

## International seminar Collective violence and Genocide Iberoasia

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Abstract:

The 7th edition of the *International Seminar on Collective Violence and Genocide* will center its attention on Asia during the Early Modern Era, particularly examining its relationship with the Iberian empires. This seminar aims to delve not only into the instances of extreme violence but also to explore the sustained, albeit lower intensity, violence, often referred to as "slow violence." Such violence has had far-reaching consequences that extend into the modern era, whether through its enduring impacts or the resurgence of violence stemming from unresolved conflicts.

In the last decade, an important transformation of violence and extreme violence studies applied to Early Modern violence has taken place. If in 2014 Ben Kiernan had to, explicitly, defend the possibility of genocide as subject of study for the Early Modern period<sup>1</sup>, in the early 2020s we are facing a consolidation of a research area through the publication of reference works that, partly, consolidate the historical dimension of genocide processes and, on the other hand, creates a specialized bibliography on extreme violence and genocide in the Early Modern period that does not import directly the concepts and methodologies of other disciplines and chronologies, or generates a teleology of atrocities that ends in the present. On the contrary, it defines, explains, and develops itself from the study of the specificities of Early Modern societies themselves<sup>2</sup>. Finally, we are facing a blooming phase where a great effort to carry out compared and connected analysis of study cases is being made, with an important theorizing effort<sup>3</sup>, going from mere juxtaposition of study cases to the construction of a consistent compared methodology that allows overcoming limitations derived from moralisms, anachronisms, and self-absorbed particularisms, to problematize the recurrent elements in different study cases, and even rethink concepts such as violence, extreme violence and genocide to understand Early Modern and Modern destructive processes.<sup>4</sup> A key element of analysis for this paradigm shift is the violence derived from imperial and

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<sup>1</sup> Kiernan, Ben, "Is 'Genocide' an Anachronistic Concept for the Study of Early Modern Mass Killing?" *History* 99, n.º 336 (2014), pp. 530-48.

<sup>2</sup> Carroll, Stuart, and Caroline Dodds Pennock, eds., *The Cambridge World History of Violence*, vol. 3, 1500-1800 CE, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020; Erica Charters, Marie Houlemare, Peter H. A Wilson, *A Global History of Early Modern Violence*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Una buena aproximación en Philip Dwyer, "Violence and its histories: meaning, methods, problems y Joy Damousi, "Theorizing histories of violence", *History and Theory*, 55, 7-22 (2017)

<sup>4</sup> Dwyer, Philip y Joy Admoussi, eds. generales, *The Cambridge World history of violence*, 4 vols., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020; Dirk A. Moses, *The problems of Genocide: permanent security and the language of transgression*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021.

colonial expansions and the destruction, intentional or unexpected, that they caused the Early Modern period.<sup>5</sup> We understand how part of the evolution of the Early Modern period is linked to the growing interconnection between Europe and the rest of the world. However, we must challenge the traditional interpretation whereby Europeans export their extreme violence on less violent populations, or that the differences in the exercise of violence between Europe and the rest of the world serves as an alibi for resorting to violence. Our point of departure is that the relation between global interconnection and increase of violence is since, with greater contact between societies, or the multiplication of cross-cultural and intercultural contexts, not only the possibilities of conflict multiply, but that incomprehension of messages passed through violence increases, which leads to violence becoming extreme.<sup>6</sup>

This seminar is part of a series of encounters developed in the framework of the «En los límites de la violencia (III): la violencia lenta de los imperios modernos» (PID2021-122319NB-C22) Spanish National I+D Research Project, financed by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and University.

