

## Chapter One

# ***'We are Determined to Exterminate Them': The Genocidal Impetus Behind Commercial Stock Farmer Invasions of Hunter-Gatherer Territories***

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In 1830, Willem Barend, a citizen of the Griqua state of Philippolis in the Transorangia region north of the Cape Colony, was reported to have expressed a determination to kill all San hunter-gatherers because they preyed on Griqua cattle. Within a few years, his resolve had effectively become reality through persistent Griqua raiding and massacring of San communities within reach of their commandos.<sup>1</sup> In 1860, H.L. Hall, notorious Indian hunter and stock manager for Judge Serranus Hastings, one of the largest landholders in northern California, went on a killing spree of Yuki Indians in the Eden Valley area, openly boasting that he had deliberately provoked conflict with them, and had recruited a posse consisting of men prepared to slay all Yuki they came across. The Yuki people suffered demographic collapse when settlers invaded their lands in the mid-1850s, declining from perhaps 12 000 to no more than 300 by the mid-1860s, reflecting a commensurate slump in Californian Indian society.<sup>2</sup> Carl Lumholtz, Norwegian ethnographer, travelled extensively through Queensland in the early 1880s, publishing an account of his experiences in 1889. He reported that: 'In Northern Queensland I often heard the remark: "The only treatment proper for the blacks is to shoot them all ... They are unwilling to work" I have heard colonists say, "and hence they are not fit to live".' During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Queensland's pre-colonial Aboriginal population of over 250 000

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<sup>1</sup> Cavanagh E. *Settler Colonialism and Land Rights in South Africa: Possession and Dispossession on the Orange River*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 37–39, and Cavanagh's chapter below. 'Commando' is a southern African term for armed, mounted militia units.

<sup>2</sup> Carranco L. & Beard E. 1981. *Genocide and Vendetta: The Round Valley Wars and Northern California*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 62–63; Madley B. 2008. 'California's Yuki Indians: defining genocide in Native American history'. *Western Historical Quarterly*, 39, no. 3, 304, 329.

suffered attrition of over 90 per cent.<sup>3</sup> What most powerfully binds these diverse examples of exterminatory violence is that the victims were hunter-gatherer peoples, and the main perpetrators commercial stock-farming settlers linked to the industrialising and globalising Western economy.

A few years ago, while writing and researching the annihilation of Cape San society,<sup>4</sup> largely by Dutch-speaking stock farmers through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and trying to locate that episode in global historical context, I was struck by how destructive European settler colonialism had been of hunter-gatherer societies generally, whether in southern Africa, Australia or the Americas. Pursuing this line of thought further, it appeared to me that a particular subset of settler colonial confrontations—those in which livestock farmers linked to the global capitalist market clashed with hunter-gatherers—were particularly catastrophic in their outcome. The frequency with which encounters of this kind resulted in the near complete destruction of forager societies raises the question why this particular form of settler colonial conflict seems to have been overwhelmingly predisposed to eradictory violence.

The tendency towards genocide in this category of conflict is even more marked if one takes into account that the definition of genocide that I use is more stringent than that of the United Nations Convention on Genocide (UNCG), the one applicable in international law. The definition used in this introduction and the next chapter is that genocide is ‘the intentional physical destruction of a social group in its entirety or the intentional annihilation of such a significant part of the group that it is no longer able to reproduce itself biologically or culturally’.<sup>5</sup> Survivors are usually reduced to forced labour or utter destitution, and subject to cultural suppression and purposeful marginalisation—in some cases even legislated exclusion from mainstream society as, for example, outlined in Sid Harring’s case study

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<sup>3</sup> Lumholtz C. 1979. *Among Cannibals: Account of Four Year’s Travels in Australia, and Camp Life with the Aborigines of Australia*. Firle, Sussex: Caliban Books, first published London, 1889, 373; Evans R. 2013. ‘Foreword’, in *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland’s Frontier Killing Times*, T. Bottoms. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, xix–xx.

<sup>4</sup> Adhikari M. 2010. *The Anatomy of a South African Genocide: The Extermination of the Cape San Peoples*. Cape Town: UCT Press.

<sup>5</sup> This definition is adapted from the one provided in *Anatomy of a South African Genocide*. See especially pages 12–13 for elaboration on its meaning and scope. For further introductory discussion on the concept of genocide, see Jones A. 2011. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. London: Routledge, ch. 1; Shaw M. 2007. *What is Genocide?* Cambridge: Polity Press, ch. 2; Stone D. 2008. *The Historiography of Genocide*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, especially the opening chapter, Curthoys A. & Docker J. ‘Defining genocide’, 9–41.

of Plains Indians in Canada. This definition is more demanding than its UNCG equivalent in that it requires higher levels of violence and social devastation for an episode of mass violence to be recognised as genocide.

It is possible to identify a number of shared features in conflicts between hunter-gatherers and market-oriented stock farmers in European settler colonies across the globe that served to intensify hostilities and tilt the balance towards exterminatory violence. This analysis explores those factors that I consider to be fundamental to promoting genocidal outcomes in clashes of this kind. While there were many other contributors to eradictory violence between hunter-gatherers and commercial stock farmers, and each conflict was unique, the primary facilitators identified here were not only common to cases globally, but also instrumental in escalating the violence to genocidal levels.

### **The nature of commercial stock farming**

In the first instance, the nature of commercial stock farming itself was a major contributor to the escalation of bloodshed to genocidal levels. One of the crucial dynamics at play in pastoral settler colonies was the rapid occupation of sweeping expanses of land characteristic of capitalist stock farming, especially when entering 'virgin' territory.<sup>6</sup> The repercussions for hunter-gatherer peoples of the invasion of their land by commercial stock farmers contrasted markedly to those by other kinds of farmers.

Commercial stock farmers had a significantly different impact on hunter-gatherer communities to invading subsistence pastoralists such as the Khoikhoi (Hottentot) or Herero peoples of southern Africa, for example. The absence of sizeable market outlets or opportunities to trade in traditional societies meant that there were low limits to the economic surplus that could be realised. And because subsistence herders tended to farm in more sustainable ways, their need for land and other resources was limited. For such peoples, stock also had substantive aesthetic and social value, which mitigated their management mainly for economic benefit. Commercial stock farmers, on the contrary, were driven primarily by profit, treated stock as commodities and sought to maximise economic returns. Linked to world markets, they were generally

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<sup>6</sup> Newly invaded territories were, of course, seldom 'virgin' as often portrayed in settler discourse because they were usually inhabited. Francis Jennings' remark that such land 'was more like a widow than a virgin' is apt. See Jennings F. 1975. *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 30.

incentivised to produce as much as possible, whatever the environmental and human cost, particularly during economic booms. Thus when subsistence herders entered the lands of hunter-gatherers, conflict was far less intense as invasions were more gradual, conflict localised and the impact less destructive of foraging activities. Although such interaction tended towards displacement of hunter-gatherers and often resulted in bloodshed, it also included incorporation, clientship and even symbiosis. With commercial stock farmers, however, the incursions were much more rapid, intent on thoroughgoing and permanent confiscation of land and resources, and far less compromising in dealing with indigenous resistance.

Commercial stock farming also had a different dynamic to that of colonising crop growers. Whereas agriculturalists tended to be sedentary, marking out longer term occupancy of land with fences and hedges, and tending to expand incrementally and contiguously, commercial stock farmers needed extensive pastures and were inclined to be on the move. Though crop farming was locally more destructive of indigenous societies because it supported denser populations and occupied land more comprehensively and permanently,<sup>7</sup> the impact of stock farming extended much more swiftly over larger areas, and was nonetheless devastating to hunter-gatherer communities living there. Stock keepers were usually engaged in a constant search for pasture and water, particularly in drier environments and when entering territory for the first time. Indeed, dry spells and drought accelerated their dispersal beyond the fringes of colonial settlement. Frontier stock farmers were generally not bound by the confines of ranches, even where they laid formal claim to such holdings. On pastoral frontiers, registered farms were often used as bases from which flocks and herds were moved in transhumant fashion and vast stretches of countryside were treated as communal grazing or open range. Distance from ports and markets was far less of a concern to stock farmers than their crop-growing counterparts, as in most cases their produce was capable of carrying themselves to desired destinations. This was especially true of animals raised for meat.

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<sup>7</sup> For an extended analysis of the impact of agriculture on genocidal thinking and practice globally, see Kiernan B. 2007. *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination From Sparta to Darfur*. New Haven: Yale University Press, as a whole and especially 29–33, 166–68, 252–53. For detailed discussion on incompatibilities between foraging and farming lifestyles, and the exterminatory violence that often results, see Brody H. 2000. *The Other Side of Eden: Hunters, Farmers and the Shaping of the World*. New York: North Point Press as well as Docker J. 2008. *The Origins of Violence: Religion, History and Violence*. London: Pluto Press, ch. 1.

