What is 'international' about genocide? The apparently simple answer to this question is that genocide was internationally constituted in legal and political terms in 1948, when the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Long before then, of course, violence targeted against civilian populations, in order to destroy particular societies, was seen as a violation of international norms, as demonstrated by concern over the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915. Indeed knowledge of this enormous episode of policy-driven mass death lay behind Raphael Lemkin's first (1933) attempt to define the general class of anti-population violence which he called 'barbarity' as an international crime. Later Lemkin (1944) coined the definitive term 'genocide' to describe such events, and his campaigning efforts led to the Convention. The criminalisation of genocide reflected a postwar consensus among the Allied powers that the type of crime committed by their erstwhile enemies should be forever outlawed. As the Cold War developed, the new legal framework mostly fell into abeyance, but the idea of genocide developed wide resonance, stimulated by new atrocities as well as the growing recognition of the genocide against the Jews as 'the Holocaust'. Thus by the time the Cold War ended, an interdisciplinary field of 'genocide studies' was beginning to emerge, and in the post-Cold War era, new episodes of anti-group violence led to first extensive applications of international law in the work of the International Tribunals, as well as to a vast expansion of Holocaust and wider genocide research.

A larger answer to the above question is therefore that genocide is also part of a much more complex set of international trends, military, political and cultural as well as legal. The politics of former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Darfur and other recent cases have had a profound influence on the international perception of genocide in general. However the 'social construction' of 'the Holocaust' as a 'sacred-evil' event over the last half-century (Alexander, 2002) - and with it the politics of the Israel-Palestine conflict (Alexander, 2009) – have also had a crucial bearing. Thus genocide scholarship has developed in highly-charged political and cultural contexts. On the one hand, this has led to a widespread phenomenon of more or less overtly politicised research, as various nationalist politics of victimisation influence research agendas and the activities of scholarly organisations (Moses, 2010). On the other, complex contextual influences have structured research trends in particular ways. I therefore argue in this article that most genocide research is predicated on assumptions - influenced by perceptions of both historical perpetrator-regimes and by the contemporary politics of genocide - which narrow the framework of research and mitigate against an appropriately broad international understanding. In the first two parts I outline some of these constraints, first in general, and then how they are reflected in
existing International Relations scholarship. In the final part I propose an alternative approach, centred on international historical sociology, illustrated through analysis of the pivotal Second World War period. In conclusion I suggest how this may provide a starting point for analysing contemporary genocidal situations.

1. Domestic context and comparative method in genocide research

Because genocide is deeply associated in our historical imaginations with Nazism and by extension with totalitarianism, it is widely regarded as a problem of ‘evil’ leaders (Slobodan Milosevic, Saddam Hussein, etc.) and 'bad' regimes. It is seen as a phenomenon produced in domestic politics and society, which becomes of international significance because it offends against the Convention and demands international response. This assumption is reflected most clearly in influential explicit claims for the domestic character of major genocides. Thus the political scientist Robert Melson refers to 'total domestic genocides like the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, including the extermination of the Gypsies, ... the destruction of the Kulaks and the Cambodian "autogenocide".' (Melson, 1992: 18). Christian Scherrer (1999) also distinguishes 'foreign' and 'domestic' genocides – putting the Holocaust in the 'domestic' category – while René Lemarchand (2002:501) remarks that both Jews and Rwandan Tutsis 'have been the target of a "total domestic genocide",' to use Melson's phrase.

The simplest reflection on these episodes makes it clear that 'domestic' characterisations cannot be sustained. Armenians resided in areas across the borders of the Ottoman and Russian empires, and their implication in the international conflict between the two states in the First World War was the catalyst for their destruction by the Ottomans. This genocide was the conclusion of a series of complex international and intermittently genocidal conflicts between the Ottomans and the emergent national-states of south-eastern Europe, which in turn involved other major empires in what Donald Bloxham (2007) has aptly called ‘the great game of genocide’. The Nazis, far from targeting mainly German Jews (who comprised fewer than one in twenty of Jewish victims), attacked the Jews of an entire continent conquered through aggressive international war ( Longerich, 2010); likewise their Roma and Sinti victims were collected from across their new empire. The Cambodian genocide was an outcome of the Khmer Rouge’s wars with both the USA and the Vietnamese Communists, and far from being targeted simply at other Khmer (as the misleading term ‘autogenocide’ suggests), was directed disproportionately at ethnic Vietnamese who, like the Armenians, were linked to an international enemy (Kiernan 1996). From Melson's list only the destruction of the kulaks could even superficially be considered domestic in both scope and genesis, but a full explanation would need to include the international origins of Stalinism and forced industrialisation in internationalised civil war and how militarism, international rivalry and perceived threats helped shape Stalin’s ideology and policies. Finally the Rwandan genocide was in significant part a response to the invasion from Uganda by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, to the threat which this posed to the Rwandan state and the fears which it aroused (Straus, 2006).

'Domestic' categorisations reveal a mindset in which genocide is regarded as a simple pattern of violence by a single 'perpetrator'-state or -regime against a singular 'victim' population group. In such a perspective, international actors are 'bystanders' (observers or at most secondary interveners) in essentially domestic relations. Insofar as genocides belong to structural contexts, they are those of particular states. Of course despite such 'domestic' claims, many scholars actually treat the production of genocide at least partially in international contexts - which are indeed difficult to avoid in the rounded historical treatment of almost any episode. Indeed
Melson (1992) himself argued that when international and civil wars occur together, there is the strongest chance of the onset of genocide - an argument which is among the most relevant claims for the international production of genocide (Krain, 1997: 348). Yet the ‘domestic’ mindset remains influential in the field, and is embedded in the dominant methodological assumption that genocide consists of a series of discrete cases which must then be compared. Indeed the interdisciplinary field of ‘genocide studies’, which has developed in the last two decades and to which historians, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and legal scholars are the main contributors, has been widely defined as a field of comparative study (Scherrer, 1999). The necessity of comparison, which might otherwise be seen as normal in historical and social-scientific research, is seen as a hard-won gain over the idea of Holocaust ‘uniqueness’ (Huttenbach, 2009), with each additional ‘genocide’ having to be painstakingly added to the canon, often after political campaigning as well as scholarship. The recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide as comparable to the Holocaust, pursued both by historians (Hovanissian, 1987, Dadrian, 2001) and campaigners, is a model which advocates of recognising other genocides have followed.

