

Are genocidal
perpetrators ordinary
men or ideological
monsters



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The term 'genocide' was coined by Raphael Lemkin as a response to the mass murder of Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, Romani, homosexuals and other minority demographics discriminated against and ultimately murdered on a mass scale in Nazi occupied Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. Prior to Lemkin's definition, the Holocaust was, as Churchill described it, a 'crime without a name' (Jones, 2006: 8). Lemkin's definition described the crime as 'the destruction of a nation or an ethnic group' (Jones, 2006: 10) and was later adopted by the newly formed United Nations in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) which in Article 2 defined the crime as acts 'committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group' including murder; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; or forcibly transferring children from the group to another.

The question arises however, as to how individual perpetrators of genocide could be considered 'normal' or 'ordinary' and not the 'evil' of their actions; a debate summarised by Matthäus as 'ordinary men vs. natural born killers' (1996: 134). We label the perpetrators of crimes we deem particularly heinous because, as Waller argues 'a world in which ordinary people would be capable of extraordinary evil is simply too psychologically threatening' (1996: 12) and incomprehensible because we fail 'to comprehend something about them' (Dudai 2006: 699). Following the Holocaust, much academic research was conducted across multiple disciplines in an attempt to explain

how an otherwise outwardly normal person could be, or become, a perpetrator of genocide.

Goldhagen explained the actions of perpetrators of the Holocaust as based entirely on the entrenched historical anti-Semitism within Germany and such a monocausal explanation is sufficient (1997: 416); however his thesis assumes that the majority of German citizens believed in this ideology and focuses only on the genocide of European Jews. Conversely, Browning (2001), Bauman (2009) and others have argued that the actions of individuals are a response to their immediate social surroundings and that their role in the social structure of hierarchy has a far greater impact on complicity. Mann, however, bridges these two central reasons as to why perpetrators commit their crimes. Firstly, the individuals were 'peculiar people', either ideologically motivated or 'disturbed' perhaps by mental ill-health or as a result of their upbringing, career path or marginalised lifestyle. Secondly, the individuals were largely ordinary but bigoted, trapped in a coercive and comradely organization, trapped within a bureaucracy or pursuing material goals (2000: 232-3).

Utilising social-psychological studies, sociological and historical research, it will be shown that where genocide occurs, the individual perpetrators who actively participate in acts of violence or murder are largely 'normal', healthy human beings who respond to the micro social situations and organizations in which they find themselves. Although the research focuses primarily on the Jewish Holocaust of Nazi Europe, other twentieth century genocides will be considered to assess whether ideology was the primary factor across the spectrum. A critique of Goldhagen's thesis of 'eliminationist' anti-Semitism <https://assignbuster.com/are-genocidal-perpetrators-ordinary-men-or-ideological-monsters/>

will be presented to discuss that this was the wider, macro social environment of genocide but was not the sole reason why individuals were complicit.

The Macro, Ideological Approach

Dudai argued that the ideology of genocide is the macro social environment in which perpetrators act (2006). Accordingly, ideology was central to genocidal policies of the twentieth century; racial as in the case of the Turkish genocide in Armenia or the Serbian genocide of Muslims; against a class for example in the Communist genocides in Russia, Cambodia and during Mao's 'Great Leap Forward' in China; or an intertwining of both as with the Holocaust (2003: 176-177). Societies in which violence is idealised and an acceptable form of achieving goals are more likely to utilise violence by the state as a means of social control (Staub, 2002: 55) for example, Germany had a strong use of violence to manage the unruly during the Weimar republic (Rafter, 2008) and Russian Communists found violence to be 'valuable and necessary' (Staub, 2002: 54) and were therefore more likely to be violent and aggressive in order to achieve their ideological goals.