Case studies across the temperate colonial world confirm that settler advances were relatively slow and conflict with indigenes limited until colonies turned to large scale pastoral farming. Few colonies were established as pastoral ventures from the start and it was generally growing demand from the metropole or some sector of the global trading network that sparked the shift to commercial stock farming. Indeed, in many temperate zone colonies, it was the ready adaptation of imported livestock to the environment that made farming with them economically viable and attractive to settlers.<sup>8</sup> Increasing demand for their produce, especially as the industrial revolution progressed through the nineteenth century, encouraged stock keepers to expand their flocks and herds, as well as formal landholdings and to move into new territory beyond the limit of colonial settlement. Economic booms usually set in motion spectacular frontier advances and the rapid stocking of land, especially with cattle and sheep, but also with pigs, goats, horses and other domesticated animals. For example, leading historian of the destruction of Queensland's Aboriginal societies, Raymond Evans, comments that with the onset of pastoral farming in that colony around 1840, 'the frontier did not merely spread; it galloped'. He estimates that at the height of the land rush of the early 1860s, the Queensland pastoral frontier advanced by as much as 300 kilometres annually.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, in Tasmania, as Lyndall Ryan demonstrates, conflict with Aborigines was muted and localised until the colony entered its pastoral phase in 1817. After that, grazing land was very quickly occupied and leading Tasmanian farmers shifted their operations across the Bass Strait to the Port Philip District (later Victoria), from about 1834 onwards where indigenous societies were destroyed within 15 years.<sup>10</sup> Similar trends are observable in southern Africa and North America. In the former it was in particular the incorporation of the Cape Colony into the British Empire and the opening up of new markets that stimulated pastoral production. In the latter it was westward migration from within the United

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<sup>8</sup> Crosby A. 2004. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 172–73, 187.

<sup>9</sup> Evans R. 2004. "'Plenty shoot 'em'": the destruction of Aboriginal societies along the Queensland frontier', in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A.D. Moses. New York: Berghahn Books, 163; see also Bottoms T. 2013. *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Times*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 17–18; Loos N. 1982. *Invasion and Resistance: Aboriginal–European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier*. Canberra: ANU Press, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Ryan L. 2012. 'White settler massacres of Aborigines in Tasmania (1820–1835) and Victoria (1835–1851): a comparative analysis'. Unpublished paper presented at the conference *Invariably Genocide? When Hunter-gatherers and Commercial Stock Farmers Clash*, University of Cape Town, 6 December 2012, 5–6.

States, immigration from Europe, and growing demand from the settled eastern areas of the continent that drove the pastoral frontier.

On occasion, it was the discovery of minerals, most dramatically gold rushes, that extended frontiers precipitately and spelt doom for hunter-gatherer communities across entire regions. The attendant growth in stock farming to help feed the explosive increase in population was usually an important ingredient in the devastation of indigenous societies far beyond the mining centres themselves, its impact felt long after the rush had subsided. This is evident in a significant way with the 1850s copper mining boom in the northern Cape, more so with gold rushes that took place in Australia, particularly Queensland, from the late 1850s onwards, and most spectacularly with the Californian gold rush that started in the late 1840s. Newly built infrastructure to support the mining economy made former wilderness areas much more accessible to settlers. Even where mineral deposits were soon exhausted, some prospective miners remained behind, turning to hunting, logging, crop growing or commonly pastoralism, as a means of living, permanently displacing indigenous peoples.<sup>11</sup>

Not only did stock farmers shift frontiers rapidly and occupy the best land, they also commandeered resources critical to the survival of hunter-gatherer communities. Commercially farmed herds and flocks consumed large amounts of grazing and water, and often exceeded the carrying capacity of the land. This damaged the ecosystem, at times altering it permanently for the worse. Invasion by commercial stock farmers had an immediate, and usually devastating, impact on the region's foraging societies, whose seasonal migrations were disrupted and whose food supplies and other foundations of life were severely compromised. The introduction of large numbers of domesticates undermined indigenous hunting, fishing and gathering activities to the extent that communities would soon be suffering malnutrition or even be facing starvation. Conflict was almost unavoidable as both hunter-gatherers and stock farmers were in direct competition for the same environmental resources, especially land, water and game. Foraging bands suddenly found that they were denied access to sacred locales, traditional hunting grounds and watering places such as springs, pools and river frontages. Livestock contaminated and exhausted water supplies, trampled edible plants, disrupted foraging activities and displaced herds of game, a primary source of food for hunter-gatherer

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Adhikari, *Anatomy of a South African Genocide*, 74; Palmer A. 2000. *Colonial Genocide*. Adelaide: Crawford House, 92, 95; Lindsay B. 2012. *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846–1873*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 135, 146.

peoples. Importantly, colonists decimated herbivore populations—whether antelope in Africa, bison in North America, kangaroos in Australia or guanaco in Latin America—and other wild animals with their guns, permanently depleting a key resource. Hungry bands thus often had little option but to target settler stock for sustenance.<sup>12</sup>

The result, almost inevitably, was spiralling levels of violence as afflicted indigenous peoples resisted encroachment and settlers in turn retaliated, usually with excessive and indiscriminate force. Hunter-gatherer communities typically resisted settler incursions using guerrilla tactics of raiding and maiming stock, slaying herders isolated out in the pastures, and attacking farmsteads, usually at night. Stock farmers responded with individual acts of slaughter, informal militia activity, and on occasion, teamed up with colonial state forces in retaliatory offensives. Such conflicts often culminated in open warfare and exterminatory onslaughts on the part of colonial society. The weakness of the colonial state and its tenuous control over frontier areas gave settlers, who had access to arms, wide discretion to act against indigenes. Frontier pastoral societies, being land hungry, having relatively low labour requirements and being difficult to administer, were prone to exterminatory violence when faced with indigenous resistance. This was particularly the case when their opponents were hunter-gatherers whose labour was not highly valued, and whose sparse settlement and peripatetic lifestyle invited thoughts of eradication.

There was another significant way in which the nature of stock farming itself helped amplify violence against indigenous peoples. Given the need for extensive landholdings or a transhumant lifestyle to graze and water animals, stock-keeping settlers were widely dispersed in small numbers across open landscapes. They were thus vulnerable not only to attack, but also to severe economic setbacks from hunter-gatherer retaliation. It was not uncommon for commercial stock farmers to be heavily indebted and threatened with bankruptcy by downward fluctuations in commodity prices or recessionary conditions. This set up an anxiety-ridden existence for stock-farming communities, making them susceptible to over-reaction to threats and rumours of danger, as well as to pre-emptive violence against perceived enemies. They were usually suspicious of all indigenes, and fearful of raids, revenge attacks, uprisings or collusion with indigenous

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Watson P. 2004. 'Passed away? The fate of the Karuwali', in *Genocide and Settler Society*, ed. A.D. Moses, 177–78; Madley, 'California's Yuki Indians', 314–15; Adhikari, *Anatomy of a South African Genocide*, 34, 36–37; Macdonald T. 2012. 'Settlers, missionaries, and sheep among the Yamana and Selk'nam of Tierra del Fuego'. Unpublished paper in possession of the author.

servants. Frontier stock keepers seldom went about their business unarmed and were constantly alert to the possibility of indigenous aggression. They expected trouble and this easily became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Situations of pervasive anxiety punctuated with sporadic violence are likely to give rise to extreme othering of enemies.<sup>13</sup> Hunter-gatherers were vulnerable to the harshest forms of racial stereotyping by settlers because their lifestyle placed them at the polar opposite of colonial societies' perception of themselves as 'civilised' and part of humanity's highest incarnation. To this heady brew of anxiety, fear and racial contempt one needs to add vengeance in the wake of indigenous resistance. This made for volatile passions among stock-farming communities that often spilt over into exterminatory rhetoric and mass violence towards indigenous peoples. Chronic tension and uncertainty weakened settler restraints against violence towards and the killing of foragers, especially where their labour was not deemed essential. It is no surprise that in pastoral settler societies, shoot-on-sight vigilantism, informal militia activity and even state-sponsored eradictory drives were common, as the case studies in this book demonstrate.