Modern genocide research is effectively a variant, therefore, of comparative politics and sociology, whose methodology assumes that the causes of each particular genocide should be sought in its specific (primarily domestic) context, and whose genocidal characteristics should be established by comparison with established cases. Thus almost all the major synthetic works - from Chalk and Jonahsson's (1990) pathbreaking survey to what Straus (2007) describes as the ‘second wave’ of genocide research – in which he includes Weitz, 2003, Valentino, 2004, Levene, 2005a and b, Mann, 2005, Midlarsky, 2005 and Séminel, 2007 – follow this approach. They deal with a small number of major genocides as discrete phenomena, treated successively and compared across their discrete situations but without systematically drawing connections between them. Thus the literature is more interested in transhistorical comparisons between these cases than in historical connections, prioritising domestic and local environments rather than international contexts. For example, one can find many comparisons between the Holocaust and Rwanda (Lemarchand 2002, Miles 2003, Séminel 2007), but fewer systematic discussions of the connections between Nazi policies and those of other states, including the Soviet Union, the Western Allies and the various eastern European states allied to all of these, in the specific context of the Second World War; or of the connections between what happened in Rwanda in 1994 and preceding genocidal violence in Burundi and Uganda, or the succeeding violence in the Congo. Yet prima facie these two different ‘international’ contexts have at least as much to tell us about the Holocaust and Rwanda respectively as do any comparisons between them.

The bias towards transhistorical comparison reflects the historical origins of the genocide idea in the specific case of the Nazi genocide and the disciplinary origins of modern genocide studies in sociological works like those of Horowitz (1979), Fein (1991) and Chalk and Jonahsson (1990). Yet the limiting consequences of the ‘comparative’ definition have been seen most clearly in the ‘second wave’ which Straus identified. Genocide, it is widely assumed, concerns a relatively small number of large, isolated, exceptional, almost totally murderous episodes, which Levene (2005a: 163) calls ‘mega-genocides’. Thus Straus can assert (2007: 479) a consensus that ‘[g]enocide is a rare event’. However the consequence of this approach is that episodes of group destruction which are smaller in scale or less murderous, like some of those perpetrated by Germany’s wartime allies, or like events in Burundi and the Congo, are
marginalised. Moreover since genocides are normally defined as concerning relations between a single perpetrator centre and a single victim group, complex alliances between state and non-state perpetrators and multiple targeting of a range of victims receive less attention (Gerlach, 2006, Gomez-Suarez, 2007). Thus major episodes are reified as ‘the Holocaust’, ‘the Armenian Genocide’, etc., a process which gels with – even when not motivated by – the political agendas of the representatives of major victim-groups. These assumptions have so little fit with the complex, messy realities of anti-population violence in most cases that Christian Gerlach (2006) has proposed abandoning the ‘genocide’ concept altogether, in favour of the idea of ‘extremely violent societies’. Moreover the definition of genocide studies through a few major, ‘domestic’ cases and their comparative study has been associated with other theoretically problematic tendencies. Straus’s survey concludes (2007: 478-79) that there remains little agreement on the scope of genocide, the universe of cases, or the appropriate explanatory model. Since its emergence as a distinctive field in the early 1990s, genocide research has never escaped from its definitional quandary. Although some scholars use the Genocide Convention’s legal definition as a matter of convenience (as well as because of its operative significance in international legal and political relations), it has been argued that it is deficient in at least two major respects. First, its specification of the targets of genocide as ‘ethnical, national, racial and religious’ groups is too restrictive, and should be remedied either by adding additional categories (e.g. political groups, social classes) or by a generic definition in terms of all ‘permanent social groups’ (Fein, 1990), ‘civilian groups’ (Shaw, 2007) or of groups ‘as defined by the perpetrators’ (Chalk and Jonahsson, 1990: 23). Second, its specification of five means of genocide is seen as too broad by scholars who wish to redefine genocide simply as ‘mass murder’ (Chalk and Jonahsson, 1990, Charny, 1991). The comparative study of ‘mega-genocides’ tends to be associated with this narrower specification of means, and several recent comparative and single-case studies (Midlarsky, 2005, Straus, 2006, Sémelin, 2007) have expressed this tendency. Corresponding to the narrow specification of the means of genocide, scholars have proliferated new concepts for the broader-based social destruction which is now excluded from the scope of genocide. On the one hand, many have adopted the Serbian-inspired ‘ethnic cleansing’ euphemism as historical or social-scientific category (Bell-Fialkoff 1996, Naimark 2004, Mann 2005). On the other, scholars have invented new, mostly further ‘-cide’ terms (ethnicide, politicide, gendercide, etc.: for a survey see Shaw, 2007, 63-80).

A related problem is that the literature places excessive emphasis on the subjectivity of the perpetrators. Genocide obviously involves action, and therefore the ideas and objectives (in genocide-speak, ‘intentions’) of the collective and individual actors who carry it out are a necessary starting-point for understanding. However an actor-based definition centred on the ‘intent’ of the perpetrators, while unavoidable in international criminal law, is not sufficient for the explanatory purposes of social science, for which social relations and context are more important. The general narratives of genocide to which comparative research leads vary considerably between authors, but owing to the prevailing actor-centric focus too many privilege ideology and/or social-psychological mechanisms (e.g. Weitz, 2005, and Sémelin, 2007), which reinforces a focus on a specific leader and movement rather than on context and political relationships. Even Mann’s account (2005), emphasising the rise of the democracy and the nation-state, is still centred on the ideological mechanism which converts ‘people’ into ‘nation’ and hence motivates exclusion.
The problem with genocide studies is not only, therefore, the systematic neglect and underestimation of its international dimensions. The latter are parts of the larger weaknesses of the field, and so this article proposes a broad and deep reorientation. It draws on the work which sees the Convention not as too broad, but too narrow in its specification of means, and returns to Lemkin’s (1944) concept of genocide as multi-faceted social destruction, including social and cultural as well as physical and biological destruction (Shaw, 2007, Curthoys and Docker, 2008). It assumes that genocide, even considered as the action of the perpetrators, is necessarily social, not only in that it always involves social relations among different perpetrators, but also in the sense of creating, and indeed being predicated on, perpetrators’ relations – however unequal – with the attacked population or civilian social groups. Since some of these relations are continuous and reproduced, we can talk about the social relationships of genocide and of structures in these relationships, i.e. of genocide as a particular structure of conflict. Even following Weber’s methodology, verstehen can only be a starting point (Shaw, 2007: 89-90); we need to move from the subjectivity of the perpetrators to the structures of genocide.

Moreover, we need to understand the linkages between structures of genocide and other social structural contexts. Since genocide, even if not rare, is not universally present in societies, the presumption must be that we need to understand genocide’s relationships to more fundamental, permanent structures, for example those of socio-economic, cultural-ideological, political and military power. Mann (2005) has argued that ‘murderous cleansing’ (in my terms, genocide) is primarily, that is most directly, generated in political, including geopolitical, contexts. However genocide generally develops where political relations become armed or violent, i.e. where political power also involves military power. In terms of Mann’s fourfold typology of the ‘sources of social power’, genocide belongs not simply in the political arena but in the interface between political and military power. Here we are beginning to approach the ‘international relations’ of genocide, since although war is not necessarily international in form or genesis, most of the biggest wars are interstate, many genocides occur in these and other international or part-international wars, and many or most civil wars have international dimensions and causes. But first we must consider existing ‘international’ tendencies in genocide research, both within International Relations and political science, and in the wider (mainly historical) genocide literature.

