that ethnic conflicts result from an escalation of failed communication? To what extent is it overlooked that although the politics of violence can oppose a group, the motives are not oriented towards their real characteristics but rather against the stigmatizing characteristics assigned to them?

Ethnicity and regional culture appear to be generally considered as "critical dimensions" for the worldwide network of states. In the conception of the world as a coherent, networked structure, ethnic conflicts are classified as a danger for the whole. In particular, a disruption to relations on an economic or political level is diagnosed.

The topicality of genocide research is particularly apparent in view of the limited scope of the conflict parameter since it argues against an overhasty standardization of the causes of collective and state violence in terms of inevitable causal relationships of ethnicity and conflict, exclusion and violence. Instead, it encourages a consideration of *intentions* and *strategies*, and consequently recognizes the need to look at the foundations of knowledge of modern societies. Not least — and this is a challenge that is particularly difficult to accept — genocide research points out that many of the foundations of knowledge in the legitimations of genocide are still valid today. Indeed, it stresses that we retain and continue with this validity today through, among other things, globalization

1. See also Drost 1959. Drost sketches central questions of genocide research in their discussion of international signs in his problematizations of the UN convention.

frameworks. The topical nature of genocide research lies in the fact that it is still possible to conceive of genocide today.

Approaches of examinations that compare structures are therefore devoted first of all to the differentiation of genocide from other forms of collective violence: massacre and war in particular. Using the various criteria of analytical genocide research, one can restrict the term *massacre* to those acts of violence that appear to be sudden, momentary outbreaks. In this case, the murderers involved rarely exhibit systematic discipline or training. They also usually constitute a self-contained group, not necessarily divided into a planning as opposed to an executing team. The implementation and choice of methods for the realization of the plan are usually left up to those who carry it out. Apart from this, there is no long-term, intergenerational plan of extermination; the massacre generally constitutes an act of situational elimination, an outbreak of "punishment" and "revenge." Both the ideological and technical preconditions to a massacre are minimal. The victims usually belong to an easily recognizable group, but despite the massacre, the group itself is not actually in danger of being entirely destroyed. A massacre kills individuals and destroys families, but it does not exterminate entire generations. Consequently, a massacre does not interrupt the generational succession of the victim group.

Following this framework, the term *war* refers to an international and organized armed conflict between two different states. The main motives are conflict, imperialism/conquest, and the enforcement of the interests of one state against another. Today, war is still considered to be a political option, although it has recently become fashionable to replace the term by either "military" or "humanitarian intervention." The distinction between victim and perpetrator is inappropriate in the case of war; here, one speaks of friends and enemies, actors and re-actors. Accordingly, the term *civil war* describes a non-international armed implementation of violence between non-state conflict parties as a consequence of the attack of one group on another within a state-organized society with the goal of the violent enforcement of group-related interests.

Ethnic cleansing (due to its euphemistic nature, in the following I will replace this term, which has become fashionable in the context of the war in Kosovo, with the term *ethnic violence*) can be understood as the attempt of a dominant ethnic group to expel from a certain region or murder (massacre) a non-dominant ethnic group who live within the same state or confederation of states, with the intention of achieving or safeguarding sovereignty of the region through the ethnic homogenization of the population. *Ethnic violence* is therefore imple-

mented in the context of conflict with regard to the sovereignty of a certain geographical region and initially does not direct itself against the members of an ethnic group in the whole area of the state, but rather solely against those who live within the region in question. *Ethnic violence* does not necessarily presuppose an ideological legitimation.

In contrast to all of these terms, *genocide* refers to the ideologically authorized and systematic extermination of a specific, defenseless part of society in order to realize the vision of a homogenous society, culture, territory and system of power. This is achieved by eliminating those parts of society which are supposed to be incapable of being integrated. It is a unique, national crime relating to the whole of society, which takes place in the course of particular processes of national transformation. According to Raul Hilberg, one central characteristic of this process consists of the different phases in its implementation: group definition, deprivation of rights, selection, deportation, and extermination (Hilberg 1961).

This outline makes it clear that it is not the forms of violence implemented that enable distinctions to be made between genocide, massacre, ethnic violence, war and civil war, but rather the perpetrator groups and institutions implementing the violence, the mechanisms of publicity, ideological frameworks, motivations and objectives of the perpetrators or the arguments of legitimation. This brief sketch could be expanded to include numerous other typical characteristics; but they may not necessarily be found in each and every case.

