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Editors' Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

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In the last issue (10.2) GSP introduced a new *State of the Field* section aimed at providing practitioners and researchers in fields related to genocide studies to share their ongoing work projects with GSP's readership. This new section will supplement other new formats in order to enrich scholarship and discussion around issues of the study and prevention of genocide and mass atrocity. One such new format is that of *Case Notes*, which consist of updates on legal case law developments relevant to these issues. Under this heading GSP will publish brief commentaries on mass atrocity related court cases. It is our hope that this section will spur debate about such cases, in a format that is accessible to legal and non-legal scholars alike. The first such contribution, provided by Stoyan Panov, appears in this issue and discusses the 2015 European Court of Human Rights case of *Vasiliauskas v. Lithuania*, in which the Grand Chamber considered whether the petitioner's genocide conviction in Lithuania pursuant to the country's 1998 genocide law violated the ban on retroactive criminal punishment set out in Article 7 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). While the Chamber found that there was a sufficiently clear legal basis for the general existence of genocide as an international crime by 1953, it nonetheless found that Lithuania's 1998 definition of the crime of genocide was considerably broader in terms of the scope of acts covered and as such, decided in favour of Vasiliauskas by nine to eight votes that there was a violation of Article 7 of the ECHR.

The current issue also contains four full articles. In "Spatiality of the Stages of Genocide: The Armenian Case," Shelley Burleson and Alberto Giordano shed new light on the Armenian Genocide by applying a historical geographical information systems (HGIS) approach to analyzing information contained in the well-known manuscript compiled by journalist Haigazn Kazarian during and shortly after the Genocide itself. By applying quantitative geographical approaches to a qualitative manuscript, Burleson and Giordano are able to take a first step towards bridging the quantitative-versus-qualitative divide within genocide studies, while providing mapped visualizations of the various stages of the Armenian Genocide according to Kazarian's observations.

The second full article in this issue also concerns the Armenian Genocide. That the author of "My Grandmother was an Armenian... Out of the Shadows: Integrating the Personal Narratives of Armenian and Rum Survivors of Violent Turkification to History Writing" decided to publish under a pseudonym is, in itself a strong statement regarding the political atmosphere in nationalistic states. Unfortunately, it seems that such notions are on the rise again throughout geographical spheres and political systems. In this article, the author draws from personal narratives in order to address a desideratum in the research of mass violence: the violent acculturation of individuals belonging to persecuted groups. The author focuses further on the role of literary accounts in these practises, producing insights which may be used in research and memory work at the same time.

In "Punishing Genocide: A Comparative Empirical Analysis of Sentencing Laws and Practices at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), Rwandan Domestic Courts and Gacaca Courts," Barbora Hola and Hollie Nyseth Brehm provide the first comparison of sentencing practices across all three different levels—international, domestic, and local—that prosecuted individuals suspected of participating in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. By visiting court archives in Rwanda, Hola and Brehm create a first systematic look at the sentencing practices of domestic Rwandan courts in relation to the Genocide. Their analysis demonstrates that sentencing varied across the three levels—ranging from limited time in prison to death sentences, and that sentencing at the domestic courts appears to have been comparatively more serious than sentencing at the ICTR and at the Gacaca courts, calling into question the consistency of sentences across levels of justice in the aftermath of mass atrocity.

The final full article in this issue also focuses on Rwanda. Using Rwanda as a case study, Kate Temoney argues that genocide studies may focus more on what she refers to as the religious and sexual aspects of such processes. She analyses religion not only as part of persecution processes but also explores how religious institutions and the individuals connected to them may be useful in the context of early warning systems. Temoney stresses that genocide studies and therefore the scholars in the field should focus most attentively on research—be it of theoretical nature or empirical—that helps to actually prevent genocide. This argument coincides with thoughts of

Kenneth Gergen who suggests reorganizing social scientific inquiry in a way that “social change is indeed the primary goal.”

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