2. International relations and genocide research
Political scientists and IR scholars have partially transcended these wider limitations of genocide studies, but they have also exemplified them. Much IR literature has explored the responses of the great powers, above all the USA, and the UN to genocide, particularly in the debate on ‘humanitarian intervention’. As Michael Desch (2006: 108) points out, ‘it is an article of faith among American elites that the United States has a moral responsibility to shut down virtually any mass political violence, but especially to stop genocides in the making.’ Although Samantha Power’s (2002) historical critique suggests that mostly it has failed in this task, Desch (2006), David Hoogland Noon (2004) and Jeffrey Record (2005) have shown that ‘genocide’ analogies have a powerful rhetorical function for US policy-makers: for example, President George W. Bush justified ‘Operation Iraqi Freedom’ by the fact that in ‘the 20th century, some chose to appease murderous dictators, whose threats were allowed to grow into genocide and global war.’ (Quoted by Record, 2005: 17) Yet such policy-making by analogy in general, and through the Holocaust analogy in particular, is highly flawed (Desch 2006).
Kevin MacDonald (2009) has shown in a wider survey, how violence comes to be represented as genocide is a complex and contested process with powerful implications for international politics.

The 'humanitarian intervention' literature did not initially identify genocide, however, as the specific prompt or even a necessary condition for intervention. For example, Nicholas Wheeler's survey (2000) saw only one (Rwanda) out of seven cases of humanitarian intervention as raising questions of genocide. Indeed even Rwanda was not immediately analysed in genocide terms. One of the best IR books on genocide is Michael Barnett's *Eye-Witness to a Genocide* (2002), about his secondment to the UN during the crisis: only afterwards did he realise fully what they had been dealing with. Barnett's ringside experience may be unusual, but his absorption of the ideological reflexes of the practitioners was typical. Just as political leaders had been reluctant to use the 'g-word', so IR scholars were (and in some cases remain) too willing to use practitioner euphemisms like 'humanitarian crisis' and 'ethnic cleansing' for situations which involved genocide. Rwanda did eventually raise the profile of genocide issues in IR, for example, for example in Alan Kuperman's (2001) critique of the limits of possible intervention in the 1994 genocide. In the most recent normative and policy-oriented developments, notably around Responsibility To Protect, genocide issues are increasingly salient (Bellamy, 2008).

This literature discussed so far shares, however, the assumption that the international relations issues concern *responses to* genocide (including rhetorical uses of the idea), rather than its *production*. Certainly, among authors critical of 'humanitarian intervention', we find arguments that reject this 'production-response' dichotomy: for example, that intervention helps to produce the genocide it is supposed to prevent (Gibbs, 2009), and that genocide is 'provoked' by attempts to bring about intervention (Kuperman and Crawford, 2006). Yet while the former argument leads us to consider the roles of great powers and international organisations in producing genocide, the latter lays particular emphasis on local actors' responsibility, and in this it aligns with older IR discussions of how the phenomenon is produced. Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr's (1988) pioneering analysis, for example, identified forty-four 'genocides and politicides' between 1945 and 1988 (although they classified only six of these as genocides, an attribution which can be questioned in the light of the broader definition advocated above). However they classified these episodes not according to international context, but according to the types of relationships between states and target populations, in line with Harff's (1986) earlier concept of genocide as involving the domestic form of 'state terrorism'. Certainly the types in terms of which they classified the 'genocides' ('hegemonial' and 'xenophobic') indicated relationships that could have international dimensions, but they did not not highlight these. Moreover although they also classified their episodes regionally, they did not analyse the role of regional international relations in their genesis; and while their analysis covered exactly the Cold War period, the Cold War context was in no way problematised (the term does not even occur in the article), although in many of their cases, this context was germane. In this sense, the article is almost a paradigm of the wider problem of genocide studies, the omission of the contexts of international relations from the understanding of episodes.

Subsequent work has certainly introduced 'international' dimensions more explicitly. Matthew Krain 1997: 335), using Harff and Gurr's data, criticised the argument of Rummel (1995) that the focus on the structure of states and the distribution of power within them explained genocide or (Rummel's term) 'democide'. Instead, Krain argued, changes in the political opportunity structure were key to adoption of genocidal or politicidal policies by states,
and 'changes in the international political opportunity structure (often caused by war) have important structural effects on the national political opportunity structure' (Krain, 1997: 330, 331). So while Krain continued to see genocide/politicide as fundamentally a 'national' phenomenon, concluding (1997: 355) that 'civil war involvement is the most consistent predictor of the onset of genocides or politicides', he agreed with Melson (1992) that when international and civil wars occur together, there is the strongest chance of genocide onset (Krain, 1997: 348). Yet the argument that domestic situations are most potent is still asserted: Harff has argued (2003: 57) that 'almost all genocides of the last half-century occurred during or in the immediate aftermath of internal wars, revolutions, and regime collapse.'

The post-Cold War era has seen more wide-ranging comparative work by international scholars. Benjamin Valentino (2005) has argued (consistently with Krain's 'political opportunity structure' case) for seeing 'mass killing' (he eschews a specific genocide focus) as 'strategic' political action. In a wide-ranging survey, Valentino's 'motives/types' (including 'territorial', 'counterguerrilla' and 'imperialist'), and his 'scenarios' (including colonial enlargement, expansionist wars, guerilla wars, terror bombing and imperial conquests and rebellions) much more obviously indicate international relations. Yet Valentino draws no particular attention to the relationships between 'international' and 'domestic' in delineating his types and scenarios, and the central focus of his 'strategic' argument is the implicitly 'domestic' focus on regime-population relations. In common with Harff and Gurr, he sees mass killing as a problem of localised political conflict, and his 'strategic' conception, although enlightening in its own terms, remains centred on perpetrators. Genocidal actors are understood in simplified unified-state terms, and he gives little indication of the messiness of genocidal situations, in which civilians are often not only victims but also participants in violence (for this he is criticised by Kalyvas, in Mueller et al., 2004: 148-50). Another wide-ranging comparative study, by Manus Midlarsky (2005), more explicitly introduces an international (in the sense of interstate) logic to genocide when it highlights 'realpolitik' ('management of threats to the state') and 'loss' ('signals of state vulnerability') as drivers of the 'state insecurity' which produces mass killing, and so 'reverses the understandable tendency to see genocide as mainly a domestic enterprise' (2005: 85). Midlarsky introduces the idea that the 'international context' can be 'critical in either promoting or abetting genocide, or preventing it altogether. ... Events occurring within in a single country are not sufficient for genocide to occur. ... It is the regional or international context that is crucial ...'. (2005: 18) Similar arguments are made by the political sociologist, Jacques Sémelin (2007: 107 -108): 'Too many studies of genocide limit themselves to analysing factors at work inside a country .... This kind of closed-cell analysis is untenable.'