In his work on discipline, Ulrich Bröckling has compiled some principles of warfare: rigid and inflexible structures of hierarchy and military command, propaganda used to create stereotypes of the enemy, intensive preparations based on drill, obedience, and training, and a lack of personal emotion with regard to the enemy, since war is not fought for personal reasons (Bröckling 1997). This assignment of typical characteristics leads to further questions, since many of these elements also play a role in genocide: a strict allocation of roles and disciplinary structures, planning, propaganda and the creation of a rather complex negative mythology in order to slander the (collective) victim. Of course, genocide is directed against an enemy within the society in question, one who aims at subverting the national unity from within. Furthermore, genocides are not decided or carried out on a battlefield, they are not surprise attacks; instead they are implemented in various stages of social exclusion and extinction. They also involve a different type of perpetrator, since the majority of these executioners are not recruited from the military but from all walks of life,

including average citizens of both sexes and various backgrounds, from science, business and the arts.

This typological approach raises the possibility of a link between the violence of war and that of genocide. The last stages of genocide — the attempts to eliminate European Jews and Armenians — occurred during both World Wars. However, according to analytical genocide research, warfare provides the perpetrator with a kind of “screen” which promotes an atmosphere that supports mass extinction.¹ In this case, genocide appears to be reduced to issues of conquest and resource expropriation (Aly and Heim 1993, Aly 1995). Are war and genocide both characterized by the same specific type of violence, i. e., a form of violence linked to a specific authority, which originally occurred in the context of war and then became a model for subsequent genocides? Are both war and genocide reflections of the same kind of society? Did the ideologies of the two perpetrating societies — the National Socialist as well as the Young Turks — consciously fall back on militaristic arguments to justify their practices of extermination? War is usually equated with aggressive violence, whereas genocide is a desire to exterminate that derives from irregular, pathological attitudes. War is legitimized as a highly regulated kind of killing, as violence that either attacks or defends. Genocidal violence is also directed against a specific victim, but since its radical intention is to exterminate not only the (collective) victim but also his entire historical and social presence, genocidal violence is both destructive and influences the structure of the perpetrator society. The typological approach appears to weaken the differentiation between war and genocide. Nevertheless, genocidal violence must be regarded as an independent type of violence, i. e., a variety that can take many forms, one that is related to traditional forms of violence but is necessarily accompanied by a specific, clearly defined motivation — annihilation.

Thus, it is not possible to characterize the violence of a genocide as modern or anti-modern, as civilized or traditional: the violence of the National Socialist perpetrators was just as *modern*, mechanized and alienated as it was *direct*, filled with hatred, traditional and “barbaric.” Initiating individual actors stand alongside employees of the “untarnished” profiteering bureaucracy. In spite of

1. Cf. Dadrian 1993. In the text it says on pp. 180f.: “Such crises can reach their peak in times of external war, especially global war, which will facilitate the rapid transformation of tentative ideas of massive violence into plans of action behind the screen of war. War thus emerges as the connecting link between the embryonic and implementing stages in the evolution of a genocide.”

this, there are numerous examples of analytical totalizations, which by means of generalized structural characteristics of the Holocaust, have been abstracted and imposed on models of other forms of collective violence. However, such approaches, with their feature-oriented universal definitions, do not make any real contribution to genocide research: talk of “total,” “ultimate,” or “bureaucratic” genocide — contrasted with the less “total” or the less “bureaucratic” acts of violence — mainly serves to construct a type of hierarchy of genocides.¹

The key focus of genocide research should therefore be on structures, self-explanations and institutions, figurations of prejudice, anti-Semitism and racism or aspects of morality and normalization. Examined *individually*, these should show detailed aspects of the planning and realization of genocide. Comparative interdisciplinary discussions of these aspects should, in addition, be related to parameters that are used *generally* for the analysis of social policy. The actual implementation of violence is not the only violent characteristic of genocide. Further characteristics are also found in the integration of genocide in forms of exclusion, deportation or murder in a society: the planning and implementation by means of societal actor groups or societal changes, which genocide processes both strive for and leave as their legacy. Thus, there is one thing genocide-research is definitely *not*: an additive series of different collective violent crimes and attempts to bring some order in this mass through wild constructions of hierarchy.

