NO CLOSER TO ‘NEVER AGAIN’:
An Analysis of Genocide Prevention Through the Lens of Ordinary Men

A thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Since the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948, the United Nations and the international community have been largely unsuccessful at preventing genocide. Why is this the case? I argue that the United Nations and other actors in the international community have failed to recognize fundamental concepts of genocide, rendering themselves ineffective at prevention. In order to prevent genocide, we must be willing to look at genocides from all angles and through all lenses to better understand the conditions that lead to genocide. Analyzing the Holocaust, I will focus on how ordinary citizens become perpetrators in genocide. Using case studies of genocide perpetrators conducted by genocide scholars, I aim to understand how ordinary people become genocide perpetrators. I will demonstrate the importance of understanding this concept and include suggestions for how this representation of genocide can be incorporated into genocide prevention strategies, making them more effective.

KEYWORDS: genocide, perpetrator, victim, Holocaust, mass atrocity, mass violence
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CHAPTER ONE
WHY ‘NEVER AGAIN’ IS NOT WORKING

“...a process must be understood, its preconditions and warning signs defined”
—Jewish World Watch

INTRODUCTION

1945. Millions of Jews and other ‘enemies’ of Nazi controlled Germany murdered. How was the world to move forward from this? In the wake of the Holocaust, the world was faced with very difficult questions. How could people be so evil? How had the rest of the world allowed it to happen? It was not that the Holocaust had been an entirely unique event; similar atrocities had happened in the past, but the scale of death and the widespread knowledge of the horrific details due to World War II made the Holocaust impossible to ignore. The international community had to come up with a plan to never let such inconceivable cruelty happen again.

With the world becoming increasingly interconnected after the creation of the United Nations, it seemed like the right time for the world to work together to come up with a plan. The slogan ‘Never Again’ was coined as a pledge to rid the world of such atrocities.

Fast-forward 70 years. Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur, Central African Republic and countless other countries and regions have experienced genocide. While the pledge of ‘Never Again’ was surely made with good intentions, efforts to bring this pledge to fruition have failed. This chapter will tease out what I believe to be the reasons behind this failure, and why I believe that in 2016 we are still no close to ‘Never Again’.

NAMING THE CRIME

The term ‘genocide’ did not exist until Ralph Lemkin, a Polish, Jewish, victim of the Holocaust fought to name the crime, put it into historical context, and demanded action (Jones,
Lemkin succeed with his mission only three years after the end of the Holocaust when the term genocide became internationally recognized following the United Nations adoption of The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNGC) on December 9, 1948. The convention stated that genocide, “whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law.” Article II of the UNGC defines genocide as:

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

This was an extremely significant step towards ‘Never Again’ because every nation that signed the UNGC and the United Nations Charter “obligated itself to adhere to the most basic norms of civilized conduct, which means that only through outright hypocrisy can a government commit a crime as grievous as genocide” (Jones, 2011, p. 575).

Excellent! Genocide officially became a crime and most of the world’s strongest nations have pledged to prevent it from happening again. The UNGC was undoubtedly a step in the right direction. The international community now had a legally binding document that called for action next time the world was faced with such violence. The UNGC created new precedent for all future cases of genocide. It became the document used to back up all UN actions related to genocide. For better of for worse, the UN became the organization that the world looked to when identifying if certain cases are genocide and what the appropriate response should be. It seemed
like all the pieces were in place to prevent another genocide. Yet, there have been far too many genocides since the adoption of the convention proving that the UN framework for genocide prevention has not worked.

**UNGC PROBLEMS**

Under Article V of the UNGC signing members are to undertake punishment of the crime of genocide, yet they often shy away from labeling something as ‘genocide’ when atrocities have occurred that very clearly fit the definition. One can assume that this is a result of the way the treaty is written. The language of the UNGC is unclear when the signing parties will be compelled to undertake punishment of genocide, what the punishments will be and who will do the punishing. Since there is no international police force, any punishment or prevention will most likely be the responsibility of the domestic governments that have ratified the convention. A lot of questions arise form this treaty: Does the convention compel ratifying states to act? If they do act, what will the repercussions be? What kind of commitment will they have to make: troops on the ground, economic sanctions, Humanitarian aid, etc.? Who will take on the financial burden? These questions highlight a fundamental problem with the genocide convention; it’s execution.

Article VIII of the Convention states “any Contracting Party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article III” (United Nations, 1948). The UNGC does not address collective action of the UN as a whole, but rather leaves the responsibility to act up to the individual Contracting Parties to decide how and when to intervene when genocide occurs. In addition, the
convention uses ambiguous language that leaves a lot of room to interpretation. For example, using the word ‘intent’ in the definition has often been a point of debate for the convention. How do you prove ‘intent’? Does it have to be proved before action can legally occur? The UNGC raises more questions than it answers. Unfortunately, this lack of clarity has led member states to seemingly treat the convention as suggestive rather than compulsory; and has lead to the belief by many member states that the convention “confers no obligation on its state parties to physically intervene to stop genocide” (Heinze, 2007, p. 373). They use the loopholes of the convention to justify their lack of action.