Yet in the body of his study, Midlarsky examines these international contexts only situationally, from the point of view of how they impact on specific genocidal actors; he remains too much within the actor (perpetrator)-centred paradigm of genocide studies. This is true in other ways, too: although he acknowledges that genocide 'is not a one-size-fits-all happening' (2005:18), he focuses mainly on the 'mega-genocides'. Moreover, Midlarsky does not systematically examine 'international contexts' from the point of view of their potential for violence and the ways in which, within such contexts, multiple actors may be involved in related genocidal violence.

Some historiographical work on genocide has recently posed these questions of international context in the production of genocide in a more systematic way. At the centre of these trends is a body of historical work on colonial genocide. Influentially, Dirk Moses (2000) has argued
has that genocide was a structural concomitant of European settler colonialism, leading to serial 'genocidal moments' in Australian history. Giving this approach wider purchase, a series of studies has documented widespread genocidal violence throughout the history of European colonisation in the Americas, Asia and Africa (Moses 2004, 2008, Moses and Stone 2006, Levene 2005b, Kiernan 2007). Genocide has been shown to be (1) associated with the inherently international relationships of colonialisation and imperial expansion, (2) manifested not in a few isolated and exceptional catastrophes ('mega-genocides') but in extensive patterns of violence during colonisation and resistance to it, and (3) implicated in complex state-society relations between settlers and imperial centres - even if Mann (2005: 4) represents the latter point in terms of regime (the link between settler control over local institutions and murderousness 'is the most direct relationship I have found between democratic regimes and mass murder'). This literature also utilises the concept of 'genocidal massacres' – smaller-scale incidents in which local populations belonging to larger groups are targeted – introduced earlier by Leo Kuper (1981: 32); and Moses uses the broader specification of the means of genocide from Lemkin’s original concept. Moreover, in a ‘postcolonial’ move, some have noted that Lemkin defined genocide as an imperial relation, involving the imposition of one national pattern on another (Lemkin 1944: 79). It has also been argued that the Nazi genocide can itself be re-envisioned as project of colonisation in eastern Europe (Zimmerer 2006); this chimes with a trend in the historiography to emphasise the imperial character of the Nazi project (Mazower 2009).

Thus this literature has introduced the idea that there were historical relations across time and space, not just between different colonial episodes, but also between colonial and European genocide. Although attention has focused on the lineage of German militarism and nationalism from the genocide of the Herero and Nama in German South-West Africa in 1905 to the Holocaust (Zimmerer 2009), this has also been seen in the larger international context of European imperialism. Such 'relational' arguments are potentially of much wider significance, and open up the question of whether we might look not just at specific relations between genocides, but at the wider complexes of social and international relations in which these specific connections are embedded. Although some ‘relational’ arguments about genocide refer to national contexts, they also lead to what we may call the ‘international relations of genocide’. Some historians have introduced arguments on the role of international relations, which represent the most developed generalisations on this question to date. Thus Levene locates genocidal continuities in the logic of the competitive international ‘system’ of nation-states – 'The system is itself a root cause of modern genocide ...'. (2005a: 156) – and suggests several ways in which it is causative:

1. 'all modern genocides [are] perpetrated with an eye to the integrity of the state vis-à-vis other competitor states';

3. 'the linkage regularly manifests itself in the way that regimes repeatedly accuse the targeted communal population of being collective agents of outside, extra-state forces whose alleged aim is the undermining of the state's own efforts towards covering up, or rectifying, its international weakness' (Levene, 2005a: 156, emphasis in original); and

5.
6. although 'the system, in principle, has been committed to a repudiation of genocide [in the Genocide Convention] ... [t]he system has colluded with genocide because to do otherwise would have been massively to destabilise the sophistry upon which the system rides: namely that it is a global family of bounded but equally sovereign states.' Levene, 2005a: 158-9)

With his third argument, Levene starts to recognise differences between states within the 'system': 'while ... acts of genocide are mostly committed by states challenging or defying the system ground rules, the system leaders themselves - that is those with the power to respond - have either condoned, or turned a blind eye, or in some cases, even covertly abetted such acts in complete contradiction of their own UNC [United Nations Convention] rhetoric.' (Levene, 2005a: 159) Therefore despite systemic drivers, Levene notes important variations in the 'diversity of political entities' that commit genocide. Moreover, he qualifies his system argument to acknowledge relationships between states and other 'loci of power' (parties, militaries, etc.: genocide is not necessarily committed by states as such); the 'specific contexts' (particularly 'crisis conditions') in which genocide emanates, which include war, state instability and revolution; and variations in political geography (the importance of 'regional clusters' in places like the Great Lakes and Balkans). Nevertheless he proposes 'a broad chronological plot ... geared towards drawing parallels between the emergence and changing contours of the international system and the actual incidence of genocide.' And since both old colonial empires like Britain's and 'radically reformulated entities' like Communist Russia and China have been notable perpetrators, Levene is drawn back to genocide as 'an essential continuity of state geo-strategic policies ... regardless of the radical change of regimes.' (Levene, 2005a: 162)

And yet he wants to insist on 'the dynamics of uneven historical development' (Levene, 2005a: 174), and particularly on a 'three-tier system profile' of relations between core, semi-periphery and periphery (Levene, 2005a: 178). He also argues that 'genocide states are likely to be ones obsessed by their "strong-weak" contradictions, ... [and] whose anxiety on this account are [sic] often unfolded in an "old state-new state" dichotomy or discrepancy.' (Levene, 2005a: 187).

It will be apparent that Levene's argument shifts to and fro between strong generalisations about 'the system' and recognitions of the diversity of genocidal contexts, regimes, etc. His theoretical basis is also eclectic – Anthony Giddens (1985) and Immanuel Wallerstein (1974-89) figure most strongly – and he has not engaged with international theorists' discussions of the 'international system' and related concepts. Moreover although he starts from a determined 'system' perspective, he is heavily drawn back into a focus on the units within the system, and the types of units which are particularly genocide-prone. This suggests that Levene recognises that his strong version of the 'system' argument cannot be sustained: if genocide is a tendency of the modern international system, it clearly doesn't occur consistently across all its periods, regions, units, etc.