The works of comparative genocide research can usually be assigned to two basic traditions. On the one hand, there are analyses based on the first useful definition of genocide, proposed by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, or the definition proposed by the United Nations Genocide Convention, issued in 1948 (which was the result of political compromise).¹⁷ On the other hand, there are approaches which use the National Socialist genocide as their starting point and attempt to account for National Socialist persecutions (Katz 1994). In his 1944 report on German occupation policy in Poland, Raphael Lemkin directed public attention towards a new kind of persecution, which he considered to be a new form of governmental population policy called *genocide* (Lemkin 1944). This first attempt to specify the new phenomenon and define it raised issues that characterize genocide research still today, since it primarily deals with complex theo-

1. The specific political or sociohistorical structures of the relevant perpetrator societies are by no means included in this ranking. The “comparison of genocides” does not therefore lead to a “system comparison” or a “structure” comparison, but rather to a counting of victims and types of killing.

retical issues and relies on juridical concepts to facilitate the early diagnosis and prevention of human destruction. Lemkin pointed out the difficulties of defining a victim group or the shift from persecution to systematic annihilation. Since he also took into account indirect genocidal measures, his work has remained valuable.

Comparative genocide studies have mostly focused on individual elements of genocide research such as the perpetrator, victim, motive, planning, implementation, and results. These studies are hardly ever compared to or examined in the light of historical and sociological case studies. Helen Fein, who sought to establish genocide as part of sociological discourse, limits the term to political crime: "Genocide is sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or indirectly, through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members, sustained regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim" (Fein 1990, p. 24). Is it possible to assume that a lack of effective resistance is a genocidal criterion without running the risk of distortion? Is it possible to include the attitude and constitution of the victim in a general, standardized scheme or paradigm of genocide? In her later works, Fein continued her attempts to establish a theoretical framework, trying to analyze the relationship between the victim group and the perpetrator as well as the difficulties in the formation of concepts of the collective victim: "Genocide is ... a strategy that ruling elites use to resolve real solidarity and legitimacy conflicts or challenges to their interests against victims decreed outside their universe of obligation in situations in which a crisis or opportunity is caused by or blamed on the victim ..." (Fein 1993, p. 813).

Two Canadian researchers, Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, developed the following definition of genocide as a specific political means to exert power: "Genocide is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as the group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator" (Chalk and Jonassohn 1990, p. 23). In their study of collective violence in the twentieth century, Michael Dobkowski and Isidor Walliman examine the role of industrialization, population growth, and resource distribution (Dobkowski and Wallimann 1998). Christina Lerner and Connor Cruise O'Brian — whose work remains valuable although less widely known than others — analyze genocidal processes against the background of processes of nation-building and accompanying myths of national foundation (Lerner 1981, O'Brian 1999). Other approaches also distinguish between possible variants: politicide, ethnocide, and democide (Harff and Gurr 1987, Rummel 1992).

Bernhard Taureck introduced a new interpretation by distinguishing between situational as opposed to intrinsic variants of genocide. This includes issues of identity creation and elimination for the sake of securing resources, and takes into account specific trends and strategies of modern development from colonialism to globalization — an analytical framework that focuses on representations rather than victims (Taureck 1999).

Finally, I should like to mention an approach which is not derived from comparative genocide research but from German history — the attempt by Immanuel Geiss to interpret world history as a *history of massacre* (Geiss 1992). He distinguishes between temporally and locally restricted massacres and those which are inherent in a specific system, between spontaneous or sudden and institutionalized massacres, and massacres that occur in the course of revolutions as opposed to massacres that take place during civil wars. He also introduces an intermediate stage between massacre and genocide, "genocidal massacres," which he applies to the Armenian case. According to Geiss, the term "genocide" should only be used to refer to the Holocaust.

The debate on analytical and comparative frameworks does not simply result in a discourse on legitimation but rather provokes one. It is necessary to underscore the singularity of each occurrence or form of collective violence, and this necessitates precise differentiation. However, this easily turns into a classificatory, evaluative perspective against the background of a specific analytical framework. Any comparison that tries to differentiate without any moral qualification risks becoming lost in highly problematic analytical qualifications as the complexity of collective violence and genocide is reduced to a single analytical structure.

In order to develop a typological and structural analysis, previous genocides have to provide an analytical framework: for example, the comparative approach usually contrasts the deportations of the Armenian Genocide with the National Socialist concentration and death camps (Goldhagen 1996, p. 414; Sofsky 1997) to illustrate the technological development of extermination methods. There are also additional arguments used to rank the two genocides. This approach can even lead to the denial of the Armenian genocide by official Turkish historiography — a depressing example of differential analysis. So far, comparative analyses have usually focused on the societies of the perpetrators, ignoring the victims and reducing their role to a mere analytical category.