### International capitalist markets

A second dynamic tipping the balance towards exterminatory violence was that access to world markets and a concomitant desire among colonists to accumulate wealth encouraged both intensive exploitation of natural resources for short-term gain as well as a resort to annihilatory practices to eliminate obstacles or threats to the colonial project, be they vegetation, animals or indigenous peoples. This impulse, though present from the very start of European colonisation—very evident, for example, in the colonisation of the east Atlantic islands in the two centuries prior to Columbus' voyages to the Americas<sup>14</sup>—intensified markedly with European industrialisation and the rapid growth of world markets through the nineteenth century. Settler rapacity, excited by opportunities for profit during economic booms, often proved deadly for indigenous communities. Many frontiersmen in newly established colonies, often

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<sup>13</sup> For discussion of how anxiety and fear of attack intensified racial animosities of settlers in unfamiliar landscapes, see Veracini L. 2010. *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 81; Newton-King S. 1999. *Masters and Servants on the Eastern Cape Frontier, 1760–1803*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 7; Lindsay *Murder State*, chs 2 & 3; Bottoms, *Conspiracy of Silence*, 43–44, 90.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Mercer J. 1980. *The Canary Islanders: Their Prehistory Conquest and Survival*. London: Collings; Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, ch. 4; Abulafia D. 2008. *The Discovery of Mankind: Atlantic Encounters in the Age of Columbus*. New Haven: Yale University Press, chs 4 & 5.



referred to as settlers in the literature and who often became settlers, were in fact sojourners in mindset in that it was their intention to make a quick fortune at any cost and return home to a life of leisure. Ensuing busts and retreat of pastoral frontiers seldom resulted in much of a reprieve for hunter-gatherer communities as in many cases severe or irreparable damage to their communal lives had already been inflicted, frustration and desperation incited callous behaviour towards indigenes, and it was usually only a matter of time before abandoned land was re-occupied.

The case studies in this collection confirm that the degree to which settler pastoral economies participated in international trade, together with demand for the commodities they produced, were roughly proportional to the rapidity of indigenous dispossession and levels of violence perpetrated. Thus in both Tasmania and Victoria, key suppliers of wool to burgeoning British markets, Aboriginal societies were effectively destroyed within 15 years of the onset of the pastoral economy, as Lyndall Ryan shows, whereas at the Cape, where the market for pastoral products was limited, the process was more incremental. This correlation is also apparent in the North American studies of Tony Barta and Sid Haring, where accelerating immigration and growing markets dictated the pace at which the pastoral frontier moved westwards and indigenous societies were displaced. A stark contrast is presented by colonial Bechuanaland (modern-day Botswana) where the market was insignificant and colonial institutions more protective of indigenous rights. Mathias Guenther explains in some detail why the characteristic pattern of mass violence towards hunter-gatherers was replaced by a relatively benign form of paternalism in this case. In neighbouring German South West Africa (today Namibia), Robert Gordon, however, demonstrates that an acute shortage of labour throughout the booming economy after the colonial wars of 1904–1908, was not enough to prevent the ruthlessly oppressive colonial regime from implementing decidedly genocidal policies towards sections of the hunter-gatherer population.

The privatisation and commodification of natural resources, especially land, a defining characteristic of capitalist economies, undermined foraging societies fundamentally. Systems of land tenure based on personal entitlement, exclusive usage, fixed boundaries, registration of title deeds, alienability and permanent settlement were completely foreign to hunter-gatherer world views<sup>15</sup> and effectively excluded them from legal ownership

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<sup>15</sup> As Tony Barta eloquently put it with regard to Australian Aborigines, the land was 'something to which they in many profound ways belong, rather than something which belongs to them'. Barta T. 'Decent disposal: Australian historians and the recovery of genocide', in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. D. Stone. Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 303.

of vital resources. Privatisation generally meant the permanent loss of such resources and that settler claims were backed by the legal apparatus, and ultimately, the armed might of the colonial state. While colonial states were often weak and had little control over frontier regions, their access to superior military technology allowed them to concentrate their fire-power and thus impose their will at particular times and places. Economic and political imperatives invariably resulted in the colonial state supporting settler interests and condoning land confiscations, even in cases where both metropolitan and local governments tried to curb frontier violence and restrain settler aggression. The case of Tasmania, where both Governor Arthur and the Secretary of State tried to mitigate settler violence and acknowledged that the dying out of Aborigines would be an ‘indelible stain’ on the record of the British Empire, provides a good example.<sup>16</sup>

Their ability to claim legal title to natural resources in many instances gave settlers cause for going on the offensive against indigenous peoples and, no doubt, reason for justifying such violence to themselves. Although different legal regimes applied to different colonies, and conditions varied considerably, it is nonetheless possible to generalise broadly about the role of colonial law in spurring frontier violence and indigenous dispossession in settler societies.<sup>17</sup> Significantly, the absence of the rule of law on the frontier favoured settlers who had superior firepower and were generally able to confiscate land and resources as well as perpetrate violence against indigenes with a fair degree of impunity. The absence of the rule of law also aided in the suspension of conventions, scruples and moral codes that might otherwise have tempered settler violence. Much of this violence was committed with the knowledge and connivance of the colonial state or elements within it. And when the rule of law was eventually implemented with the closing of the frontier, it was heavily biased in favour of settlers. Not only were indigenes routinely and explicitly disadvantaged by the legal system, but settlers also had significant control over its institutions and day-to-day operation. The law was instrumental in both confirming settler claims to the land and consolidating their control of indigenous labour. As Lisa Ford put it: ‘Settler violence, then, was clothed in law—a law which in important respects settlers constituted and controlled’.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Reynolds H. 2004. ‘Genocide in Tasmania’, in *Genocide and Settler Society*, ed. A.D. Moses, 144.

<sup>17</sup> I am thankful to Edward Cavanagh for drawing my attention to the significance of the role of law on settler colonial frontiers.

<sup>18</sup> Ford L. 2010. *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 85. See also Kercher B. 1995. *An Unruly Child: A History of Law in Australia*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1–18.

The access that frontier communities had to world markets, their metropole and settled parts of colonies also meant the availability of resources, technologies and ideologies that made mass violence towards indigenes all the easier to perpetrate, and extermination all the more comfortable to contemplate. Ships carrying men and supplies with which to settle and conquer; guns and ammunition with which to kill; horses and wagons with which to transport goods; centralised political institutions through which to organise dispossession and mass violence, and an array of tools and machines, the sophistication of which indigenous societies could not hope to match, were among the more obvious advantages frontier settler society derived from continued contact with its Western wellsprings. Less tangibly, such contact helped reinforce the ideological underpinnings of violence perpetrated against indigenous peoples. Cultural and religious chauvinism, ideas of European racial superiority and entitlement, as well as jingoistic imperialism, were fortified by continued settler contact with their European and colonial hubs, and played important parts in promoting violence towards indigenes. Where colonies gained complete independence, even through war and revolution, settler communities nonetheless continued to derive great power from their metropolitan connections.

### **Racial ideologies**

A third common characteristic favouring exterminatory violence was the influence of Western racist thinking that dehumanised the hunter-gatherer way of life as an utterly debased form of existence, comparable in many respects to that of animals, and proof of their racial inferiority. Foragers were cast as the lowest of the low in the racial hierarchy, with particular groups at times the object of speculation that they formed the 'missing link' between humans and animals. Hunter-gatherers were generally perceived as not owning their territories but merely inhabiting them, much as animals do, because they were allegedly not making productive use of it. Though modulated by local imperatives, the generalised image of unused land occupied by dangerous, godless savages bereft of morality, reason or any form of refinement, and importantly, obstructing the advance of 'civilisation' and economic development, usually underlay settler rationales for both land confiscation and accompanying mass violence.<sup>19</sup> Stereotyped as immune to 'civilising' influences, and their labour unsuited to settler

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<sup>19</sup> Levene, M. 2005. *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide*. New York: I.B. Taurus, 47; Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 280–81, 342, 362.

needs, hunter-gatherer populations were often regarded as expendable. Exceptions arose in cases where hunter-gatherer labour was essential to the well-being of the colonial economy, as demonstrated by Ann Curthoys' chapter on Western Australia. However, as Robert Gordon's study indicates, racially motivated exterminatory urges sometimes did trump the economic interests of the colony.