Levene's theorising therefore reproduces the tendency of realist IR, echoed in different ways in Giddens' historical sociology and Wallerstein's 'world system' theory, to emphasise the most general 'system' properties of modern international relations. However the idea of a continuous system based on the principle of 'sovereignty', supposed to have originated in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, has been comprehensively critiqued (Teschke 2003). In any case, if the exclusive idea of the 'nation' is central to high-modern genocide – and on this there is a convergence between Levene, Mann and others – its origins are more plausibly linked to French Revolutionary nationalism and the assault on the Vendée in 1794 (Levene, 2005b, 103-
61) than to Westphalia. Moreover, as Levene recognises, an overall account of modern genocide must begin in the rather different contexts of colonial conquest and settlement, linked more obviously to 'empire' and 'race' (Moses, 2002) than to 'nation'. Thus Levene's reversion to actor-type analysis tends to blunt more historically specific system-type questions: what have been the historical tendencies in the forms and incidence of genocide, how have international relations in general changed over time, and what are the relationships between these trends? Theoretically the problem is best encapsulated not by the most abstract 'system' analysis, but by theorising specific types of genocidal context in the context of constantly mutating international politics. A more nuanced historical account of genocide, in the context of twentieth-century international relations, is indeed emerging. Bloxham (2007) has shown the Armenian Genocide of 1915 as the culmination of a regional pattern of international relations in south-eastern Europe, developing from the final quarter of the nineteenth century, in which many actors pursued destructive, exclusive population policies against many 'other' ethnic or national groups. Although he describes only the Armenian case as genocide, his 'great game of genocide' is best understood as involving genocidal policies by multiple actors in the context of complex relations between nationalist movements, local states and great powers. In subsequent work, Bloxham (2008, 2009a, 2009b) has knitted this story into a larger picture of genocidal nationalisms in east-central Europe after 1875. Likewise, Eric Weitz (2008) has stressed the extent to which 'population politics' – centred on the ethnic or national composition of states' populations – developed in the complementary developments of forced deportations and minority protection from the 1860s, and came to constitute the core of the 'Paris international system' after 1918. These contributions offer a more tightly specified version of Levene's argument about the international 'system', but they leave unanswered the general issues which he posed, to which a historical-sociological IR still needs to provide an answer.

Although this article has criticised abstracted 'domestic' and 'comparative' sociological and political science approaches to genocide, it is clear that some kinds of 'international' approach could be just as inadequate. It is necessary to interrogate the meaning of 'international' in the production of genocide. If genocide is a set of violent relations between 'armed power organisations' (often, but not always, states or state institutions) and 'civilian social groups' or populations, clearly it may have both 'domestic' (e.g. Third Reich: German Jews) and/or 'international' (Third Reich: European Jews) manifestations. Moreover the meanings of 'domestic' and 'international' in these situations may be fast-changing: when Melson classified the Holocaust as domestic, he meant that it occurred within the German empire, yet in this expanded realm, the Nazis maintained the distinctiveness of the German core with new distinctions between the Reich itself – into which only a part of occupied Poland was incorporated – and the General Government and other new colonised jurisdictions. These distinctions were very important in the development of their genocide, as Poles, Jews and others were shunted around the new jurisdictions in line with both the Nazis' general conceptions of their roles and the specific policies of local Nazi rulers (Longerich, 2010: 143-78). Evidently, genocide tends to problematise both given international relations and the domestic-international dichotomy; we must be as wary of a simple 'international' as of a purely 'domestic' definition of the problem.

The study of genocide compels us, moreover, to remember that the study of international relations must always attend to two principal meanings of 'international' – as 'interstate' and 'between nations' – and the fact that 'nation' and 'state' do not necessarily coincide even
in so-called ‘nation-states’. So genocide may involve relations between a state, whether or not formally an empire, and subordinate nations, as for example in the Ottomans’ extermination of the Armenians. Although constitutionally this appears as a ‘domestic’ relationship since the Armenian population had long lived under Ottoman rule, the very identification of the Armenians as an enemy was premised on their rulers’ belief that they were not part of the emerging Turkish nation-state, but constituted another, incompatible nation. In this sense genocide, with its declaration of profound and irreconcilable otherness, often presupposes and/or constructs a relationship which is ‘international’ in the antagonistic sense. Thus genocide may be part of the process of reconstructing the ‘domestic’ relations between emergent nations in an old empire as ‘international’ relations between nation-states in a new post-imperial context.

This consideration brings us to an argument that has become very important in debates in both IR and genocide studies: that categories like ‘international’ and ‘domestic’, ‘nation’ and ‘ethnic group’ are not fixed and given, but fluid and constructed. This idea has been particularly difficult in the genocide field. The ‘genocide’ idea emerged from the era of the Second World War in which the principle of nationality was at its strongest in world affairs: in Lemkin’s conception there was little doubt as to the meaning of ‘nation’. The Genocide Convention then inscribed this and related categories (‘ethnic group’, ‘race’, ‘religion’) as though their meanings were fixed and self-evident. Some legal scholars such as William Schabas (2000) still defend this notion and resist a fluid interpretation, let alone replacement, of these categories, although Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn’s (1991: 23) insistence that the target group of genocide is subjectively defined by the perpetrators has been highly influential. Even in international law there has been increasing recognition of the need to understand categories like ethnicity flexibly, and to move partially beyond them, as when the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda argued that the destruction of the Tutsis constituted genocide although they were not an ethnic group in the given sense of the term (Schabas 2000: 131-32). Moreover Moses (2008) and Zimmerer (2006) have insisted, following Lemkin’s own formulation (1944: 79), that genocide, whether conducted in the context of formal colonisation or not, is inherently a ‘colonial’ relationship. The advantage of adopting this terminology is that the ‘colonial’, which in its classical conception is invariably a variant of the international, necessarily suggests inequality and imposition, whereas ‘international’ itself is neutral as to the content of the relations between nations or states, and can be understood in both equal/unequal and cooperative/antagonistic senses.