The Perpetrator of Genocide

By now it should be obvious that genocides cannot be explained purely as general types of extermination but rather as an inherent part of complex societal processes. Genocide is not a manifestation of collective violence but is realized through a complex network of individual, collective and institutionalized structures of violence, through ideas and knowledge, acting and resisting (it was one of the central characteristics of National Socialism that resistance to it aimed to bring about the fall of the regime, but not the end of the murder of the Jews). The perpetrator is primarily characterized by determination, an intentional will. Historical and socio-psychological "profiles" of Nazi perpetrators, as exemplified in the works of Gitta Sereny, include further characteristics such as team spirit, a bureaucratic mentality based on unrestricted obedience, willingness to follow authority slavishly, and a low threshold of aggression (Sereny 1974). But is it possible to define genocide perpetrators in these terms, or are they mere products of societal and ideological conditions, influenced by a particular mentality? Despite these kinds of problems, many analyses continue to focus on perpetrators. Early approaches, largely influenced by the concept of leadership, apparently aimed at establishing a certain group of perpetrators to turn attention away from possible German collective guilt. The issue of deliberate extermination dominates contemporary scientific debates still today, even though discussions of intentionalism and functionalism have long since proved unproductive. Nevertheless, they seem to be present in questions regarding visionary, ideological or situational decision-making aspects. Consequently, the search for evidence, documents, protocols, declarations and decrees continues. Solving this problem requires a closer examination of the language, images, projections, political ambitions and visions of the perpetrators to point out that there was in fact a "reason" for killing the victim group and, even more, that the victim group was, of course, "innocent" despite this so-called "reason." This line of argumentation has to rely on the "logic" of extermination, it has to construct and explain the motives that led to a particular behavior. However, this means returning the victims to the disastrous logic of guilt and innocence, guaranteeing the continuity of the perpetrators' discourse beyond the act of extermination.

Genocide, however, is not a question of guilt or innocence. Can it actually be characterized as an enforced act between a victim and a perpetrator? One could argue that genocidal annihilation does not call for an examination of the relationship between guilt and innocence, victim and perpetrator, but for an

examination of the extinction of a group which has previously been deprived of its rights. In fact, the question of the perpetrators' "intentions" is usually answered by focusing on traditional patterns of behavior rather than concentrating on particular aspects of the actual decision-making involved. Up to now, explanatory models have provided numerous motivations based on sociological, ideological and economic reasons. Does it appear too difficult to consider annihilation as the main objective?

When analyzing genocidal processes, it appears impossible to either comprehend a single or dominating motivation or to speak of complex combinations of motives. Nevertheless, we can observe the undisputed results of previous genocides today: successfully homogenized societal structures. Collective violence, massacres and genocides of the previous century have succeeded in destroying what they intended to destroy. They constituted an integral part of major societal transformations. The modern authority of the state has not only accompanied but also shaped the modernizing processes that have led to the realization of nation states. In the face of an increasing escalation of annihilating acts, pointing towards an overall development and structure of the perpetrators and their institutions, it appears appropriate to assume an "intention" and "program" of extermination. Thus, the term "genocidal intention," which I consider important at this point, does not assume there are inevitable or even cyclical historical processes, nor does it seek any one particular explanation, be it the paradigm of totalitarianism, the principle of leadership, or general concepts of world history, such as fear of falling back into an uncivilized state. There have always been alternatives to genocide: genocide is not the last step in an evolutionist, escalating process.

GENOCIDE AND THE NATION STATE

An examination of epochs characterized by specific types of violence, e.g., *the age of religious wars*, or *the age of colonial conquests*, does not make any sense as long as it only results in a cyclical perspective, highlighting a kind of violence that is typical of the twentieth century. However, the analysis of *genocide and the modern age* becomes useful as soon as violence against specific groups is no longer considered a unique "accident" of world history but part of the development of our current society (Platt 1998). During the Enlightenment, most European societies realized that people demand a government they can identify with, and that

the future belongs to those societies that have settled the identity of people and state, religion and culture, language and territory, origin and history amongst themselves. However, the articulation of principles such as freedom, education, and progress was also accompanied by certain duties, rights, and legal forces. The departure of God as the creator of the world and His replacement by evolution and history allowed man to assume his position as the center of the world. At this point, history turned into win and lose, give and take, power and powerlessness, past and future. The Enlightenment was the first vision of the European modern age, not only a new beginning after the break-up of old structures, but also a deliberate intervention in the development process. This vision constituted a radical departure for the sake of creating a new society for subsequent generations (Dabag 2000).