The seminar series also aims to expand the variety of actors studied. The development of centralizing states during the Early Modern period, not only in Europe, is considered a key element in the evolution of Early Modern violence, because of their capacity to mobilize resources and their willingness to use large-scale violence. However, the most recent bibliography compensates for the weight traditionally granted to the state, highlighting the key role of other stakeholders and perspective to understand the evolution of violence in the Early Modern period. The convergence of history of the war, history of violence and genocide studies also connects with the stress in long-lasting social, economic, cultural, political and environmental processes in which Early Modern extreme violence is part of, and to which it gives a meaning. Thus, the relevance of the genocide by attrition approach proposed by Helen Fein and developed later by Sheri Rosenberg and Everita Silina that implies the medium-term destruction of group through forced displacements, sexual violence or provoked famine, among others.<sup>7</sup> This allows

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<sup>5</sup> Gary Clayton Anderson, *Ethnic cleansing and the Indian. The crime that should haunt America*, Norman, University of Oklahoma press, 2014; Andrew Woolford, Jeff Benvenuto y Alex aban Hinton, eds., *Colonial genocide in indigenous North America*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2014; Eitan Ginzberg, *The destruction of the indigenous peoples of Hispano-America: a genocidal encounter* (Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 2018); Sebastian Alioto, Juan Francisco Jiménez and Daniel Villar (dirs.), *Devastación: violencia civilizada contra los indios de las llanuras del Plata y del sur de Chile (siglos XVI a XIX)*, Rosario, Prohistoria, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Jill Lepore, *The name of war: King Philip's war and the origins of American identity*, Nueva York, Vintage, 1998; Andrew Lipman, "A meanes to knitt them together': the Exchange of body parts in the Pequot war", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 65:1, 3-28 (2008); Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater frontier: Indians and the contest for the American coast*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2015; Anke Fischer-Kattner, James Ostwald, eds., *The world of the Siege: representations of early modern positional warfare*, Leiden, Brill, 2019; Rosanne M. Baars, *Rumours of revolt: Civil war and the emergence of a transnational news culture in France and the Netherlands, 1561-1598*, Leiden, Brill, 2021; Jérémie Foa, *Tous ceux qui tombent: visages du massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy*, Paris, La Découverte, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Helen Fein, «Genocide by attrition 1939-1993 The Warsaw Ghetto, Cambodia, and Sudan: Links between human rights, health, and mass death». *Health and Human Rights* 2, n.o 2 (1997): 10-45; Sheri P. Rosenberg, «Genocide Is a Process, Not an Event». *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 7, n.o 1 (2012): 16-23; Rosenberg, Sheri P., y Everita Silina. «Genocide by attrition:

us to link the study of extreme violence to processes of slow violence, extending the environmental sense originally proposed by Rob Nixon, to include the “long emergency” of converging problems proposed by James Kunstler and David Orr<sup>8</sup> and applied to imperial and colonial contexts, as Pauline Wakeham recently advised.<sup>9</sup>

The general idea of this edition is of the seminar, is to analyze (extreme) violence in Early Modern Asia, with a special focus on the areas in/or events in which Portuguese and Spaniards were involved either directly, or indirectly through comparisons/connections.

In the broader frame of the project, the objective of the seminar is to advance in two connected directions. A first one composed by, on the one hand, the common processed of slow violence imposed by Early Modern imperialism and, on the other, the long emergency established in local societies on which it was exercised. The second dimension covers the form in which that violence informs the configuration of the new societies emerging from it, both in the processed of legal, economic, and social reconstruction and in its political, theological, or legal justification. The final aim is to understand the broader, slower, long-term violence in those spaces and its long-term consequences that inform the challenges facing our world today.

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Silent and efficient», en, Joyce Apsel y Ernesto Verdeja (eds.), *Genocide Matters: Ongoing Issues and Emerging Perspectives*, New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 106-26.

<sup>8</sup> James Howard Kunstler, *The long emergency: surviving the converging catastrophes of the twenty-first century*, Nueva York, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005; David W. Orr, *Dangerous Years: Climate Change, the Long Emergency, and the Way Forward*, New Haven London: Yale University Press, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Pauline Wakeham, «The Slow Violence of Settler Colonialism: Genocide, Attrition, and the Long Emergency of Invasion». *Journal of Genocide Research*, disponible online el 15 de marzo de 2021, 1-20.