However it is not evident that a history of colonialism, any more than of international relations in a narrow sense, will inscribe the full range of genocidal experiences, including for example the destruction of religious-, political- and class-defined populations. Genocidists and genocide-victims may not always see themselves as national in character, operating in an international relationship, nor may they see themselves as colonisers and colonised; rather, on either side, other markers of identity may be used. Therefore genocide forces us to think categories like ‘colonial’ and ‘international’ in a broad, open sense. If genocide occurs whenever any organised, armed actor defines a civilian social group or population as an enemy and aims to destroy that group or population, then we need to bear in mind that defining genocide as an inherently colonial or international phenomenon is only a way of encapsulating the ‘othering’ involved. The justification, therefore, for seeing genocide as involving these relationships is, first, that national (and the closely related ethnic) are typical markers which may partially stand for the wider range of experience; but also second, that even class, religious and political targeting is generally framed by international relations in a wider sense.
Thus the case for the generally international construction of genocidal relations, does not concern only, or even mainly, direct relations between 'perpetrator' and 'victim' actors. These, which may sometimes be plausibly represented as 'domestic', are only the most immediate layer of the structuration of genocide. The central argument of this article is that international relations are central for understanding the structural contexts which generate genocidal relations. These contexts concern the larger complexes of relations, constituted largely on axes other than genocide, in which a range of international actors – not only 'perpetrators' and 'victims' but also 'bystanders' – operate and relate to each other. As Midlarsky, Levene and Bloxham recognise, actors in genocidal conflicts operate simultaneously in interstate and state-society relations; however this description does not exhaust the international relations which form the context of genocide. As much of the last two decades' work in IR has emphasised, international relations comprise (increasingly) many layers of relations across as well as between states – 'global' and 'transnational' as well as strictly 'international' or 'interstate' – and involve many different types of non-state as well as state actors. Moreover, where states are concerned, although some definitions of genocide (e.g. Chalk and Jonahsson, 1990: 23) refer (like Realist IR) to 'the state' as an actor, it is often not states as such, but regimes and particular elements of state apparatuses, which organise genocide (Dadrian, 2001: 140). In these contexts, as in general, the 'unity' of the state-as-actor is something which needs to be established empirically, rather than assumed. In addition the interactions between various 'state' and 'non-state' actors are often crucial (Gerlach, 2006). Our starting point must not be a particular fixed, state-centric conception of the 'international system', but complex, multi-layered (economic, social and cultural as well as political and military) relations involving many types of actors and of linkage between 'domestic' and 'international' contexts – relations and contexts which are constantly reconfigured in dynamic genocidal processes.

This historical aspect is essential to an international understanding. Although much genocide research is historical, the prevailing method of transhistorical comparison and the usual problems of historical empiricism have inhibited serious historical understanding of genocide. There are historical studies of genocide, there are histories of genocide, but there is not really a history of genocide, in the sense of work which seriously interrogates the tendencies of genocide over time and the variation between different periods. Promisingly entitled volumes like Weitz's A Century of Genocide (2005) turn out to be the usual comparisons of four or five major episodes, through a thematic prism (in his case, 'utopias of race and nation'): they almost never offer a comprehensive, developmental history of genocide even in the given period. Ben Kiernan (2007) has written a 'world history of genocide', but even this turns out on examination to offer an uneven combination of extensive surveys of genocidal violence in key regions of western imperial expansion with fairly conventional, discrete case studies of the largest recognised genocides of the twentieth century. The linkage between the two is established primarily in terms of the continuity of the overarching themes of the volume: cults of antiquity, a fetish for agriculture, ethnic enmity and imperial and territorial conquests. The briefest of introductory notes to the twentieth-century part provides only one clue to a possible discontinuity in the history of genocide: 'By 1910 the world had become smaller, the great powers greater, and contests for territory more closely fought. A new phenomenon emerged: genocides perpetrated by national chauvinist dictatorships that had seized control of tottering, shrinking, or new empires, aiming to reverse real or perceived territorial losses or conquer new regions from established powers.' (Kiernan 2007: 393). The looseness of this thesis is evident in the
alternatives 'tottering ... or new', 'reverse ... or conquer'; its location within the established comparative literature rather than international relations is suggested by the emphasis on regime type ('national chauvinist dictatorships'); and in any case, the book fails to systematically pursue the argument. Nevertheless the sense that there was a major shift in genocide, from the era of settler colonialism to that of radical party-states, is also implicit in Mann’s account (2005), which adds a further disjuncture: the shift from the era of nationalist genocide, perpetrated primarily by radical party-states, to the post-colonial era, in which maximal forms of mass murder are tending to give way to less murderous forms of 'ethnic cleansing'. William Rubinstein’s (2004) three modern eras of genocide – the colonial age, the age of totalitarianism and the era of ‘ethnic cleansing’ – constitute a similar periodisation. But none of these writers develop a theoretical exploration of the historical transitions involved.

The aim of an international relations of genocide should therefore be place these questions of historical transformation at the centre of analysis, and to formulate more precise theories of their changing international and social contexts. If genocide is not a general feature of international relations in all periods and regions – even if it is also not as rare as some think – the task is to identify particular temporal and geographical clusters of genocidal violence, the specific international conditions in which they are located, and the larger international dynamics involved. Any adequate ‘international’ theory of genocide must offer a complex understanding of the changing relations across and between societies, as well as between states, in the historical transformations of modernity. In this sense an international theory of genocide must not only be framed sociologically, but in historical-sociological terms.

3. Twentieth-century European genocide in an international historical-sociological perspective

In this final section, I develop a theoretical argument along these lines concerning early twentieth-century European genocide. Clearly genocide had long been a feature of European history, both along religious lines (Rubinstein, 2004: 29-38) and in political suppression (as in the Vendée: Levene, 2005b: 103-61), as well as in colonial contexts. However recent historiography suggests a major historical change at the end of the nineteenth century, in ways which enable a more systematic historical-sociological account of the role of international relations in modern European genocide. I first summarise the relevant historical discussion, and then propose a theoretical interpretation.