William Gladstone claimed 'The very worst things that men have ever done, have been done when they were performing acts of violence in the name of religion' (Jones, 2006: 400). Staub argues that pluralistic societies are less likely to be susceptible to narrow ideology as individuals are offered a more independent perspective without fear of ostracism or physical danger (2002: 235) therefore suggesting that without the rigorous hierarchy and oppression of genocidal states, individuals may have the ability to choose not to

participate. Where genocide takes place, a process of 'othering' takes place
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whereby the persecutors believe themselves to be superior and their 'enemies', the 'others', inferior. Howard Becker defined the 'outsider' as the individual or group who fail to abide by the rules of his wider social group, imposed by the 'insiders'. To be an outsider does not require a specific act but is a 'consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions' (Becker, 1968: 11).

Anti-Semitism had existed for centuries in Germany and across Europe prior to the Holocaust however, the concept that 'eliminationist' anti-Semitism (Goldhagen, 1997: 71) was a standard belief is highly discredited. Goldhagen infamously argued that the Germans had for centuries harboured homicidal animosity towards Jews which led to 80-90 percent of the German population under Nazi rule wanting to murder them (1997: 541) although he presents no evidence for this assumption. European anti-Semitism was partly a result of Christian dogma regarding Jews as the killers of Christ and unbelievers early in the middle ages, perpetuated by the education of Christian children in the criminality and inferiority of Jews (Staub, 2002: 101). Although the Christian Church had never outwardly called for the destruction of the Jewish faith, the Church had 'made the Jewish people a symbol of unredeemed humanity; it painted a picture of the Jews as a blind, stubborn, carnal, and perverse people' (Blass, 1993: 44). Mann studied fifteen hundred biographies of perpetrators of the Holocaust in an attempt to explain who these people were, finding an unexpected correlation between Christianity and Nazism whereby those who identified with the Catholic Church were disproportionately represented as perpetrators (2000: 347). Similarly, the Christian Armenians had, for centuries lived under oppressive Ottoman rule

and under aspects of Islamic law. Under Islamic civil law, Muslims enjoyed the full rights and duties of citizenship whereas dhimmî, non-Muslims, were to be 'endured' with great inequality between the two groups (Akcam, 2007: 7). Edicts dating back to the sixteenth century declared that the dhimmî were unable to testify against Muslims in court or marry Muslims and they were unable to observe their religious practices if it would disturb Muslims, therefore building new churches or ringing bells was forbidden and repairs to existing churches required official permission from the state. Physical 'othering' also took place to identify non-Muslims as socially lower than their Muslim counterparts where houses were not to be built higher than Muslims', valuable materials such as silk were not to be worn and head and footwear were to be coloured red (Akcam, 2007: 9). In Rwanda, Jones argues that the high rates of conversion in religion to Islam from Catholicism was a result of Islamic rejection of participation in the genocide and the rescuing of Tutsi (2006: 400).

However, secular ideology can be as destructive as fundamentalist, extremist religious ideology in the instigation of genocide (Jones, 2006: 400). Indeed, secular ideologies have 'underpinned' twentieth century genocides (Jones, 2006: 400). If Goldhagen is considered to be incorrect in his assertion that traditional and historical 'eliminationist' anti-Semitism was the sole reason behind the Holocaust, new ideologies must also be considered as to the macro social background behind genocides in the twentieth century. Stalin's Russia, Mao's China and the Khmer Rouge's Cambodia were based on Marxist Communist theory which, although written decades prior to the genocide, caused new political revolutions in which individuals fought for a