When Ziya Gökalp wrote his poem *Turan* in 1911, the Young Turks had already seized power and brought parliament under their control (Dabag 1998): The movement of Young Turks had grown out of secret groups in the Ottoman Empire, which had been fighting for modernizing reforms — particularly a constitutional system — since the 1820s. But at the turn of the century the strategies of the movement were institutionalized in a stable network of intellectual and paramilitary groups. The aims of the Young Turks were no longer freedom, democracy and progress; they had one goal of overriding importance — identity. By the end of the nineteenth century, the reform process had been replaced by the visions of a “new life” and a “new order,” which were subordinate to the implementation of the “national life.” They aimed at the political implementation of the unity of all Turks along the lines of a territorial and in particular culturally and linguistically legitimized vision: *Turan*. The term *Turan* first of all reveals a shift in orientation: Arabic and Persian elements of history and culture were rejected and replaced by a Turkish identity (Turkism) with a territorial North-East-orientation, i. e., to the Turkish peoples of the Russian Empire. The concept of *Turan* embraced the Turkish speaking peoples of Central Asia, Iran, and Afghanistan all the way to the Great Wall of China. The historic basis for the link between *Turan* and a territory belonging to the “Tur” or “Turk” people has not yet been established, nor have its exact historic borders between Hungary, Finland and China. In his epic *Kızıl Elma*, Ziya Gökalp had the female protagonist, the “noble” maiden Ay Hanim, who was supposed to be the ancestor of numerous generations, say the following: “The people is like a garden, / we are supposed to be its gardeners! / First the bad shoots are to be cut / and then the scion is to be grafted”.¹

Genocidal policy is primarily focused on designing new generations as a conscious creative act and on providing for the development of new, different generations. The definition of a particular victim group is supported by widespread stereotypes and preconceptions or reveals a history of persecution. The atmosphere of annihilation, however, is primarily influenced by a sense of fulfilling a national duty, one which might be considered difficult: carrying out an important, honourable duty for the sake of a new beginning and the emergence into the modern age, in the face of a menacing threat to the “national body.”

Moving beyond the sphere of any traditionally accepted moral code, annihilation is itself turned into a moral issue. The perpetrator does not turn into a beast or a callous monster. He surmounts any moral conflict by strongly believing that he is carrying out an important, necessary task. The perpetrator is not motivated by hatred, contempt or racism, but by a determination derived from a normative claim to authority. This claim has not been imposed by terror and is felt both by the circle of perpetrators and “average citizens.”

In his reflections on the strategies involved in legitimizing the annihilation of the Herero people in South-West Africa in 1904, Medardus Brehl proves the presence of a similar pattern of argumentation: “Genocide is turned into a contribution to creating a future mankind as well as into moral behaviour and into an element of moral maturity. The perpetrators are not considered to commit a crime but to carry out useful, morally justified and hard work...” (Brehl 2000, p. 27).

Systematic mass extinction cannot be considered a specific phenomenon of the modern age. Comparative genocide research, which follows up this kind of thought, runs the risk of reducing genocide to an international crime. In contrast, genocide constitutes a national crime occurring in the context of specific nationalizing processes of transformation, aiming at the implementation of an inner normative order. Genocide does not involve solving a conflict, but is rather the realization of a “noble” and “sacred” goal, the realization of a *new future*.

1. This poem was published in several magazines: *Genç Kalemler* No. 4 (23 May 1911); reprinted in: Gökalp, Ziya: *Kızıl Elma*, Istanbul 1914/15. The translation was made according to a later edition of the complete works: *Sözler ve Halk Masalları*. Ziya Gökalp Külliyyatı I, ed. by Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, Ankara 1989, p. 5. “Fatherland for the Turks is neither Turkey, nor yet Turkestan; / Fatherland is a great and eternal country: *Turan*” (Astourian 1999, p. 32). Compare Tekin Alp’s free rendering for a translation into German in: *Österreichische Rundschau* 46, 6, 1916, pp. 284–297, here p. 285.

GENOCIDE AND IDENTITY

The fact that the scholarly treatment of collective violence raises the issue of individual and collective concepts of identification is not due to the extreme nature of modern violence such as persecution, war and genocide. The killers and bureaucrats as members of the group of perpetrators are not only connected by ideology and hierarchical structures of an unfathomable system of command. The exertion of violence and its authorization are also closely related to the construction of collective identity in the perpetrator society. Thus, the study of genocide and identity raises two issues: for the victims, suffering from genocide implies a multitude of discontinuities, injuries, and losses. The experience of extreme physical and psychological violation not only leads to long-term traumatic effects which are passed on to following generations, but also to the radical destruction of their identities. This kind of destruction, however, is not a mere side effect of genocidal violence, but rather its primary objective. In the case of a genocide, racial and ideological stigmatization are directed towards the destruction of all aspects of identification (e.g. history and language, family and profession, belief and traditions) since it aims at complete annihilation, which goes beyond the physical extermination of the victim's presence, extinguishing both the past and future. This leads to the second issue of genocide and identity: extermination plans also provide for the creation of identity within the perpetrators' societies. The elimination of a specific part of the population, and thus the erasure of different expectations, systems of reference and concepts, is intended to strengthen and unify the future identity of the perpetrating society.

