



Governments, Citizens, and Genocide: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach

Alex Alvarez

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A comprehensive analysis demonstrating how whole societies come to support the practice of genocide.

"Alex Alvarez has produced an exceptionally comprehensive and useful analysis of modern genocide... [It] is perhaps the most important interdisciplinary account to appear since Zygmunt Bauman's classic work, *Modernity and the Holocaust*."

?Stephen Feinstein, Director, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

"Alex Alvarez has written a first-rate propaedeutic on the running sore of genocide. The singular merit of the work is its capacity to integrate a diverse literature in a fair-minded way and to take account of genocides in the post-Holocaust environment ranging from Cambodia to Serbia. The work reveals patterns of authoritarian continuities of repression and rule across cultures that merit serious and widespread public concern." ?Irving Louis Horowitz, Rutgers University

More people have been killed in 20th-century genocides than in all wars and revolutions in the same period. Recent events in countries such as Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia have drawn attention to the fact that genocide is a pressing contemporary problem, one that has involved the United States in varying negotiating and peace-keeping roles. Genocide is increasingly recognized as a threat to national and international security, as well as a source of tremendous human suffering and social devastation.

Governments, Citizens, and Genocide views the crime of genocide through the lens of social science. It discusses the problem of defining genocide and then examines it from the levels of the state, the organization, and the individual. Alex Alvarez offers both a skillful synthesis of the existing literature on genocide and important new insights developed from the study of criminal behavior. He shows that governmental policies and institutions in genocidal states are designed to suppress the moral inhibitions of ordinary individuals.

By linking different levels of analysis, and comparing a variety of cases, the study provides a much more complex understanding of genocide than have prior studies. Based on lessons drawn from his analysis, Alvarez offers an important discussion of the ways in which genocide might be anticipated and prevented.

Alex Alvarez is Associate Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Northern Arizona University. His primary research interests are minorities, crime, and criminal justice, as well as collective and interpersonal violence. He is author of articles in *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Social Science History*, and *Sociological Imagination* and is currently writing a book on patterns of American murder.

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