Bloxham (2007, 2009a and b) and Weitz (2008) demonstrate important shifts in population politics from the 1870s or even 1860s, first in south-eastern Europe and later across eastern Europe, with large implications for the wider European order. In the disintegration of the Ottoman, Romanov and Hapsburg empires, nationalism became increasingly widely - although never universally or constantly – genocidal, in the terms discussed here. Moreover insurgent as well as post-imperial nationalisms were implicated: although the Ottoman Young Turks perpetrated the largest genocide, Turks and Muslims were also victims of genocidal expulsions and massacres at the hands of Christian nationalists. Although nationalist population politics thus became increasingly important drivers of genocide, they were also increasingly implicated in general inter-imperial rivalries and wars. Balkan nationalism helped provoke the First World War, but once this was under way, the dynamics and forms of inter-imperial conflict themselves increasingly conditioned the development of genocide. Thus although there had been earlier large-scale massacres of Armenians and other Christians in Anatolia, the heartland of the Ottoman empire, the catalyst for the 1915 genocide was the war with Russia. Moreover the
denouement of the war brought further large-scale genocidal violence, not only in the former
Ottoman lands (where Greek and Turkish armies marauded in 1918-21, expelling, often
murderously, the 'other' population: Bloxham, 2007) but further north too, in the civil war
following the Russian Revolution, most notoriously in the massacres of Jews in the Ukraine in
1918-20 (Midlarsky, 2005: 45-53). The international settlement following the war, based on the
Wilsonian principle of national self-determination, also provided (since in mixed societies, one
nation's self-determination was invariably another's subordination) incentives for exclusion.
Indeed even 'the origins of human rights standards are not so pristine and pure ... A major part
of their history lies in a way of thinking about populations - group protection and group rights -
that entailed the very same thought patterns that enabled and promoted forced deportations ...
' (Weitz, 2008: 1316) The same leaders advocated both. Although the settlement was
accompanied by measures for minority protection, the latter served to irritate 'majority'
nationalists as much as to genuinely protect. The culmination of the post-Ottoman violence was
of course the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 which internationally sanctioned the destruction of
historic Greek and Turkish communities in modern Turkey and Greece respectively.
Clearly nationalist population politics, legitimated at Paris and in the League of Nations (and
reinforced by V. I. Lenin's endorsement of 'self-determination'), became only more central to
the international system. Indeed they were at the centre of Nazism's revisionist approach to
the post-First World War settlement: its first major international aggression, the annexation
of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia, invoked the principle of minority protection. Certainly
other types of anti-group, anti-civilian violence, on a 'class' (e.g. Stalin’s 'liquidation of the
kulaks') and a 'political' basis (e.g. Franco's persecution and killing of Spanish Republicans
after his military victory), also occurred in this period. But exclusive nationalism was its main
political driver, and the Nazis its most internationally important instigators. Theirs was the
largest-scale, most ambitious and (ultimately) most murderous genocide, and their (population-
inspired) military aggression and territorial expansionism the catalyst for the wider pattern.
Yet, as a result of the genocidal war that Germany unleashed, genocide became widespread
in the eastern and central European theatres of the Second World War, in what Timothy Snyder
(2010) calls 'the bloodlands' (but with important effects in western Europe too). Ultimately it is
its general character, rather than its Nazi-centrism, which is important.
To an academic literature heavily saturated with the idea of the specificity if not 'uniqueness' of
the Holocaust, this may seem a radical reorientation. Yet the Holocaust (in the sense of the mass
murder of the Jews), rather than being the exception, was the most murderous element of Nazi
Germany's generally genocidal campaign in eastern Europe (against Slavs as well as Jews),
which in turn was the most comprehensive and aggressive of the campaigns of many of the
states and armed movements involved in the war in Europe (and in Asia) which practised
genocidal violence. Most of Germany's allies and clients developed their own genocidal
objectives against unwanted minorities (Croatia to murder Serbs, Romania to remove Turks,
Italy and Hungary to 'nationalise' annexed Yugoslav territories, and so on), as well as
participating in Nazism's overall anti-Jewish programme, sometimes (as in Romania)
developing their own lethal anti-Jewish initiatives (Ahonen et al. 2008: 43-60). The Soviet
Union, when it invaded eastern Poland in the aftermath of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939,
engaged in large-scale ethnic removals (Ahonen et al. 2008: 23-26), while the Nazis carried out
their better-known expulsions in the west of the country. After the German invasion of the USSR
in 1941, Stalin carried out genocidal expulsions of the Chechens, Crimean Tartars and other
peoples deemed unreliable in the war (Werth 2008: 405-06). In London, the governments-in-exile of Czechoslovakia and Poland developed plans for the expulsion of their German populations, which were endorsed in turn by Great Britain and the USA. (Ahonen et al. 2008: 61-69, Brandes 2009). In the concluding stages of the war, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia expelled some ten million or more Germans. In addition, the USSR also expelled Poles from the areas of former Poland it annexed, and the Yugoslav Communists expelled Italians from their reconquered territories. All the expulsions can be considered genocidal because their aims were to destroy the 'enemy' populations as a presence in their homelands; the implementation of these policies was invariably accomplished with violence, sometimes at high levels (at least half a million Germans died in the expulsions, mostly in the last stages of the war, but some after: Bloxham 2008: 122). The continuity between events that were often seen as categorically opposed is aptly summed up when Bloxham notes (2008: 122) that ‘the eviction of more than 200,000 ethnic Germans from Hungary from 1945 [was] conducted by many of the same Hungarian personnel as had helped deport Jews in 1944.’ That the USSR began destroying Polish communities in pre-war western Poland through its understanding with Nazi Germany (1939-41), and then completed the process – albeit with Germans as the main target – with the collusion of the Western powers and even of the re-emergent Poland (1944-45), is another illustration of the general character of population-expulsion in the war.

This new historiography raises fundamental questions about how the various genocidal policies and actions were related to each other and how they should be explained. Comparative studies deal with them only partially, for example by incorporating 'Stalin's genocides' as a distinct set of domestic-regime-driven genocide alongside Nazism's (Naimark, 2010; Mann, 2005: 318-30; Werth, 2008). But Stalinist policies, against 'treacherous' nationalities during the war and against Germans and Poles at the end, particularly demonstrate the limits of explanation in terms of nationalism, or indeed ideology, alone. Soviet policies show how 'nationalist' policies could be driven by real or imagined security considerations, driven by the perceived demands of international military competition as much as by ideology. Indeed it has been argued that even in Nazi policies, racist and nationalist ideology was entwined with real and imaginary security considerations (Moses, 2011). In fact many deaths occurred, in Snyder's words, 'as a result of the interaction of the two systems' (2010: 381: emphasis in original). So although recent historical research partially reinforces the emphasis on nationalism, it shows that this was not only an ideology, still less an exclusively domestic phenomenon. Rather international relations stimulated the development of exclusive-nationalist, genocidal policies, and we cannot understand the former without the latter.

To summarise, the explanation of early to mid-twentieth century European genocide involves the following international-national dynamics:

1. Changing international relations increasingly stimulated nationalist population politics, which in turn became increasingly embedded in international relations, from the end of the nineteenth century. The weakening of the old empires in east-central Europe stimulated nationalisms, which in turn generated conflicts between new nation-states and empires, in which 'other' national populations became enemies and were targeted for expulsion or worse. The general character of this process meant that even liberal-democratic and Communist leaders, whose politics were ostensibly not nationalist, thought in terms of the equation of nation and territory. Great powers supported, intervened in and attempted to manage
these conflicts through international institutions and law, so that the Paris peace settlement legitimatized this principle, which was a necessary (but not a sufficient) condition for the pattern of genocide.

2. **International armed conflict played a central role in the coming to power of radical nationalists for whom violent expulsion was an acceptable means of solving population 'problems'.** International war and conflict often helped radicalise domestic politics, bringing to power more radical nationalists – particularly but not only the rise of the Young Turks (in responses to Ottoman losses in wars before the First World War) and the Nazis’ rise in Germany. The latter should not be regarded as a mainly 'domestic' phenomenon - it was clearly conditioned by the international results of the First World War (militarism, resentment at Germany's treatment) and the subsequent international economic crisis. In German-allied Europe, the accession of extreme nationalists to power was largely a direct result of the international war which Germany unleashed: indeed some of the states involved, such as Croatia and Slovakia, were creations of the expanding Nazi empire.

3. **International war radicalised nationalist population policies, providing opportunities for deportation and mass murder.** Throughout the period, it was above all international war which enabled 'solutions' which were not previously politically possible. For many nationalists, genocidal population policies were a large part of what the 1939-45 war in eastern Europe was about. International war provided the opportunity for territorial expansion, fed moves towards population expulsion and enabled increasingly murderous policies. Moreover the genocidal policies of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia led to a pattern of international imitation by their allies. Thus not only extreme nationalists and ‘totalitarians’ but also (in some cases) 'democratic' nationalists embraced deportation and mass killing.