One of the consequences of racial thinking was that supposed racial traits were generally regarded as inherent, the entire 'race' being judged in terms of them. Blanket racial condemnation of 'the savage' helped foster indiscriminate as well as exterminatory violence. Commercially based pastoral settlers across the globe seem to have had little difficulty justifying the killing of indigenous women and children as well, and did so in remarkably similar fashion, claiming that the women bred bandits, and that children grew up to become enemies. Griqua, Willem Barend, reportedly said of the San that '... we are determined to exterminate them [as] the children grow up to the mischief and the women breed them'; Californian H.L. Hall justified his extirpatory actions by claiming that '... a knit (sic) would make a louse'; and Carl Lumholtz recounts that a Queensland farmer found it 'severe but necessary' to shoot 'all the men he discovered on his run, because they were cattle killers; the women because they gave birth to cattle killers; and the children because they would in time become cattle killers'. 'Nits make lice' reasoning was an inexorable part of racist discourse.<sup>20</sup>

Racist theorising, especially from the latter part of the nineteenth century when Social Darwinism became popular, often anticipated the dying out of 'the savage', conceiving of it within a meta-narrative of an all-encompassing racial struggle for the survival of the fittest through which humanity would progress to its full potential. This brand of thinking further encouraged violence against indigenes and fostered an extirpatory attitude within frontier society as their demise was seen as inevitable, the outcome of an inexorable law of nature. The extirpation of indigenes could thus be interpreted positively as being in step with nature and ridding humanity of an encumbrance, and racial war could be romanticised as a

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<sup>20</sup> Carranco & Beard, *Genocide and Vendetta*, 63; Cavanagh, *Settler Colonialism*, 37; Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, 373. See also Stannard D. 1992. *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 131; Churchill W. 1992. *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 229; Barta T. 2007. 'Mr. Darwin's shooters: on natural selection and the naturalising of genocide', in *Colonialism and Genocide*, eds A.D. Moses & D. Stone. London: Routledge, 27.

means of achieving this advancement.<sup>21</sup> Because forager subsistence needs were by and large irreconcilable with those of the settler economy, colonial society viewed the foraging way of life as one to be eliminated, whether neutralised through segregation in reserves, forced acculturation into some subordinate status in the colonial order or outright extermination. In many cases the forces propelling settler expansion radicalised over time in ways that favoured the most extreme of these options. Where commercial stock farming was the mainstay of the colonial economy, they nearly always did.

Although often cast in racial terms and shot through with racist rhetoric, genocidal struggles between hunter-gatherers and commercial stock farmers were not primarily racial in character. They were essentially about incompatible ways of life vying for the same scarce resources and the right to occupy particular areas of land. Racist ideology played essentially enabling and justificatory roles in these conflicts. Racism provided a rationale for dispossessing indigenes, and their dehumanisation made it easier to ignore their suffering and to exploit, kill or exterminate them.<sup>22</sup> That economic competition rather than race was at the heart of these conflicts is demonstrated by Edward Cavanagh's chapter on the Griqua, a mainly Khoikhoi-speaking people in the northern Cape. After successfully turning from subsistence to commercial pastoralism in the 1810s and 1820s as a result of market opportunities opened up by British occupation of the Cape Colony, the Griqua became as enthusiastic and deadly slaughterers of the San as European colonists, and effectively cleared the Transorangia region of hunter-gatherer bands.

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<sup>21</sup> See Brantlinger P. 2003. *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800–1930*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; McGregor R. 1997. *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880–1939*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press; Finzch N. 2007. "It is scarcely possible to conceive that human beings could be so hideous and loathesome": discourses of genocide in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America and Australia', in *Colonialism and Genocide*, eds A.D. Moses & D. Stone London: Routledge, 12–13; Dippie B. 1982. *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and US Indian Policy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas; Gallois W. 2013. *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 14.

<sup>22</sup> For an extended analysis of the dehumanisation of racial others, see Smith D.L. 2011. *Less than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others*. New York: St Martin's Press. For further reflection on the matter, see Scheper-Hughes N. 2002. 'Coming to our senses: anthropology and genocide', in *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, ed. A.L. Hinton. Berkeley: University of California Press, 369–74; Chirot D. & McCauley C. 2006. *Why Not Kill Them All? The Logic and Prevention of Mass Political Murder*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 81–87; Lindqvist S. 1992. *Exterminate All the Brutes*. London: Granta Books, 9, 130, 140.

### Superior military technology

A fourth contributor to genocidal outcomes in clashes with hunter-gatherers was the advanced military technologies available to insurgent pastoral settlers, which gave them huge advantages in situations of conflict. Superior technologies of war both aided processes of dispossession and played a role in escalating violence to exterminatory levels. Not only did this disparity in military power make mass violence easier to perpetrate, but meant that colonial forces, both formal and informal, could act with relative impunity. This technological gap also helped confirm settler views that their enemies were racially inferior.

Most obviously, firearms gave settlers and their surrogates massive military ascendancy over hunter-gatherer adversaries. Even the relatively primitive front-loading muskets available prior to their replacement by rifles in the latter half of the nineteenth century, were far superior to the stone-age weapons used by hunter-gatherers. Muskets had a range much greater than that of forager weapons such as spears, darts, or bows and arrows—at least double the distance of the last-mentioned, which had the furthest reach. This allowed colonists to pick off enemies from a safe distance. Guns fired in volleys were particularly effective when the enemy was massed together. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards the availability of much more accurate and rapid-firing rifles greatly tilted the balance in favour of colonists. Pistols were used in closer engagements, as were sabres and knives.

Horses not only gave colonial fighters the ability to cover long distances rapidly, but also manoeuvrability and advantages of height in close skirmishing. Jared Diamond describes the horse as ‘of incalculable military value’ in pre-industrial times, the equivalent of ‘the tank, the truck and the jeep of warfare’.<sup>23</sup> Horses were particularly effective in flat, open country with low scrub, and were invaluable in situations requiring hot pursuit. The combination of guns and horses amplified the settler military advantage in warfare for, as historian William Keleher Storey explains, the pairing allowed colonial forces to travel like cavalry and attack like infantry. Small contingents of armed, mounted settler militia were thus able to defeat much larger throngs of indigenous fighters on foot using traditional weapons.<sup>24</sup> Not surprisingly, both guns and horses

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<sup>23</sup> Diamond J. 1992. *The Third Chimpanzee*. New York: Harper Collins, 237; Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 23–24.

<sup>24</sup> Storey W. 2008. *Guns, Race and Power in Colonial South Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 36; Lindqvist, *Exterminate All the Brutes*, 48–49; Swart S. 2012. *Riding High: Horses, Humans and History in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 13, 19, 27; Swart S. 2007. ‘Riding high: horses, power and settler society in southern Africa, c.1654–1840’, in *Breeds of Empire: The Invention of the Horse in Southeast Asia and Southern Africa*, eds G. Bankoff & S. Swart. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 123–50.

became emblematic of European racial ascendancy in colonial situations, featuring prominently in symbolic displays of settler power. Packs of dogs trained for hunting, herding and guarding against intruders were commonly part of the settler armoury.<sup>25</sup>

Also, frontier stockmen were a hardy breed. They were toughened by long periods spent outdoors in uncomfortable conditions and in the saddle. Hunting both for the pot and for sport, together with the carrying of guns for protection, meant that most were adept at handling firearms. Two ubiquitous settler skills on pastoral frontiers, marksmanship and horsemanship, complemented each other, enhancing the proficiency with which they were able to kill indigenes when their energies were channelled in that direction.

For all these advantages, some stock-farming communities nevertheless had difficulty quelling hunter-gatherer resistance, even when they went on the offensive. The basic reasons for this were that frontier areas were vast, pastoral settlers thin on the ground, environments often hostile, and the target populations sparse, mobile, self-reliant and exceedingly well adapted to their surroundings. Even where settlement was sparse, settler communities or the colonial state were usually able to assert their dominance at times and places of their choosing by concentrating their fire-power. This allowed relatively small groups of armed colonists to confiscate land, destroy bands, defend strategic nodes, and for colonial states to force targeted indigenous peoples to do their bidding.

Also, colonial fighters needed coordination and discipline through some form of training and tactical deployment. It is for this reason that settlers and colonial administrations formed militias and paramilitary groups such as the commandos of the Cape Colony, the roving parties of soldiers, policemen and settlers in Tasmania, the Native Police forces of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, and volunteer companies of Indian hunters of California such as the Eel River Rangers that operated in Mendocino County, northern California. Conflict on pastoral frontiers in many instances radicalised to the extent that settler violence became indiscriminate, and virtually every indigene a potential victim irrespective of age or gender. In such cases it was not unusual for settler paramilitary forces, such as those mentioned above, to operate as mobile death squads, scouring the countryside for natives to kill.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Van Sittert L. & Swart S. 2008. *Canis Africanis: A Dog History of South Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 7.  
<sup>26</sup> For Cape commandos, see Penn N. 2005. *The Forgotten Frontier: Colonist and Khoisan on the Cape's Northern Frontier in the 18th Century*. Cape Town: Double Storey, ch. 5; Adhikari, *Anatomy of a South African Genocide*, 39–59, 72–75; for Queensland's Native Police, see Richards J. 2008. *The Secret War: A True History of the Queensland Native Police*, chs 1–2; for the Eel River Rangers, see Carranco & Beard, *Genocide and Vendetta*, ch. 5, and Lindsay, *Murder State*, ch. 5.