SCIENCE AND PERSPECTIVE

In German discussions, the debate concerning the uniqueness and comparability of genocide has turned out to be particularly effective in distorting scholarly preoccupation with forms of collective violence. Interestingly enough, there appears to be no motivation within this discussion to deal with competing analyses of genocidal occurrences. Similarly, the debate on the relative number of casualties plays a rather marginal role: in German scholarly discourse, the victim as such has become subject to comparison and controversies. Thus, attempts are being made to establish a hierarchy of the victims of National Socialist persecutions. Before discussing this debate, it is important to assess the specific kind of

alienation which affected Jewish identity due to the segregational measures as well as racial and ideological definitions involved in National Socialism. This alienation was completed by specific patterns of interpretation, in particular by the image of the nameless, anonymous victim, and it hinders the commemoration of remaining victim groups as well as an appropriate commemoration of the Jewish victims. The attempt to deal with the history of Jewish everyday-life by assigning names and identities to the largely anonymous victims promotes the understanding of the processes of persecution and murder, but it also has a side effect: it actually conceals a central aspect of the Holocaust — the negation of individuality. This approach exemplifies the possibilities of playing down the actual events. Historiography still sticks to its emphasis on the anonymous, almost uncountable and appalling number of victims. The request to commemorate other victim groups implies a concern with the peculiarity of the Jewish victim group rather than its overwhelming numbers. This does not call for research on totalitarianism, fascism or dictatorial leadership. Preoccupation with the peculiarities of Jewish victims requires an examination of the attitudes that lead to the formation of a society of perpetrators: Anti-Semitism and the National Socialist ideology, prejudice and envy, racism and "seduction." Considering the scholarly controversy connected with the Goldhagen debate, it appears to be even more difficult to face the complexity and variety of motives that facilitated the extermination of the Jews than it is to study the broad societal basis which supported and guaranteed its planning and implementation.

In post-war research, the racial criteria according to which National Socialists established their specific hierarchies of persecution have resulted in projections onto the victim group, which have had to be internalized by the latter as a precondition to their participation in scientific debates. Research on genocide should neither be reduced to a debate regarding different victim groups such as Jewish and Polish victims, victims among the German civilian population and victims of the National Socialist persecution, nor to a mere addition of increasing numbers of separate victim groups that make up the general figure of "six million Jews, Sinti, Roma, Homosexuals." In contrast, comparative genocide research focuses on comparable aspects of the ideological and bureaucratic systems of the perpetrating societies. By addressing different forms of collective violence, genocide research provides an approach which acknowledges the distinct singularity and peculiarity of each victim group. Occasional reproaches of victim groups for demanding exclusive commemoration cannot be used by researchers to justify avoiding current occurrences of collective violence. Since

there are no basic analytical categories which permit detailed case studies without inciting a debate on singularity and comparability, dealing with the persecution of the Sinti and Roma as well as with the victims of socialist totalitarianism and Stalinist terror has become an extremely explosive subject. A possible analytical category could be established by falling back on the concept of collective violence, which implies different forms of realization: massacre, war, genocide.

There is another aspect worth mentioning to complete this theoretical framework. With regard to the debate on singularity and comparability, it is important to bear in mind the strategic aspects of each discourse. Anyone who addresses the issue of singularity and comparability is not interested in fundamental aspects of the theory of history, but rather seeks to position himself within a framework of theoretical concepts that are closely linked with denial and relativism.

Does the choice between an *explanatory* and an *understanding approach* imply a choice between two scientific theories, that is between two analytical procedures? Considering historiographic works, is it even possible to speak of conscious decisions between explaining and understanding? Almost any introduction to National Socialism and the Holocaust tries to approach the actual events rather than explain them: no attempt to renounce all explanatory approaches, however, has ever been made. Dan Diner has presented a detailed account on the motivations that underlie explaining vis-à-vis understanding approaches to genocidal processes (Diner 1991). Surprisingly enough, most reflections on the theory of history that deal with the paradigm of explaining and understanding, which in fact constitutes a central theoretical borderline in the case of genocide research, do not even refer to the controversy on genocide (Goertz ed. 1998). The debate on explaining and understanding basically affects different forms of the process of historical recognition, analytical frameworks, as well as the structuring and hierarchical arrangement of event, pattern, interpretation and projection. In the context of this debate, the study of history places itself within its own developmental process: it scrutinizes the character of interpretation and arrangement of its statements as well as preconditions influencing its interpretation.