new role in society. Maslow identified cultural differences in 'synergy', the extent to which individuals forfeit their own gains and fulfil themselves by contributing to a common good (Staub, 2002: 51). As one Stalinist perpetrator argued, 'with the rest of my generation I firmly believed that the ends justified the means. Our great goal was the universal triumph of Communism, and for the sake of that goal everything was permissible - to lie, to steal, to destroy hundreds of thousands and even millions of people' (Jones, 2006: 401). However, universality of acceptance of the new regimes was not the case. Davis argues that Stalin's 'terror famine' and the famine of Mao's 'Great Leap Forward' were the culmination of violence and killing of the peasantry, designed to break independent spirits and force subordination (Shaw, 2003: 39). Furthermore, resistance to the movements became common with some families choosing suicide over living under Communist rule and subsequent starvation, by choosing to kill livestock rather than hand it over to the Communist party or being part of violent uprisings (Shaw, 2003: 55). If one considers the role of capitalist, democratic ideology in recent warfare, enforcing this ideology in other countries has, in some instances been very unpopular. The anti-Vietnam movement, for example, demonstrated against the United States' bombing of Cambodia as part of the war on Communism in Vietnam (Shaw, 2003: 202) and there were similar demonstrations against the early twenty-first century's war in Iraq which held the intention of restoring democracy to the Iraqi people but was highly unpopular with British citizens.

Goldhagen argues, with no supporting evidence, that the bystanders of Kristallnacht, the infamous pogrom in 1938, believed this would serve the

Jews right because 'the absence of evidence is evidence itself' (Augstein, 1998: 157) however if anti-Semitic ideology was as traditional and prolific in other European countries as Goldhagen argues, the thesis neglects to reason why for the majority of Europe, it took Nazi invasion or annexation to give rise to such 'eliminationist' attitudes. In Italy where anti-Semitism was rife, it was only when the country attempted to further their allegiance to Germany that anti-Semitic policy increased (Rafter, 2008: 302). Conversely, Czechoslovakia for example had a long history of anti-Semitism with pogroms and the forced removal of Jews into a ghetto in the Josefov district of Prague dating back to the thirteenth century but had made no outward attempts to deliberately exterminate the Jewish population. Moreover, if the eliminationist anti-Semitic ideology was so powerful in Germany, Goldhagen, in acknowledging that without the economic depression the Nazis would have never come to power, fails to consider why the overwhelming desire to eliminate the Jews was not acted upon sooner (Finkelstein, 1997: 42). Responses to Nazi occupation varied greatly both within occupied areas and globally for example, Jan Karski infiltrated the Warsaw ghetto and Belzec concentration camp, escaping to London with hundreds of documents detailing the genocide taking place but many, Jews included, found the actions unbelievable (Jones, 2006: 399) and early reports following the liberation of Auschwitz were disbelieved by the British media who only reported their findings after other global media had verified and reported. Furthermore, if the ideology was so entrenched in society and traditionally perceived as a threat, Goldhagen fails to acknowledge why many Jewish citizens of occupied Europe did not attempt to emigrate sooner, believed the Nazi propaganda detailing their 'resettlement' at work camps and that the <https://assignbuster.com/are-genocidal-perpetrators-ordinary-men-or-ideological-monsters/>

gas chambers in extermination camps were shower facilities as testimony from those survived the concentration camps and particularly those who worked in the Sonderkommando (special units of concentration camp prisoners who worked in the gas chambers and crematoria) describes (for example Venezia, 2009; Müller, 1999; Haas, 1984). Moreover, Goldhagen fails to explain why the eliminationist ideology 'rapidly dissipated' (Goldhagen, 1997: 593-4) following the fall of Berlin and Nazi rule.

Propaganda and indoctrination are highly used in genocide to spread the state ideology across the masses. For example, propaganda in Nazi Europe and indoctrination of Argentinean soldiers to promote 'character, honour and pride' (Staub 2002: 214). Coupled with the perceived threat of Communism, propaganda was highly used against the Jews, portraying them as not only racial inferiors but as assisting in Bolshevism (Jones, 2006: 267). Indeed, perpetrators were more likely to have originated from the 'threatened' borders of the Reich where anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism were great (Mann, 2000: 348). Similarly, the Hutu portrayed the Tutsi as 'bloodthirsty foreigners intent on exterminating the Hutu' (Valentino, 2005: 35) by means such as the radio and the extremist Hutu newspaper, the Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines and Kangura respectively, and calling on Hutu to follow the infamous 'Hutu Ten Commandments' calling for vigilance against the Tutsi enemy (Jones, 2006: 237). The 1972 genocide in Burundi of Hutus was a theme of Hutu political discourse and used in an attempt to invoke fear in the Hutu population, that if the Tutsi were not destroyed, the Tutsi would destroy the Hutu (Valentino, 2005: 183) for although there was little evidence of fear and hostility between the two groups prior to the 1994

