



GENDERCIDE AND GENOCIDE

EDITED BY ADAM JONES

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Editor's Preface

In the conclusion to my article “Gendercide and Genocide,” published in June 2000 in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (Taylor and Francis), I expressed the hope that “other scholars in various disciplines will be prepared to explore” the gendercide framework, and suggested that “there will be much to learn from their contributions.” I hardly anticipated that such a scholarly engagement would follow so rapidly, and in such a wide-ranging fashion. Dr. Henry Huttenbach, editor of the *JGR*, offered me the opportunity to prepare a special issue focusing on the theme of gender and genocide, with contributions from an international set of scholars from various disciplines. This was published in March 2002. I extend my deepest thanks to Dr. Huttenbach for his willingness to devote an entire issue to the gendercide theme, and for giving me the opportunity to prepare it.¹

This volume includes nearly all the recently published scholarly materials on gendercide—all seven essays published in the special issue of the *JGR* (some with minor modifications and updates), together with four others: my original “Gendercide and Genocide” piece; Augusta C. Del Zotto’s treatment of black male gendercide in the United States; R. Charli Carpenter’s essay “Beyond ‘Gendercide’”; and the closing chapter, Terrell Carver’s “Men and Masculinities in Gendercide/Genocide.”² I believe this book represents an important step forward in our understanding of the importance of gender in cases of genocide and mass killing, including institutionalized and “structural” mass killing.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this collection is the diversity of disciplines and pursuits represented: psychology (Lindner), sociology (Holter), sociology/social psychology (Stein), human rights activism (Buchanan), environmental/queer studies (Rixecker), political theory (Carver), and international relations (Carpenter, Del Zotto, Jones). Among the issues raised for consideration and further research are the following:

- Does the gender “lens,” inclusively applied, help us to understand the dynamics of genocide, and of particular genocides? In my chapter on the Rwandan genocide, I contend that “gendering” the

holocaust is in fact indispensable to understanding the social and structural background to the crisis of 1994; the planning and propaganda of the *génocidaires*; the course of the genocide itself; and the social and demographic quandaries of postgenocide Rwandan society. In some respects, the Rwandan case is unusual or exceptional, and the gender variable may be more muted in many other instances of genocide. On the other hand, it may be even more profoundly salient (for example, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia in 1965 and 1966, the Congo “rubber terror,” and the Nazi slaughter of Soviet prisoners of war).³

- Which conflicts, societal settings, and framings of masculinity tend to be most closely associated with gendercidal atrocities? In “Gendercide and Genocide,” I proposed a link between “patriarchal” societies and gendercide. Three contributors to this volume expand fruitfully on this line of inquiry. Evelin Lindner suggests a focus on “honor” versus “human rights” societies, indicating that the former, in their construction of both masculine and feminine gender, may bolster gendercidal trends. Øystein Holter, in “A Theory of Gendercide,” points to how different stages of genocidal and gendercidal build-up tend to be fueled by particularly murderous, and highly manipulated, gender constructions. He also ties these constructions to deeper “background” transformations in economy and society, in a way that I find very suggestive. Finally, Terrell Carver, in the chapter that closes this volume, expands on concepts of gender and their utility for inquiries into genocide, basing his analysis on the rich literature produced by both feminist scholarship and studies of men and masculinities.
- Can the concept of “gendercide” usefully cover institutionalized discrimination of the type experienced by African Americans in the United States, as Augusta C. Del Zotto contends?⁴ If so, one wonders whether elements of the African American male experience also feature in the treatment of minority males in other parts of the world. Parallel arguments might be made for women’s experiences of discrimination in the Third World. The project that I co-launched early in 2000, Gendercide Watch (www.gendercide.org), includes a case study of maternal mortality—a plague that takes the lives of some 600,000 women annually,

according to UN estimates.⁵ In that case study, I argue that governments' refusal to provide adequate prenatal and postnatal care renders them complicit in—indeed, the direct agents of—gendercide.

- Are gendercidal trends and potentials an issue that ethicists and other concerned individuals should be attuned to in evaluating the new biomedical technologies? Stefanie Rixecker presents a strong argument for the possible significance of these technologies in campaigns against bearers of different and dissident sexualities. Her analysis also serves as a reminder that “gender” cannot be equated simply with biological sex. The role constructions and systemic constraints experienced by those gendered “queer,” for example, may expose them, no less than those targeted as “embodied” women and men, to gendercidal attack. (Definitions of sex and gender, and debates over whether it is legitimate to conflate the two for certain analytical purposes, also feature in the contributions by Stein, Carpenter, and Carver.)
- Of what relevance might the gendercide framing be to human rights activism? David Buchanan finds the theory a valuable tool in analyzing gender-selective atrocities, and—in particular—in carving out a place in the analysis for male-selective victimization. (A. C. Del Zotto’s chapter echoes a number of these claims.) The subject, Buchanan asserts, has been skated over or ignored by most human rights authorities, to the point that “outrageously” discriminatory legislation can be entrenched even by an avowedly progressive body like the International Labor Organization. One wonders, again, whether these arguments can legitimately be extended to the more diffuse and decentralized forms of victimization that women suffer—such as female infanticide and maternal mortality. Similar questions might be posed vis-à-vis institutions that are at times gendercidal in their impact upon males—military conscription, *corvée* labor, and incarceration prime among them.⁶
- Does the prominence of the gender variable in some instances of mass killing warrant the deployment of the term “gendercide”? Stuart Stein, in “Geno and Other Cides,” and Charli Carpenter in “Beyond ‘Gendercide,’” express doubt on this point. Their chapters make an enormously useful—even seminal—contribution to

situating the gender-and-genocide debate within the field of genocide studies as a whole. But Stein and Carpenter also provide a forceful critique of the assumptions and stated implications of my gendercide thesis. In my “Problems of Gendercide” chapter, I try to give these two contributions the sustained response that they merit.

I thank all the authors whose work is assembled here. I have indeed learned much from their efforts and hope that other readers will emerge similarly challenged and enlightened. I also thank editor Michael Ames, who oversaw preparation of this volume for Vanderbilt University Press, and the renowned scholar of men and masculinities, Michael S. Kimmel, who offered both moral support and practical assistance in getting *Gendercide and Genocide* published. Lastly, I am grateful to Dariel Mayer of Vanderbilt for her diligent production assistance; Bobbe Needham for her wonderfully rigorous copy editing; and Vancouver artist Miriam Tratt for her haunting cover graphic.

Adam Jones

Notes

1. I am grateful as well to Assia Nakova for her diligent production assistance.

2. My chapter “Problems of Gendercide” is more substantially reworked, incorporating sections of a “Response to Carpenter” as published in the *International Journal of Human Rights*, 7: 1 (spring 2003), pp. 141–47.

3. For case-study treatments of the “gendering” of all these genocides, see the Gendercide Watch website, www.gendercide.org.

4. The mechanism of “quasi-morticide” proposed by Jawanza Kunjufu and cited by Del Zotto invites an even more probing question: Can self-destructive behavior that is the product of systematic discrimination also be considered gendercidal? If so, the phenomenon might usefully be linked to the analysis of suicidal behavior by both women and men in Evelin Lindner’s fascinating contribution.

5. For the full text of the maternal mortality case study, see www.gendercide.org/case_maternal.html.

6. These institutions receive case-study treatment on the Gendercide Watch site.