Analyzing occurrences of violence illustrates the fact that this debate on perspective, too, is not limited to simple questions of method and procedure, but that it primarily demands consideration of the validity of the resulting statements. This has consequently led to the debate on different ways of reducing the

Holocaust to a mere historic event, by means of historical analyses with no political, moral and pedagogical obligations. In addition, issues such as the generalization of analytical categories as well as the assumption of continuity are examined. In fact, especially as far as the analysis of genocidal processes is concerned, the study of their history needs to reflect on its traditional periodical concepts, in particular the paradigms of continuity and discontinuity, singular or universal structures of event. Paradoxically, the analysis of genocidal processes appears to be hindered and restrained by these basic issues, although the Holocaust initiated the debate on the theoretical paradigms of historical research. In coming years, the debate will no longer be limited to a warning about reducing the Holocaust and other genocidal processes to mere historical events or whether it is even possible to do so. Due to the fact that new forms of collective persecution and violence demand scientific study, the analysis of collective annihilation will increasingly have to take into account the difficulties and implications of scientific categorization. An approach that posits a contrast between an *understanding* and an *explanatory interpretation* is thus inextricably linked to the discussion on the singularity or comparability of genocidal processes. It should be noted that both debates on perspective are primarily concerned with warnings, the definition of their own point of view as well as assigning of other points of view to other perspectives. The debate seems to resemble a ball in a gaming machine, not permitted to touch the edges in order to remain in the game.

It is not possible to use theoretical considerations to solve the problem of how to account for the singularity of each occurrence and still formulate comparative statements that are relevant to current research, nor can the complex and multi-causal nature of genocidal processes be adequately explained in a theoretical context. After all, these issues do not appear in the context of theoretical reflections, but in connection with case studies. Consequently, genocide research can only begin to meet these requirements if its comparative statements concentrate on structural elements of the perpetrating society (Dabag 1998, pp. 152-153). General comparisons as well as the comparison of casualty figures cannot be the subject of serious genocide research. Similarly, it must be clear that monocausal patterns are not sufficient to explain genocide. Genocide research can make an important contribution by demonstrating that the paradigms of totalitarianism, fascism, or dictatorship can be used to describe perpetrating societies. The analysis of processes of persecution, violence, and murder,

however, must be kept separate from the analysis of a particular political system since they are not inevitable but independent processes.

Finally, there is a third perspective relevant to genocide research — that of the victim. The fact that there appears to be no acceptance of survivors' recollections and that they have not been truly integrated into the historiography of world history is due to the nature of public and academic discourse after 1945. The discussion has mainly focused on the perpetrator. There are two reasons for this: first, the preoccupation with an identifiable perpetrator has been preferred to a concern with anonymous victims who, because of their sheer numbers, appear to lack any tangible substance, and second, the discourse has continued to be determined by the terminology and argumentation of the perpetrators. The victim was turned into a mere witness: a victim who stood for the experience of extermination, but was denied the status of a legitimate eyewitness to the actual events in court proceedings against the perpetrators (Platt 1998b, Platt 2000, Platt 2002),¹ since his testimony was "not assigned any authenticity, i.e. congruence with an experience of violence which was considered too complex, too absolute and radical, and at the same time too simple and unstructured," as Kristin Platt puts it (Platt 2002, p. 46). The witness was reduced to the status of mere evidence, and as such had more value dead than alive. The victim does not participate in the discourse on genocide, since he "gives evidence of the excluded — and the excluding — [the survivor] represents an experience, which cannot be shared, which is selective rather than representative, but not finished either" (Platt 2002, p. 46). The victim's testimony belongs to the past. Each articulation of the victim's perspective is misinterpreted as an attempt to turn the opposite number into a perpetrator, since the identity of the victim can only be maintained in connection with its perpetrating counterpart. The victim's experience is misunderstood as an attack, as a demand for the confession of one's guilt. The fact that genocide research has to face the victim's perspective is both a central precondition and a theoretical innovation. It is related to approaches to the history of everyday life and oral history and permits concern for psychological and socio-psychological issues. It also takes into account the central characteristic of genocidal processes, i.e., that genocide goes beyond the victim's death to cause long-term traumatic effects as well as creates successfully homogenized structures in the perpetrating society. Taking into account the victims' per-

1. Cf. Also Kristin Platt's chapter in this volume.

spective not only implies assigning them a place in historiography, but also including factors such as trauma, memory, and testimony as fundamental analytical categories.