genocide, the conflict was engineered (Valentino, 2005: 57). Ideological propaganda can be received by individuals differently however. Franz Stangl, commandant of Treblinka believed propaganda was used by the Nazis 'to condition those who actually had to carry out these policies to make it possible for them to do what they did', further arguing that the primary motive for genocide was for Nazi control of Jewish money and property (Semelin, 2003: 270).

'Self-concept' is a large factor in the ideology of genocide. Germany had lost a large proportion of their territory following their defeat in World War I, a war fought to gain the power and advantages Germany felt were owed to them, and the subsequent Treaty of Versailles. Hitler subsequently blamed the Jews for the loss of the war and, owing to the Sonderweg (special status of the country) (Elias, 1996: 438) declared that Germany needed more Lebensraum (living space) resulting in the invasion of many countries across Europe to regain land which was seen as belonging to Germany. Moreover, individuals may have a strong sense of belonging to a group, identified for or against by visible symbols, education and other means (Staub, 2002: 253). Self image is reinforced by the relationship to the 'others', the outsiders who have been deemed a threat by the social group. For example we may consider the attitude of the British in their war efforts in World War II or the social responses to terrorism in comparison with genocidal action; where a threat (whether 'real' or 'imaginary') is posed by one social group against another a unity of identity forms.

'Racially unclean' social groups in Nazi occupied Europe, including the mentally and physically ill, were deemed inferior and inherently criminal
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based on biological criminology and alterations to Lombroso's Born Criminal thesis (Rafter, 2008). Where the Weimar Republic had been a series of turbulent governments and viewed as soft on crime, a more authoritarian policy on crime and criminals was called for by conservatives. Hitler was, Goldhagen argues, 'not seen as a madman but a politician to be taken seriously' (Augstein 1998: 157). With biological 'evidence' collected by the Criminal-Biological Service in Bavaria that these groups were the cause of crime within the state, the ideological policies became incorporated into the criminal justice system, further perpetuating the image of the Jew as inferior and a potential threat to the German way of life.

The Micro, Bureaucratic and Hierarchical Approach

An acknowledgement of ideology must therefore be considered to underpin the rationale of genocide. Browning, in arguing a multi-causal rationale of the Holocaust acknowledges the 'deluge of racist and anti-Semitic propaganda' (Jones, 2006: 270), however he also questions the role of obedience, peer pressure and obligation. Arendt's Report on the Banality of Evil impacted greatly on the impression we have of perpetrators of genocide, drawing focus away from the pathological and towards more social explanations of their actions (Dudai, 2006: 700), followed by Bauman who argued that 'cruelty is social in its origin much more than it is characterological' (Bauman, 1989: 116).

Prior to multi-disciplined research into the psychology of perpetrators, individual participants were believed to be mentally ill. Goldhagen reinstates this claim, arguing that the anti-Semitic ideology made the Germans

