



Call for abstracts

Critique is a gift – A workshop on challenges to genocide research

Genocide research is an internationally recognised field of research. It is established through organisations, journals, research institutions, and degree programmes. These are very welcome developments. Simultaneously, this boom brings several challenges, mainly of methodological, epistemological, and theoretical nature.

There is for instance a lack of reflection on narrative logic and strategies for producing evidence. One example is the widespread combination of *statement* and *reference*. A reference to a study without critically discussing and classifying it is no proof of the statement's validity. The question is how facts, reasons, explanations, connections, conclusions, arguments are produced narratively.

Explaining phenomena as complex as genocides makes it necessary to consider knowledge from many fields and disciplines. However, authors do not always succeed in sufficiently contextualising empirical and theoretical work from other disciplines. This concerns aspects such as epistemology, validity and reach, genesis, and critique. Consequently, such works are often presented in a simplified manner and contracted to such a degree that their meaning is distorted. This applies in particular to classical studies in various psychological disciplines. In addition, complex concepts like identity, action, social role, or practice are not always discussed with the appropriate theoretical rigor and knowledge.

There are many closely interwoven problems regarding methods and methodology. We for instance observe a lack of in-depth discussions regarding the use of translators (nor are they credited adequately for their work) and translations. This lack also can go hand in hand with a superficial familiarity with the region under study. Interpretations based on such material and knowledge are correspondingly shaky. Studies in the field also lack culture-sensitive methodologies, theories, and epistemologies. Examples are different ways to narratively

construct the self (identity) or explain action and define groups. We furthermore observe a lack of transparency. Data is often insufficiently documented. Transcripts are generally not made available and there is a need for curated databases in which research material is systematically collected and made available to researchers. Lastly, many advanced empirical and theoretical approaches published in other languages than English are not known in the community. Therefore, ideas, initiatives, and funding are needed to circulate such knowledge.

Despite the fact that these and other challenges affect the core of our research they do receive relatively little attention. Moreover, the scholarly contributions that do touch upon these challenges remain scattered across journals, books and blogs and a coherent effort seems to be lacking.

To address these issues an online workshop will be organized on **September 30th 2021** by Christian Gudehus of the *Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict of Ruhr-Universität Bochum* and Roland Moerland of the *Maastricht Centre for Human Rights of Maastricht University*. We invite colleagues to contribute to the workshop and we welcome submissions on the abovementioned, but also other relevant challenges in genocide research. Abstracts should be no more than 600 words long and include a presentation title as well as 3 – 5 keywords, and a short bio.

Abstracts can be submitted via email to
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until **July 15th, 2021**.

The contributions to the workshop will be published in an edited volume.