## Demographic imbalances

Demographic imbalances played a significant role in the genocidal destruction of indigenous societies in various ways. Most obviously, the sheer weight of numbers and resources that settler colonial projects were able to muster would in time, and with continued immigration, overwhelm hunter-gatherer societies, which by their very nature were sparsely populated. With the coming of the industrial age and the possibility of what James Belich refers to as ‘explosive colonisation’,<sup>27</sup> as occurred in the American west and the Melbourne hinterland, these imbalances became very stark indeed. Tony Barta’s characterisation of this unequal struggle as objectively embodying ‘relations of genocide’ in which hunter-gatherer society was ‘subject to remorseless pressures of destruction inherent in the very nature of the society’ is apt.<sup>28</sup>

The communicable diseases interlopers carried, to which indigenes had low immunity, compounded these inequalities. Their low population densities and itinerant lifestyles did not spare foraging societies from the devastating repercussions of virgin soil epidemics. As an elderly San hunter reminisced about the impact of smallpox on indigenous communities: wherever it spread, ‘there are no people left, only stones’.<sup>29</sup> Disease often wreaked a toll greater than direct killing, and sometimes entire communities were severely compromised even before direct contact was made. The effects of contagious disease were commensurately greater in those societies suffering land confiscation, malnutrition, mass violence, forced labour and the psychological traumas of invasion. Colonisation and contagion fed off one another, a deadly pairing that buttressed racist theorising about the inevitable demise of the ‘savage’.

A significant demographic imbalance almost inherent to the colonial frontier was that severely skewed gender ratios in settler society led to excessive sexual violence towards indigenous women. The more remote and undeveloped the frontier, as pastoral frontiers tended to be, the greater

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<sup>27</sup> Belich J. 2009. *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 9, 178–79; see also Barta T. “‘They appear actually to vanish from the face of the earth’: Aborigines and the European project in Australia Felix’. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 10, no. 4, 520; Mann M. 2005. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 72, 82.

<sup>28</sup> Barta T. 1987. ‘Relations of genocide: land and lives in the colonisation of Australia’, in *Genocide in the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death*, eds I. Walliman & M. Dobkowski. New York: Syracuse University Press, 240; see also Maybury-Lewis D. 2002. ‘Genocide against indigenous peoples’, in *Annihilating Difference*, ed. A. Hinton, 44–45.

<sup>29</sup> Phillips H. 2012. *Plague, Pox and Pandemics: A Jacana Pocket History of Epidemics in South Africa*. Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 37.



gender disparities were likely to have been. On some pastoral frontiers, the ratio between settler men and women was as high as 10:1. What is more, frontier stockmen tended to be a hard, uncompromising and rough lot who behaved in sexually predatory ways towards indigenous women in particular. This, together with racial stereotyping of indigenes as barely human, led to rampant sexual violence towards native women and the spread of venereal disease. Assault, abduction, rape and sexual slavery of indigenous women by settler men were common on many frontiers. Venereal infection was sometimes so widespread it was a major hindrance to the biological reproduction of indigenous communities. Not only were infected women often unable to conceive or bear foetuses to term, but sexually transmitted diseases by themselves sometimes killed large proportions of populations, on occasion surpassing other diseases and direct killing in impact.<sup>30</sup> These factors had severe repercussions for hunter-gatherer communities as their populations were sparse and they reproduced at relatively slow rates because of the necessary wide spacing between siblings. Sexual violence and venereal disease were thus of central import to the implosion of indigenous societies.

### **The nature of hunter-gatherer society**

Finally, the nature of hunter-gatherer society itself contributed to genocidal outcomes when faced with an aggressive settler pastoral presence. Whereas the hunter-gatherer way of life in many ways was extremely resilient, it in other ways was vulnerable when under sustained attack or when it faced prolonged disruption of economic activity. Hunter-gatherer society was inherently resilient because it consisted of small social groups scattered over large areas, often in inhospitable and remote landscapes. It was, in addition, extremely flexible, mobile, superbly adapted to the environment, and able to live off the land. On the other hand, because hunter-gatherer communities by and large subsisted off the current offerings of nature, were dependent on seasonal cycles of regeneration, and produced virtually no surplus, the severe ecological disruption and despoilment caused by invading commercial stock farmers represented an immediate and acute threat to their foundations of life.

Foraging societies were also vulnerable to genocidal outcomes in other ways when faced with prolonged, systematic violence. Because of its

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<sup>30</sup> Cook N. 1998. *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492–1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Alchon S. 2003. *A Pest in the Land: New World Epidemics in a Global Perspective*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press; Hays J. 1998. *The Burdens of Disease: Epidemics and Human Response in Western History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, ch. 4; Broome R. 2010. *Aboriginal Australians: A History Since 1788*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 63–66.

small scale and relative lack of social differentiation, almost any form of organised violence against foraging peoples took on the aspect of total war, and bloodshed or child confiscation to any appreciable degree started assuming genocidal proportions at the level of the band and of socio-linguistic groupings. That there was likely to be a blurring of distinctions between warriors and non-combatants in hunter-gatherer society, and that settler violence was often indiscriminate rather than targeted at fighters or stock raiders, made this doubly so. It was not unusual for entire indigenous communities to be held responsible for the actions of a few individuals, for one community to pay for the acts of another, and for collective punishments in the form of massacres and random killings to be meted out to people known to be innocent.<sup>31</sup> In the case of hunter-gatherers, colonial violence thus easily degenerated into ‘total war on a local scale’.<sup>32</sup>

That hunter-gatherers were unable to fight in any other way except by using guerrilla tactics, contributed to the escalation of violence against them. Settlers tended to see their stealth attacks, arson and maiming of stock as dishonourable forms of warfare which in turn fuelled unrestrained responses.<sup>33</sup> Settlers had difficulty adapting traditional European means of warfare to dealing with hunter-gatherer adversaries. As Henry Reynolds noted: ‘There were no forts to besiege, villages to attack, crops to burn, or wells to poison. Nor did there appear to be any chiefs or leaders with whom to negotiate’.<sup>34</sup> Colonists thus had to find new ways of countering hunter-gatherer resistance. It is not surprising that settlers at the Cape, in North America, Australia, and probably elsewhere in the world, developed the strategy of forming roving paramilitary detachments whose favoured tactic was to surround sleeping hunter-gatherer camps under cover of darkness and attack at dawn. The need for fresh approaches also resulted in such ill-conceived experiments as the ‘Black Line’ offensive governor George Arthur organised against surviving Tasmanian Aborigines in 1830.

There is another important way in which the small-scale social structure of foraging societies was an inherent weakness. The dispersed format of their social order meant that hunter-gatherer fighters were routinely

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<sup>31</sup> For some examples, see Lindsay, *Murder State*, 26, 200, 204, 206; Palmer, *Colonial Genocide*, 52; Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, 96; Evans, ‘Plenty shoot ‘em’, 155–57; Rowley C. 1970. *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 39–40; Bottoms, *Conspiracy of Silence*, 39, 41, 50, 63, 66–67, 106–07.

<sup>32</sup> Moses A.D. 2008. ‘Empire, colony, genocide: keywords and the philosophy of history’, in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A.D. Moses. New York: Berghahn Books, 26.

<sup>33</sup> Madley B. 2004. ‘Patterns of frontier genocide 1803–1910: the Aboriginal Tasmanians, the Yuki of California, and the Herero of Namibia’. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6, no. 2, 173.

<sup>34</sup> Reynolds, ‘Genocide in Tasmania’, 147.

outnumbered in hostile engagements, even when attacked by relatively small militia or paramilitary units because individual hunting bands seldom had more than eight or ten men of fighting age, and often no more than four or five. Forager bands, though they did not have hereditary leaders, were on occasion able to combine fighting forces under the command of temporary war chiefs. They were, however, unable to sustain such initiatives for long as the lack of centralised political structures must have made coordination difficult. More to the point, hunter-gatherers did not produce enough of a surplus to maintain anything resembling an army in the field.

The small-scale social structure of forager societies also meant that women and children usually found themselves in the frontline of fighting and thus extremely vulnerable to being slaughtered or captured. Being taken prisoner, which in most cases meant serving as forced labour or being integrated into colonial society in some subservient status, was an integral part of the genocidal process because it was as destructive of indigenous society as killing its members. A common pattern in settler mass violence towards hunter-gatherer communities was to slay the men, take those women not killed as domestic and sexual drudges, and to value children as sufficiently malleable to be trained for a life of servile labour. As Jared McDonald convincingly argues, child abduction played a central role in the genocidal destruction of hunter-gatherer societies at the Cape. The dispersed social structure of foraging peoples was an asset for as long as intruding settler societies lacked the strength or the will to embark on systematic killing campaigns against them. It appears to have become a decided liability when settler societies went on concerted, eradictory drives.