4. **Genocidal expulsions were conditioned by international armed conflict in the sense that they were responses to enemy military campaigns, which created real and imagined security concerns in which minorities were seen as implicated; and also in the sense that they were sometimes limited by these campaigns.** The Ottoman campaign against the Armenians can be seen partly in this light, as a response to the Russian and Allied threat and putative Armenian complicity. However the clearest positive case is probably the expulsions of nationalities inside the USSR which – although with precedents including ethnic deportations during the civil war as well as the campaigns against the peasantry in the 1930s – were responses to the German war campaign, mediated by Stalin's own genocidal ideology. Negative cases can also be found, however, particularly in the increasing reluctance of Germany’s allies to accede to its demands for action against the Jews once it became clear that it was possible that Germany would lose the war - not to mention the impact of Allied action in ending Nazi genocide even as it enabled Soviet population policies.

5. **Genocidal expulsions can be seen partly as international 'counter-genocide', i.e. responses, facilitated by international victory, to enemy genocide.** Thus the 'revenge' expulsions of Germans were conditioned by the genocide the Nazis themselves had committed, as well as more generally by their aggressive war and its atrocities, against Poles, Czechs, Russians and others (but less, ironically, by their specifically anti-Jewish policies, of which some nationalist proponents of counter-genocide did not disapprove). However genocidal population policies were also important international war aims for the USSR in its annexations of the Baltic states and Poland in 1939, and for the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the emergent Tito regime in Yugoslavia in the later stages of the war, and so can be seen only partly in revenge terms. In
this perspective, international victory enabled genocidal policies, driven by a combination of exclusive nationalist and security goals, which were partly legitimatized by 'revenge' ideas.

6. The development of international law and politics after wars, although intended to produce peaceful relations between nations as well as states, often stimulated or at least permitted genocidal conflict. The Western powers' 'Paris system' served to stimulate as well as limit genocidal expulsions; and the Allies' Potsdam conference approved the destruction of German communities after the second war. International treaties ratified as well as limited expulsions and violence, most notoriously in the Greco-Turkish 'population exchanges' of 1923. Even the international law which was supposed to 'prevent and punish' genocide was complicit – through its deliberate omissions not only of political and social groups but also of expulsion as a method – in permitting what it was supposed to outlaw. Indeed, the international politics of the drafting process in the late 1940s saw even Lemkin turn his back on ongoing conflicts, for example in India and Palestine, which raised 'genocide' concerns for some contemporaries (Cooper, 2009).

5. Conclusions
We have seen that international relations play an essential part in explaining the wider development of genocide in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet interstate relations contributed partly by stimulating 'domestic' nationalism, underlining the need for a type of IR explanation which bridges the 'international-national' divide and recognizes the linkages of intra- and inter-state relations. However Levene's question remains: in what sense did genocide become internationally systemic? To answer this question we first need to acknowledge the limits of genocide in the period under discussion. For international relations never became generally or universally genocidal, even during the world wars: genocide was primarily a regional phenomenon of east-central Europe, becoming concentrated finally in the 'bloodlands' between Russia and Germany. In western Europe, even the Nazis' war was not generally genocidal against the major national populations – although of course it was against the Jews, Roma, etc. – and some 'Aryan' nationalities were positively integrated into the Nazi system of power.2 Soviet policies were even more selectively genocidal, and US and British policies not directly at all, despite their complicity in their allies' genocide. In Asia, some Japanese policies might be qualified as genocidal, but not all. So overall genocide was partial even in the Axis campaigns – it was only sometimes and in some places what they were about – and was not what the war was generally about.
Why did not the international system become more generally genocidal? While ideologies are clearly part of the explanation for the variation, this discussion has emphasised specific regional dynamics, particularly historic crises of state forms, the conflicts these set up, and war interactions. Because of these dynamics, the wider conflicts of the European and world international system helped produce a regional system of international relations, in east-central Europe, in which genocide was increasingly endemic. However only in the context of a war system did this regionally genocidal international system develop, so that war interactions repeatedly produced genocidal responses from actors, and even (but to a limited extent) that one genocide led 'counter-genocidally' to another. Yet the regional pattern was linked in 1914-18 and even more in 1939-45 to the general, increasingly global, war system – the interactive stimuli, demands and constraints of armed conflict between great powers located outside as well as within the region concerned. Thus for the most part genocide was developed, and constrained, because of how the policies of regional actors changed in the context of pan-
European and global military and political interactions. What does this tell us about relations between genocide and international relations in a longer historical perspective, and in particular how should it influence the framing of genocide-production in contemporary global politics? First, it suggests a narrower formulation of the relationships between genocide and international 'systems' than proposed by Levene, recognising the specificity of both regional systems of international and political conflict and of systems of armed conflict. Second, it suggests that we should see the relations of global great powers, international institutions and law to genocide not only in terms of 'response' but also in terms of how they enter into the production of genocide. And from a historical-sociological point of view, we should recognise the greatly changed characters of global social and power relations since the period discussed in this article, and the changed and variable articulations of regional with global relations. For the approach developed here to have purchase in explaining contemporary genocide and its role in post-Cold War international relations – for example in the role of regional political systems and systems of armed conflict in former Yugoslavia and the African Great Lakes – it would have to take into account the very different social and international relations of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This account of the role of international relations in genocide, and genocide in international relations, in twentieth-century Europe, does not offer a universal model, but it does represent a starting point for further analysis. Studying the international relations of genocide in the way proposed here has the potential to radically change the direction of genocide research. At the same time, it challenges International Relations to recognise the extent to which genocide is a recurring feature of international relations both historically and in the present era, and to adapt its theories and concepts to make them adequate to this challenge.

Bibliography


Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Biographical note
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1 The appellations 'perpetrator', 'victim' and 'bystander' are used here, as shorthand descriptions of the principal types of actor in genocidal relationships, because they are conventional in the literature. However these terms oversimplify the typical roles of the actors and should probably be replaced: in particular 'victims' are not only victims, and third parties have a great variety of roles which impact on genocide in many ways which the idea of 'bystanding' does not adequately represent.

2 Thus Lemkin's argument that Nazism was generally genocidal across Europe failed to distinguish between the suppression of national identity (which was a general Nazi policy against all conquered peoples) and the actual destruction of social life and relations (which was exemplified mainly in their policies towards Slavs, Jews, Gypsies and the disabled). Since the 'destruction' of peoples was how Lemkin himself defined genocide – a definition in which he has been followed by most subsequent authorities – it seems a sharper distinction between Nazi policies is necessary than that which he made, while avoiding the opposite error according to which only the mass murder of the Jews was genocidal.