'pathologically ill', 'struck with illness of sadism' 'diseased', 'tyrannical' and
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'sadistic' (Goldhagen, 1997: 397). Blass discusses a 'dispositional approach' to the individual pathologies of the perpetrators in that they may be in some way mentally unhealthy (Blass, 1993: 37). Rorschach ink-blot tests were conducted on Nazi leaders prior to the Nuremberg trials in 1945 to conclude that they were of a 'distinct group' and 'were not psychologically normal or healthy individuals' (Blass, 1993: 37). However, the findings have largely been discredited with Kelley arguing that the personalities displayed were 'not unique or insane' and 'could be duplicated in any country of the world today'; the tests were not 'blind' and the researchers could therefore have been biased in their analyses and where blind analyses were conducted there was individuality of results that contradicted the conclusion of a uniform distinction setting apart the perpetrators (Blass, 1993: 37). Where Eichmann had been perceived by Arendt and Wiesenthal to be 'normal' and acting under orders, blind analyses of personality tests revealed him to be 'sadistic and violent in his hostility', 'quite paranoid' and 'a criminal with an insatiable killing intention' (Blass, 1993: 37). Finkelstein rebuts this claim, arguing that a 'homogeneously sick society' would act as an alibi for the perpetrators for 'who can condemn a " crazy" people' (Finkelstein, 1997: 44). Arendt, who was present at the trial of Eichmann found him to be 'normal' and there to be potentially an 'Eichmann in every one of us' (2005: 113).

Nazi ideology and German culture in the 1930s and 1940s were strongly affiliated with the concept of obedience, indeed as Berger notes, the first commandment in indoctrinating Nazi youth was 'the leader is always right' (Blass, 1993: 33). The Holocaust in Nazi Europe took place under a strict bureaucratic regime with a 'meticulous' division of labour and linear

graduation of power (Bauman, 2009: 98). Those faced with the task of directly murdering 'enemies' were the subordinates at the end of a long bureaucratic chain leading to Himmler, the head of the SS and Heydrich, the head of the Einsatzgruppen. The practical and mental distance afforded to those at higher levels of the bureaucracy who may have had little experience or knowledge of the true nature of the delegated orders was not the case for those whose responsibility it was to shoot at point-blank range in the Einsatzgruppen or pour in the poison Zyklon B pellets into the gas chambers (Bauman, 2009: 99).

The obedience that allows the subordinates of a hierarchy to commit murder is therefore of critical importance. A psychological explanation offered by Blass is that of a 'situational perspective', whereby forces outside of the individual, largely from the social environment such as the position in a hierarchy and subordination can explain seemingly deviant or counter normative behaviour as a result of the immediate situation (Blass, 1993: 31). Blass argues that the results of Milgram's obedience experiments are representative of the causal relationship between the immediate situation and the reactions of individuals. Milgram's experiment consisted of asking the subject to apply increasing voltages of electric shock to the 'learner' should they answer a question incorrectly in 15 volt increments up to 450 volts, ominously marked 'XXX'. 65% of subjects subjected the 'learner' to the highest levels of voltage and he concluded that individuals could become 'agents in a terrible destructive process' out of a sense of obligation, through the course of their jobs and without any hostility towards their victim (Blass, 1993: 33). Responsibility for any harm caused was relinquished to the

legitimate authority, the examiner, and the subordinate subject was no longer guided by conscience but the extent to which they obey the orders of authority (Blass, 1993: 33). Similar experiments were carried out throughout the 1970s including that of Ring, Wallston and Corey who found a 91% obedience rate in applying 'painful sound' to a 'learner', even when the experiment appeared to go awry and surprise even the experimenter (Blass, 1993: 34).

In the well-documented experiments conducted by Zimbardo, individuals were randomly labelled as 'prisoner' or 'guard' and were to carry out these roles in a controlled environment for a period of time. Those labelled as 'guards', knowing they were overseeing individuals who were had in no way been labelled as inferior prior to the experiment, became overly zealous in their positions and when physical violence and humiliation was utilised against the 'prisoners', the experiment was halted on ethical grounds. Zimbardo concluded that the dominant positioning within the hierarchy allowed sadistic behaviour to be elicited from non-sadistic, normal people who would exert violence on their equals because their social positioning allowed them to (Valentino, 2005: 44-46)

Two social-psychological theories attempt to explain the actions of genocide perpetrators whilst obediently following orders. The concept of the 'divided-self' considers that the 'self', our personality and behaviour remains intact but a second self is created or activated in a new situation. Conversely, 'unitary-self' theories argue that there is a single self which becomes altered as a result of the societal forces, situations and organisations (Waller, 1996:

12). Lifton uses examples of The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde or <https://assignbuster.com/are-genocidal-perpetrators-ordinary-men-or-ideological-monsters/>

the comic, Superman in his analogy of the divided self in that when presented with a situation of distress, a character such as Clark Kent changes into his alter-ego of Superman to save the world (Waller, 1996: 13). Clark Kent remains the primary self but Superman, the secondary self, becomes activated and controls the behaviour of the body and mind. A variation of this dissociation may be 'doubling' where the two selves are separate with no conflicts and where 'moral standards are annulled' (Waller, 1996: 14-15). Auschwitz survivors have described some of the doctors as two different people (Waller, 1996: 26) For example, The Nazi doctor, Mengele who performed pseudo-medical experiments on Auschwitz inmates asked children to call him 'uncle' and would appear to behave with kindness, playing with them and giving them luxuries of sweets and chocolate only to continue to perform his experiments and murder (Nomberg-Przytyk, 1985: 104). Steiner also noted differing 'psychosocial' types which only present under certain conditions for example the 'sleeper' will not be apparent until an environment allows for or causes the release (Blass, 1993: 43). Bauman similarly notes a difference in personalities dependent upon the extraordinary situations in which one finds oneself. Recounting the studies of Le Monde, survivors of a hijacking had a high incidence of divorce owing to individuals seeing their partners in a 'different light'; good husband were selfish, the brave business man displayed cowardice and the resourceful 'fell to pieces'(Bauman, 2009: 6). The journalist questioned which face of the survivors was their true self; the original or their selves during the hijacking and concluded that neither was more true than the other. The normal 'good' face was apparent in ordinary settings and, but for the extraordinary circumstance of the hijacking, the other self would have remained dormant

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(Bauman, 2009: 6). Milgram contended that in conforming to the orders of a superior, an 'agentic state' is created where the individual operates on the behalf of their superior and thus becomes an agent of their will. Similar to Steiner's psychosocial types and Bauman's analogy of the hijack victims, Milgram argues that this state lies dormant until it is required that one will act under orders. However, unlike Lifton's doubling, the agentic state avoids an inner moral conflict by toggling between the autonomous and agentic states (Waller, 1996: 16).

More contemporary social psychology has adopted a strategy of the 'unitary self'. When an individual is faced with actions which are inconsistent with their morality, they must either alter their behaviour or their personality as inconsistencies between the two cause individuals to feel 'troubled' (Waller, 1996: 16). In certain situations, including the rigid hierarchy of the SS where each individual was accountable to an immediate supervisor (Bauman, 2009: 100), changing one's behaviour may not be possible or desired as individuals who hid or aided a Jew were punishable by death (Staub, 2002: 165) as were moderate-Hutu in Rwanda (Jones, 2006: 238). Fear is arguably a motivation for compliance. As Augstein criticised Goldhagen, he had grown up in an American democracy and could not imagine the conformist pressure and 'moral cowardice' which took place under Hitler's dictatorship (Augstein, 1998: 153). In Cambodia, one survivor talked of his complicity in the violence saying 'Collaborate? Everyone do what Khmer Rouge say - no one want to be killed' (Baum, 2008: 158). Therefore in order to remain consistent, the manifest conformity to rules and orders may lead to a change in the self (Waller 1996: 16). Waller furthers this argument by stating that there are