Those bands forced onto marginal land beyond the range of colonial settlement or in the interstices of farms lived miserable lives and were vulnerable to extinction in a range of ways. Some managed to live off a combination of foraging and stock theft for a while. This was a dangerous option as it invited deadly reprisal from settlers. Many were in time forced into the service of farmers, usually on detrimental terms dictated by employers. Where hunter-gatherer bands were forced into the territories of neighbouring communities, it often resulted in internecine conflict between indigenous groups, weakening them further. In drier areas, bands displaced to remote, marginal land might succumb some years after their displacement because with the coming of the next drought, there was every possibility they would find themselves stranded without food or water.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Adhikari, *Anatomy of a South African Genocide*, 57.

The social dislocation caused by incessant conflict and displacement from ancestral land severely undermined the cultural and biological reproduction of hunter-gatherer societies. The intensely spiritual lives of hunter-gatherer communities were usually closely tied to specific sites and aspects of the landscape, and for them, in the words of Nigel Penn, ‘to lose the land was to lose literally everything’.<sup>36</sup> Also, the necessarily lengthy spacing between siblings in hunter-gatherer society meant that procreation was more easily disrupted and difficult to maintain in times of severe and prolonged upheaval than in farming communities. This wide spacing meant that it also took a long time for bands and socio-linguistic groupings to recover from demographic setbacks as hunter-gatherer women rarely bore more than four children in their lifetimes.<sup>37</sup> The stress accompanying the sundering of their world could only have reduced the fertility of hunter-gatherer women. This could have happened in direct ways, such as people deciding not to have children or resorting to abortion and infanticide, or indirectly, through the physiological impacts of stress and poor nutrition reducing women’s ability to conceive and bring foetuses to term.

The observation that the nature of hunter-gatherer society itself contributed to genocidal outcomes in conflict with commercial stock farmers is not in the least meant to put blame on the victims, nor to diminish either the agency of foraging societies engaged in frontier conflict, or the reality that settler society at times had a rather tenuous hold on power. Nor are these comments to be read as lending any credence to specious doctrines such as *terra nullius* or *vacuum domicilium* and other justifications for violence and dispossession used by imperial establishments. It was, after all, their resistance that usually precipitated extirpatory offensives against hunter-gatherers. This line of argument is intended rather to indicate that, in the final analysis, such struggles were inherently very uneven and that the assault on the land, lives and culture of hunter-gatherer peoples had a decided tendency towards exterminatory violence.

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Case studies are broadly arranged in geographic and temporal sequence. The collection kicks off with my chapter on the destruction of the San

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<sup>36</sup> Penn N. 1996. “‘Fated to perish’: the destruction of the Cape San’, in *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen*, ed. P. Skotnes. Cape Town: UCT Press, 88. Although he was referring specifically to the Cape San, his comments apply to hunter-gatherer society generally.

<sup>37</sup> Diamond, J. 1999. *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: Norton, 89.

(Bushman) societies in the Cape Colony during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because it is the earliest of the cases and provides useful context for contributions on the San that follow. Cape San society was almost completely annihilated as a result of land confiscation, massacre, forced labour and cultural suppression that accompanied colonial rule. The first part of this chapter analyses the dynamic of frontier conflict between the San and settler under Dutch colonial rule during the eighteenth century. The basic pattern was one of incursion into San territory by Dutch-speaking pastoral farmers known as trekboers, San retaliation in the form of cattle raids and farm attacks, followed by colonial retribution by armed, mounted, state-sanctioned militia units known as commandos, as well as indiscriminate murder and massacre by farmers. Conflict intensified through the eighteenth century, with all-out war on the frontier for nearly three decades from about 1770 onwards. The chapter demonstrates both the exterminatory intent underlying settler violence as well as the complicity of a weak colonial state in these depredations, most clearly evident in its sanctioning of the root-and-branch eradication of the San in 1777. Whereas Dutch colonial violence against the San was exterminationist, British policies were eliminationist in that they sought to extinguish San society through assimilation, or 'civilising' in colonial parlance. Despite relatively benevolent British colonial policies from 1798 onwards, the San way of life within the Cape Colony was nevertheless extinguished during the course of the nineteenth century through incremental encroachment on their land, enforced labour incorporation and periodic massacre. This chapter holds that the near extermination of Cape San society constitutes genocide.

Next, Jared McDonald spotlights the much neglected topic of the experience of captured San children in the Cape Colony. One reason for this lack of attention has been that the evidence is sparse and scattered, but McDonald has done an excellent job of tracking down relevant sources. He contends that after San resistance had effectively been broken along the north-eastern frontier in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, an increasing number of San children were captured to satisfy the growing labour needs of the expanding European pastoral economy. McDonald concentrates on the trade in San children during the early decades of the nineteenth century and their forced assimilation into trekboer society—or 'taming' as it was known. McDonald interprets the process as one of culturecide, which he characterises as the eradication of the culture of victims who survive exterminatory violence, a practice integral to the genocidal process. Drawing on comparisons with Australian and Latin American examples during the same period, he demonstrates the

importance of culturecide to San experience of genocide on the Cape's north-eastern frontier, especially after British occupation of the colony in 1806. The British introduced legislation to regulate the employment of Khoikhoi labourers and the treatment of slaves and their descendants, but tended to be silent on the San. In this context, 'tamed' San children had an ambiguous legal status exploited by commercial stock farmers who presented them as 'Hottentot' rather than 'Bushman' to gain tighter control over such workers. The capture and virtual enslavement of their children was fundamental to the obliteration of Cape hunter-gatherer identities and cultures.

In chapter Four, Edward Cavanagh examines the annihilation of San society in the Transorangia region at the hands of Griqua polities formed there in the early decades of the nineteenth century. By demonstrating that the struggle was fundamentally economic in nature, Cavanagh seeks to subvert the 'simplistic, colour-coded binary' that often informs studies of frontier conflict. As competition for resources between indigenous and colonial economic systems intensified along the southern African frontier during the early nineteenth century, it was not only trekboers, but also Bantu-speaking, Khoikhoi, 'Bastaard' and Griqua pastoralists that came into conflict with the San hunter-gatherers who raided their stock. Retributive campaigns against the San became commonplace and some of these offensives, notably on the part of the Griqua, were exterminatory in character. The chapter first outlines the nature and scale of the Griqua pastoral economy which by the 1820s had grown to become the envy of many competing settler farmers. Next it provides an account of the slaughter of the San communities in the Transorangia region between the 1820s and 1850s by commandos mobilised by the Griqua states, centred on Griquatown and Philippolis respectively. The diaries of missionaries and travellers, along with many pointed observations by *landdrost* (magistrate) Andries Stockenström reveal the degree to which Griqua commandos perpetrated exterminatory violence against the San. Concluding that this case constitutes genocide, Cavanagh cautions against racial reductionism that often informs studies of frontier conflict.

Robert Gordon's chapter, which focuses on the divergent experiences of two foraging communities in German South West Africa (GSWA), demonstrates that not all hunter-gatherer peoples were necessarily perceived in similar ways by colonisers. Contrasting perceptions could be of fundamental importance to their experience of colonisation, and indeed, even to their survival. Gordon points out that while the Namibian San, viewed as irredeemable outlaws of little value as workers, faced genocidal onslaught from the colonial establishment, another hunter-gatherer people, the Damara, did not, because they were viewed as useful labourers. What makes

this comparison particularly tantalising is that it represents an inversion of pre-colonial perceptions in terms of which the San were valued as guides and for their hunting skills, whereas Damara were regarded as marauders who deserved to be exterminated. The German onslaught against the Namibian San came in the wake of the 1904–1908 genocidal wars against the Herero and Nama, when pastoral settlement moved into San territory north and north-east of Hereroland. Resistance to this invasion resulted in the colonial state and settlers embarking on a policy of *Ausrottung* (extermination) against Bushmen. After identifying several mutually reinforcing factors that fuelled the tendency for settler violence against indigenes, Gordon explains how an exaggerated emphasis on ceremonialism and on the letter of the law regulated and routinised relations of violence in the colony. He goes on to demonstrate how an excessive reliance on the dubious speculations of academics about the racial dispositions of indigenous peoples contributed to divergent perceptions of the San and Damara in early twentieth century GSWA.<sup>38</sup> Academic discourse presented the San as incorrigibly criminal and incapable of being 'civilised', and thus deserving of a final solution such as extermination or deportation, whereas Damara, though 'primitive', were portrayed as 'born servants, capable of continuous and challenging labour'. Gordon argues that it was in particular the San's supposed lack of any concept of property that singled them out for *Ausrottung* in colonial eyes. However much they maligned San labour, both the colonial state and settlers hunted and captured the San for use as workers on farms and in the copper mines. This genocide in the making was ended in 1915 when South African forces invaded Namibia as a result of the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>39</sup>

In an explicit counter example to the hypothesis that initially set this project in motion, Mathias Guenther shows that colonial relations between the San of the Ghanzi region in western Bechuanaland (present-day Botswana) and incoming white pastoral settlers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were largely peaceful, even cordial. Instead of genocidal conflict over resources as occurred in other parts of southern Africa, relations between Boer pastoral settlers and Bushman hunter-gatherers soon stabilised into patterns of patronage, with Boers as patrons and the San as labour-rendering clients. In their initial interactions, which included competition for resources, Boer and San transformed the potential

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<sup>38</sup> See Stone D. 2007. 'White men with low moral standards? German anthropology and the Herero genocide', in *Colonialism and Genocide*, eds A.D. Moses & D. Stone, for mutual influences between German anthropology and colonial experience in Namibia.