CONCLUSIONS

Genocide research, as research on a systematic social policy, is also research on social, historical and psychological relationships and structures. Genocide research has the task of creating awareness of general structures of knowledge and politics that involve the possibility of genocide, but is also concerned with presenting detailed individual studies on less well-researched acts of collective violence. This is accompanied by a clear differentiation of genocide from other forms of collective violence as well as an exact setting of the descriptive, empirical and comparative tasks. An interdisciplinary, structure comparative genocide research should take into account the following aspects when considering the term genocide:

(a) Genocide is always a crime that relates to the whole of society. Its causes can be traced across generations. Its structures demonstrate general characteristics of modern societies. Nevertheless, planning and implementation are only to be understood as specific national processes. For the researcher this means that no generally valid universal model of the course of genocide can be defined. Every genocide is singular from a historical and social point of view: the individual forms of each deprivation of rights, each act of persecution and genocide are different.

(b) Genocides are the result not only of a variety of causes but also multiple kinds of violence. We cannot reduce genocides to an — ultimate — form of murder, for instance in the form of an extermination massacre or an extermination camp. Genocide is realized in a number of stages of differing violence: exclusion, stigmatization, and deprivation of rights.

(c) Goals and characteristics of individual genocides should be viewed from a specific historical point of view. However, persecutions and violence are legitimized with arguments that belong to general norms of modern reality: stability, balance, the restoration or protection of identity, talk of an inner enemy. The contemplation of a genocide is integrated into the creative planning of the future of a society — legitimized as "safeguarding" or "saving," legitimized by reference to general patterns of progress and civilization.

The relevance of the parameters of the analysis of genocide for the discussion of present-day conflict situations and the potential violence that will possibly come to determine the 21st century, relates to the modern-day foundations of knowledge: patterns of identity, norms and values of membership, patterns of unity and stability. The critical convergence towards the setting of paradigms of the present, efforts to develop new forms of learning and communication as well as endeavors to foster and produce sensitivity towards intercultural tolerance are to be understood as obligations that play a central accompanying role in the analysis of processes of genocide.

It might initially seem surprising that (potential) perpetrators do not allow themselves to be deterred by the legal consequences of their actions. However, in the legitimizing justifications of state violence it becomes clear that the consequences of (as well as the conviction for) one's own actions are consciously accepted by the perpetrators planning a genocide. As genocide is realized not primarily for one's own generation but rather for the following generations, i.e., for the future of the perpetrator society, the (potential) perpetrators are able to explain their own actions outside of the valid norms and values as right, or even as moral.

Also against this background, considerations to view not only genocide itself but also the denial of genocide as punishable offences under international law should be taken seriously, in order to include the successor generations of the perpetrators in the processes both of moral reappraisal and of social responsibility.

The fields of activity of the Permanent International Criminal Court in the Hague (ICC), constituted on March 11, 2003, on the basis of the Rome statute adopted on July 17, 1998, which could mean an institutional breakthrough for a protective system against genocide and human rights violations, stretch far into the societies.

However, it is possible that tasks of recollection alone, in a society radically homogenized following a genocide, could also place the victims themselves back in a social discourse. For this reason it should at least be considered whether a general recognition of other genocides (such as the genocide of the Armenians, which continues even today to be officially denied by Turkey), in addition to leading to the punishment of the perpetrators, could not also have an influential effect on the prevention of further plans for genocide. The punishment of the perpetrators has not, as yet, succeeded in banishing genocide from legitimizable political strategies. But perhaps the insistence on recollection

can, at least in the societies in question, halt the possibility of continuing perpetration.

Thus, the genocide in Rwanda has shown that it is very difficult to speak of prevention of grave human rights violations when we only concentrate on the final stages of the murders, and do not consider the stages leading up to them. The decision to murder a minority that is declared as impossible to integrate is made only at the end of different stages of ideologization, of definition and segregation.

The conceptualization of models of prevention and protection, early recognition and control of systematic politics of violence must therefore start where the focus is on developing group and community rights. Where the concern is with finally developing and implementing alternatives to the national model that declares itself as the general model and which through specific representation considerations is only conceivable as a homogenous structure and deems everything else as a non-transparent zone and a danger. Not least, prevention cannot be conceived of without the requirement that the international community must finally recognize the voice of the victim: as the witness of persecution as well as the voice of a right to one's own accepted position, an accepted political place in the world society.

Translated into English by Sarah Mannion MA (Cantab)

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