three catalysts to the internal changes in the selves of direct perpetrators of genocide; devaluing and dehumanising the victim and blaming them for their own suffering; the escalating of commitments to a cause; and 'learning by doing'. The process of dehumanization was raised in the Rwandan context by Hatzfeld as one perpetrator felt they no longer regarded the Tutsi as people as the killing escalated (2005: 47). While Goldhagen's answer to the Germans' murder of the Jews was 'because they wanted to', Foster, Haupt and de Beer's answer to the political violence in South Africa was 'because they felt entitled to' (Dudai, 2005: 703). Entitlement would imply an option of redeeming behaviour by the victims however victims of genocide are not persecuted because of what they do rather, who they are. Routinisation of actions are argued to facilitate genocide, for example Hatzfeld quotes one Rwandan informant who claimed 'I struck a first blow. When I saw the blood bubble up, I jumped back a step... later on we go used to killing without so much dodging around (Hatzfeld, 2005: 23) and repetition caused the perpetrators to become 'more and more cruel, more and more calm, more and more bloody' (2005: 50). Furthermore, Waller argues that coerced behaviour is rarely internalised however when our initial attitudes are weak, the initial act may result in a change of attitude (1996: 22).

The attitude of one's superiors could directly influence the behaviour of the subordinates. For example the police sergeant, Hein, was never seen to hit or humiliate a Jew, participate in mass-killings of Jews, or be unfair in his treatment of Jews. Furthermore, those under his command could abstain from the mass-shootings. However, 'self presentation' theorists seek to explain Hein's following of official requirements for Jews to stand whilst he

was sitting as an attempt to maintain an appearance of conforming whilst inwardly rejecting the ideology (Matthaus, 1996: 141). Goldhagen argued that the cruelty of the perpetrators of the Holocaust was 'nearly universal' (Valentino, 2005: 52) however a surprising number of the Einsatzgruppen refused to participate, perhaps twenty to thirty percent in comparison to the less than thirty percent who presented themselves as 'enthusiastic' and the remaining members who dutifully adopted their roles within the system (Valentino, 2005: 54). During their first mass killing in Lithuania, the Schutzpolizei (urban police) members of one Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing unit) dropped out of the act because they knew some of the victims or could not stand the mental pressure. Furthermore, doubts were raised regarding the legality of the killings and justifications were made amongst themselves that 'one generation has to go through this so that our children will have a better life' (Matthaus 1996: 136).

However, obedience need not be in a downward, linear direction but obedience to one's peers. Browning argues that for some members of a police battalion faced with the mass-shooting of Jews, comrades not participating would be seen to leave the 'dirty work' to their comrades, risking isolation, rejection and ostracism which, in the tightly knit regiments, would have been an uncomfortable prospect (Valentino, 2005: 46). Similarly, a unity existed between the Hutu, using lexis as 'comrades' and 'patriotic brothers' (Hatzfeld, 2005: 12). Where Browning argued members of the Einsatzgruppen existed in a 'reverse morality; where those who avoided killings were regarded, by themselves included, as cowards, in Rwanda, a 'supportive comrade' would assist when one perpetrator felt unable to

participate that day whilst the individual would contribute with other 'useful tasks' (Hatzfeld, 2005: 74). Hilberg argued that the methods for genocide of European Jews in the 1930s and 1940s were not suggested entirely by those further up the hierarchy; major ideas could be produced by those at a lower level of responsibility and approved by superiors to become policy (Blass, 1993: 37).

Mann's biographical study of perpetrators included an examination of the previous job positions held by individuals prior to Nazi rule and found correlations between Nazi policy, related institutions and individuals within them. For example, a key Nazi policy was 'racial purity', ensuring the Aryan race was free of those considered undesirable, beginning early in the rule with the T4 experiments to euthanize those with mental or physical health problems. Correlating with this policy, Mann found 13.53% of his sample to have been previously employed as healthcare workers. Rafter's assertions of Nazi racial policy impacting on German criminology and policy within the Criminal Justice System correlate with 22.29% of Mann's sampled perpetrators holding previous employment in the military, police or prison system, 12.92% having held employment in civil administration and 3.38% having worked in the legal field (2000: 350). Individuals may therefore have acted in an agentic state towards the Nazi ideology because this was their profession and they were 'caught up' in the hierarchy and bureaucracy.

In instances of revolution and rapid-paced political change, however, an anomic theory where a lack of social position and role in a hierarchy, as a