<sup>39</sup> See Gordon R. 2009. 'Hiding in full view: the "forgotten" Bushman genocides of Namibia'. *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 4, no. 1, 29–57.

for mass violence into forms of accommodation. Importantly, ecological and economic factors, including the aridity of the Ghanzi region and the isolation of the Boers, forced them to combine a foraging life style with their inchoately commercial cattle-ranching practices. Because hunter-gatherer bands occupied a different ecological niche to that of Boers, they were able to share Ghanziland with its aboriginal inhabitants. Firstly, extensive tracts of unfenced land between settler farms offered enough foragable foods to allow Bushmen to continue their traditional lifestyle. Secondly, the region was relatively rich in game and the Ghanzi Boers were not eradictory in their hunting practices, leaving the San with a major source of sustenance largely intact. This, together with Boer need for San labour, and many San over time becoming dependent on Boers for food, allowed an opportunity for relations of clientship to develop. The potential for violence arising from both white supremacism and economic exploitation was mitigated by their similar lifestyles, and mutual obligations from their patron-client arrangement helped forge close emotional bonds between Boer and Bushman. With Boers living in Bushman-style wattle-and-daub huts, settler children being reared by San nannies, as well as farmers becoming fluent in San languages and developing extensive knowledge of San cultural practices, the potential for violence was dampened. Guenther, in addition, contends that a strong humanitarian impulse, stemming from both the missionary presence and oversight by the League of Nations, limited violent tendencies in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The key factor explaining the exceptional outcome in Ghanziland was that although they had access to markets, the Ghanzi Boers, because of their isolation and the semi-desert environment, were more in the nature of subsistence pastoralists than capitalist ranchers.

Nigel Penn's chapter, which compares frontier conflict between hunter-gatherers and settler stock farmers at the Cape in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with that between hunter-gatherers and pastoralists in Australia, serves as a convenient transition between case studies in the two regions. On the one hand, because of his detailed coverage of the Cape's northern frontier, Penn provides a useful summation of developments in the annihilation of the Cape San. On the other, his general survey of the Australian situation fulfils the role of an introduction to the detailed regional Australian studies that follow. Penn sets out to explain why these frontiers were so violent and why the hunter-gatherer societies of both regions were virtually exterminated by pastoral settlers. The main similarity he discerns between the two is that both involved violent competition for environmental resources. Although the Cape frontier was one of Dutch colonial expansion in the eighteenth century, in the nineteenth century both the Cape and Australia were part of the British



Empire. The chapter attempts to explain why in both cases British authorities, despite humanitarian motives and policies, were powerless to stop the genocidal destruction of hunter-gatherer societies under their jurisdiction.

In chapter Eight, Lyndall Ryan compares the settler pastoral invasions of Tasmania (1817–1832) and Victoria (1835–1851), which in both cases led to the eradication of more than 80 per cent of their Aboriginal populations within 15 years. She challenges interpretations that consider the virtual extinction of Tasmanian Aborigines as an aberration, and the virtual disappearance of Aboriginal Victorians as the result of inadvertently introduced European diseases by pointing to the dire impact of pastoral land seizures on the Aboriginal populations of the two colonies. She also questions why it is that many historians accept Tasmania, but not Victoria, as an example of genocide. The chapter compares the various methods of land appropriation in the two colonies, their ties to the global economy, and colonial interaction with indigenous populations, dealings marked by racism, settler senses of entitlement and annihilatory violence. The pastoral invasion of Victoria was more rapid and violent than in Tasmania as these squatters were more experienced colonisers, more numerous, better resourced and better prepared for dealing with Aboriginal resistance. Importantly, rapid growth in the demand for pastoral products in the industrialising world at this time meant that larger fortunes were at stake. Ryan focuses in particular on the role of massacre in the decimation of Aboriginal populations in the two colonies, using a comparative statistical approach to reveal new aspects of the genocidal nature of these cases. She concludes that in Australia, when stock farmers invaded the lands of hunter-gatherers, genocide was a predictable outcome, except in instances where Aboriginal labour was needed, such as in the Northern Territory.

This is precisely the point of departure of Ann Curthoys' contribution on the fate of the Aboriginal peoples of Western Australia, where the labour of indigenous peoples was 'not merely useful but essential'. She compares the repercussions that employment in the pastoral, as opposed to the pearling, industry held for Aboriginal society to help tease out the implications demand for Aboriginal labour might hold for understanding the relationship between settler colonialism and genocide. She demonstrates that whereas the treatment of indigenous labour in pearling approximated that of genocide, that of the pastoral industry, though harsh, did not. Pearling involved a regimen of 'brutality and death ... [that] helped destroy certain groups and their relation to country ... [through] the destruction of emotional and family ties including the taking of children'. Pastoralism, on the other hand, although it 'relied

on a powerful mix of dispossession and forced labour ... and significant amounts of ill treatment ... provided a space for some forms of cultural and physical survival'. Curthoys on this basis suggests the need to rethink the argument that settlers were interested only in appropriating land. In the extensive cattle farming regions of Western Australia, where imported and immigrant labour was scarce, colonists were more dependent on Aboriginal labour and had an interest in preserving this workforce. This was important not only for the survival of hunter-gatherer peoples, but is also significant for our understanding of the relationship between settler colonialism and genocide.

In chapter Ten, Tony Barta focuses on the dispossession of hunting peoples in a large section of the Great Plains north of Texas, known as 'Indian Territory', first by commercial stock farmers and later a deluge of settlers moving westward—what Edmund Burke anticipated as 'hordes of English Tartars ... a fierce and irresistible cavalry'. From the early nineteenth century, waves of stock-farming settlers in the region forced Indians off their land and into reserves. A period of coexistence ensued in which enterprising Indians were able to fashion a degree of autonomy for themselves by leasing reservation land to overstocked cattlemen. While the cattle industry destroyed traditional Indian society, it provided some opportunity to those prepared to move with the times. Barta argues that the invasion by stock farmers in this case was not genocidal in the sense of physically obliterating Indian societies, but rather that it displaced them to reserves and eliminated resistance to settler encroachment. Whatever promise this symbiotic relationship held was erased by the subsequent flood of immigration westward, mainly by homesteaders but also by all manner of refugees and fortune seekers from within the United States itself, and later in the century by even greater numbers of European immigrants. The westward surge intensified in the wake of the 1862 Homestead Act that allocated 160 acres of land to new settlers. The US government was complicit in the havoc that befell Native American society 'not by murder but by a ruthless policy of privatisation' of Indian reserves. In one of the clearest examples of explosive colonisation, smallholders came in sufficient numbers to complete the destruction of Indian society that the earlier incursion of stock farmers did not.

In the penultimate chapter, Sidney Haring argues that the demographic collapse experienced by Native American societies of the Canadian prairies, which were opened to white settlement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, constitutes genocide. Unlike the US frontier, the settlement of the Canadian west was more carefully regulated, with

Canadian First Nations removed to reserves after a series of numbered treaties were negotiated with them. This land was then sold to settlers, initially mainly stockmen who later turned to crop and mixed farming. The reserves, predictably, were overcrowded and poverty stricken. They were completely unsuited to the kind of agriculture that was expected to sustain these populations and eventually result in their acculturation to Canadian society. Any possibility of continuing the hunting life of old ended with the obliteration of the buffalo herds by the late 1880s. Hunger, alcoholism, disease, depression and generally poor living conditions on reserves led to the Plains Indian population being reduced by half between 1870 and 1900. Harring explains that although direct killing of Indians was limited, the annihilation of Native American society nonetheless constitutes genocide in terms of the UNCG definition. While forced cultural assimilation, or ethnocide, was the stated objective of Canadian policy, it was the government's failure—and later its refusal—to act when Indians started starving on reserves that makes it guilty of genocide. Surviving Indian peoples tried various ways of adapting to their dispossession, but under the 1876 Indian Act and subsequent amendments, were relegated to an inferior status that kept them on the fringes of prairie society. These structures of subordination have been maintained through to the present, marginalising Native American peoples.

Finally, Lorenzo Veracini's contribution serves both as a conclusionary chapter as well as to provide theoretical reflection on the main theme of the book by drawing together many of its diverse strands in the development of its argument. Veracini regards settler colonialism as consisting of two inter-related transfers. Firstly, colonists physically occupy indigenous land and transfer to it an attachment as their new home, thereby becoming settlers rather than being mere sojourners or migrants. Secondly, to gain exclusive control of its resources, indigenous peoples are physically coerced or transferred from the land. The colonised are also discursively detached from the land in a variety of ways to help legitimate settler claims. Hunter-gatherer communities are particularly vulnerable to both forms of transfer as they are sparsely settled, militarily susceptible to attack and lead migratory lifestyles. This fragility is compounded by the specific nature of stock farming, especially when hunter-gatherer labour is not needed by the colonial economy. Veracini argues that a crucial part of consolidating settler claims to the land is the discursive indigenisation of settlers and the concomitant nomadisation of indigenes. By presenting settlers as inherently sedentary, and indigenes, especially hunter-gatherers, as 'pathologically mobile', settler colonial societies globally sought to

legitimate their dispossession and, where necessary, their extermination of indigenous peoples.<sup>40</sup>

### Conclusion

While there have clearly been many other contributors to mass violence between hunter-gatherer peoples and invading commercial stock farmers, the cumulative effect of the six fundamental factors identified here go a long way towards explaining why, in sustained clashes between these two groups, exterminatory violence was not so much an aberration as normative.

A factor inherent to situations of commercial stock farmers occupying the domains of hunter-gatherers not addressed directly, but implicit in much of the discussion so far, is the nature of settler colonialism itself. Unlike other forms of colonial domination, settler colonialism is much more focused on the permanent confiscation of land and seizure of resources, and therefore on the complete dispossession of indigenous peoples within those areas that settlers claim for themselves. Settler colonial situations are therefore much more prone to mass violence towards indigenous peoples, as well as to violent indigenous resistance to the occupation of their land. Hunter-gatherer communities who resisted settler encroachment have, in addition, been more susceptible to exterminatory violence than other forms of indigenous society. They were despised as the most 'primitive' of peoples, their way of life an anachronism destined for extinction, and sometimes even seen as deserving of that fate. Their sparse populations made extermination more thinkable to interlopers who sought permanent solutions to the 'problem' of indigenous resistance, and their nomadic lifestyle invited settler justification for their dispossession on the basis that they did not really own the land and could not lay legitimate claim to it. In cases where their labour was superfluous to the needs of the colonial economy, foraging peoples were particularly susceptible to extirpatory campaigns. The situation was accentuated in the pastoral industry which had relatively low labour requirements, needing a small, dispersed labour force with skills that foragers had to be taught, and that colonisers often considered them incapable of learning. In other instances, although settlers disparaged hunter-gatherer labour as unsuited to their requirements, they nonetheless made extensive use of such workers, usually captives, or people in one or other way coerced into working for farmers.

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<sup>40</sup> See Brody, *Other Side of Eden*, 152–53; Day D. 2008. *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 77, 161–62, 165; Docker, *Origins of Violence*, 34–36.

These arguments are not meant to suggest that settler colonialism is inherently genocidal as has sometimes been claimed, and as Lemkin seemed to imply,<sup>41</sup> but that it tends to be particularly violent. It is also not suggested that settler colonialism is inherently genocidal towards hunter-gatherer peoples, but that in cases where commercial stock farmers invaded the lands of foraging societies it was generally so. The inclusion in this volume of several examples that challenge absolute claims in this regard is an unequivocal indication of this. In the clearest of these cases, Ghanziland, there is no question of genocide having been perpetrated, essentially because the market for settler produce was so small and their profit motive so attenuated that its pastoral economy was closer to a traditional than capitalist mode of production. Although Guenther presents a counter example to the general pattern outlined in this book, it confirms a key contention of the project, namely, that it is the extent of access to capitalist markets and the operation of a profit motive that are the key drivers of mass violence in these cases.<sup>42</sup> In partial counter examples, Gordon shows how one section of the hunter-gatherer population in German South West Africa was targeted for genocidal persecution, while another was not; and Curthoys demonstrates how one sector of the West Australian economy, pearling, was genocidal in its impact while stock farming was not. Tony Barta, in addition, argues that the process of destruction started by commercial stock farmers was devastating to Indian societies, but not genocidal, their ultimate shattering accomplished by the subsequent invasion of large numbers of homesteaders. The key question is for how long the symbiosis between cattlemen and Indians could have continued. My guess is not for very long. Given time, ranchers were likely to have dispossessed Indians as completely as their Canadian counterparts were busy doing.

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<sup>41</sup> Lemkin R. 1944. *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*. New York: Columbia University Press, xi, 79–80; Docker J. 2008. 'Are settler colonies inherently genocidal? Rereading Lemkin', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, ed. A.D. Moses, 97; Moses A.D. 'Genocide and settler society in Australian history', in Moses, *Genocide and Settler Society*, 27; Finzsch N. 2008. "'The Aborigines ... were never annihilated, and still they are becoming extinct": settler imperialism and genocide in nineteenth-century America and Australia', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, ed. A.D. Moses, 253.

<sup>42</sup> In addition to his chapter in this collection, see Guenther M. 1993. "'Independent, fearless and rather bold": a historical narrative on the Ghanzi Bushmen of Botswana'. *Journal of the Namibian Scientific Society*, 44, 25–40; Guenther M. 2002 'Independence, resistance, accommodation, persistence: hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists in the Ghanzi veld, early 1800s to late 1900s', in *Ethnicity, Hunter-Gatherers and the 'Other': Association or Assimilation in Africa*, ed. S. Kent. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 87–104.

The international market for pastoral commodities was the main driver of conflict between hunter-gatherers and commercial stock farmers, and the level of demand for these products the main determinant of the intensity of hostilities. It was *ultimately* this market's ability to absorb large quantities of merchandise and create the prospect of substantial wealth for producers that helped spur immigration to colonies, and that propelled stock farmers into the lands of indigenous peoples. This was what stoked ruthlessly exploitative attitudes to land and labour, a sense of entitlement to resources among settlers, and a determination that nothing would stand in their way of creating personal prosperity.<sup>43</sup> The most significant *proximate* factor giving impetus to genocidal violence in settler colonies was indigenous resistance. It was this threat to their subsistence, personal ambitions and at times to the colonial enterprise as a whole, that precipitated exterminatory attitudes, actions and policies within the settler establishment. It is not surprising that settlers reacted with extreme hostility, and in concert, when they perceived their lives and livelihoods to be at risk. It was equally predictable that colonial and metropolitan governments would support the settler cause or allow violence they instigated to take its course when the economy suffered or the colonial project itself was under threat. It was the settler population rather than the colonial state that tended to be the main perpetrators of violence when commercial stock farmers overran the territories of hunter-gathering peoples, as these states tended to be weak, were often hampered by metropolitan constraints, and because the initiative in frontier regions generally lay with settlers. Although these were civilian-driven rather than 'state-led' genocides,<sup>44</sup> there were significant degrees of state collusion in such violence, even where policy makers were repelled by settler aggression. The degree of state collusion in such violence was by and large dependent on the degree of settler control of the state.

The preceding analysis, and the volume as a whole, attempts to demonstrate that where pastoralists producing for capitalist markets invaded the territories of hunter-gatherers, the global economic system tended to bring together the practices of metropolitan and colonial governments, the interests of providers of capital and consumers of commodities, and the agency of colonial actors ranging from governors to graziers in remote

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<sup>43</sup> In a survey of American genocides, Alfred Cave, in my opinion, correctly concludes that 'Native American groups, which for one reason or another, could not be integrated into the colonial economy were the most likely to be the earliest victims of genocide'. See Cave A. 2008. 'Genocide in the Americas', in *Historiography of Genocide*, ed. D. Stone.

<sup>44</sup> See Palmer, *Colonial Genocide*, 3, 199; Levene, *Rise of the West*, 95.

outposts in ways that almost invariably fostered exterminatory violence towards those peoples whose territories they overran.<sup>45</sup> The fate of the Cape San, Australian Aborigines, as well as hunter-gatherer peoples who once inhabited substantial swathes of the Americas, testifies to this.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Wolfe P. 2008. 'Structure and event: settler colonialism, time and the question of genocide', in Moses, *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 104.

<sup>46</sup> The broad thesis of this volume certainly applies to Latin America and other parts of the world. Unfortunately, two commissioned case studies, one on the Pampa-Patagonia region and one on Tierra del Fuego, did not materialise. Illness robbed this collection of a study on Queensland, while a comparison of Zimbabwean and Kenyan experiences did not come to fruition either. Attempts at securing Asian case studies came to nought.