Much of the literature on genocide prevention points to the current genocide prevention norms in place to explain the obvious disconnect between what the UN has pledged to do and what it actually does. The effectiveness of the UN is often based on its ability to set in motion national forces that directly influence the making of national policy; in other words, how is the behavior of a particular state influenced by its membership in the UN (Martin & Simmons, 1998). If this is in fact the purpose of an institution, then it can be argued that the UN is failing at genocide prevention even if they may not be fully to blame. Since the UN does not have an external enforcement mechanism to compel states to act, it is often the member states themselves that “are responsible for deterring, if not outrightly preventing, in one way or another, the United Nations form acting in a timely and/or adequate fashion” (Totten & Bartrop, 2004, p. 8). As Totten and Bartop (2004) point out, this is particularly true for members of the Security Council, “which basically control what the United Nations does and does not do in the way of intervention and prevention of genocide” (p. 8). This lack of motivation to confront genocide has developed into an accepted norm among UN member states.
Unfortunately, while the UN clearly holds responsibility for its lack of enforcement, its political will can only be as strong as its member states permit it to be. Therefore, these influential member states must also be looked at as actors in the international community with the responsibility and ability to prevent genocide. In particular, permanent members of the UN Security Council, “the only international body with the global legal right to compel countries to adhere to international humanitarian treaties and customs, by force if necessary” hold much of the blame for ineffective genocide prevention policies (Jones, 2011, p. 575). For example, the UN Security Council member states voted to pull peacekeepers and resources out of Rwanda once the genocide started—despite possessing prior knowledge that the conflict had been escalating for months, and possessing the ability to actually adjust the UN mandate to make it more effective before the genocide actually started. States like the United States; a hegemon in the UN system with a vast military budget and permanent membership to Security Council often influences UN policy decisions and must also be looked at when trying to understand the UN’s failures related to genocide.

Constructivists argue that “systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values...exert a powerful influence on social and political action” (Burchill et al., 2013, p. 224). Meaning that the norms surrounding genocide prevention should influence both the social and political actions of the states that have ratified the UNGC, but it seems to fall short. When the UN has responded to a particular genocide they are often ineffective because the framework for responding to these conflict always follows a similar pattern. The common response has become authorization of a ‘peacekeeping mission’ justified under either Chapters VI or VII of the UN Charter that deploys set number of personnel and troops for the purpose of ‘peacekeeping’. The missions are limited by their mandates and rarely strong enough to end the conflict. Peacekeeping missions usually
help mitigate a crisis, but do nothing to help the larger cause of genocide prevention. For example, the UN established United Nations Assistance Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) to address the genocide in Darfur. The original mandate granted 26,000 peacekeepers, but when it actually deployed only 9,000 were sent (World Without Genocide, 2015). UNAMID to this day is “undermanned and ill-equipped” and “its presence has been inadequate to change the situation on the ground.” (USHMM, 2015a). Another example is the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which has little hope of ever actually ending the conflicts with their current mandates. While over 10,000 troops have been committed to MINUSCA, the Central African Republic being roughly one-and-a-half times the size of France “in an area without proper transport infrastructure, without a proper communications infrastructure, even 50,000 wouldn’t be enough” (Fisher, 2014). It’s clear to anyone paying attention that this system is not work.

Reforms

UN failures did not go unaddressed. In 1998, the UN “renewed” its commitment to the UNGC to refocus efforts for the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide (UN General Assembly, 1999). In the years following its renewed commitment, the UN explored suggestions on how to improve their efforts with investigative reports. In March 1999, the UN Security Council was presented with the Report of Independent Inquiry into the actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda (Independent Inquiry). The Independent Inquiry ultimately concluded:

The failure by the United Nations to prevent, and subsequently, to stop the genocide in Rwanda was a failure of the United Nations system as a whole. The fundamental failure was the lack of resources and political commitment devoted to the developments in
Rwanda and to the United Nations presence there. There was a persistent lack of political will by Member States to act, or to act with enough assertiveness. (Carlsson, Sung-Joo & Kupolati, et al., 1999, p. 3)

The *Independent Inquiry* identified the many failures of the UN in Rwanda: inadequacy of UNAMIR’s mandate, overburdened due to inadequate resource and logistics, UN was focused on cease-fire instead of moral outrage of the massacres, and the lack of political will of the member states (Carlsson et al., 1999). At the time the mandate was established “members of the Security Council were either ignorant of or turned a blind eye to the possibility of genocide” and “when they authorized UNAMIR: They chose to disregard explicit early warnings of the potential perils that such a mission would inevitably face,” so “UNAMIR's mandate...was constructed on a foundation of palpably false assumptions” dooming the mission from the start. The *Independent Inquiry* was shortly followed by the *Brahimi Report* to investigate the UN’s ability to conduct peace operations (for conflicts in general, not just for genocide) effectively and give realistic recommendations to enhance its capacity in the future. The recommendations of the report were very much in line with those of the *Independent Inquiry*, which, if implemented properly, “could point the way toward best practice in UN peace operations by curtailing ill-considered and inadequately supported interventions, encouraging the greater use of career military officers to assess requirements, and fostering greater willingness to make resources and political support available so that the United Nations can do those jobs its asked to do” (Totten & Bartrop, 2001, p. 11).

Even the US recognized it’s failing in this department and funded investigative reports of its own. For example, the government funded Genocide Prevention Task Force Report conducted by Madeleine Albright and William Cohen argued that “there is no military ‘solution’ to
genocide, but military options can be critical parts of a whole-of-government solution” (Albright & Cohen, 2008, p. 74). Similarly, Holly Burkhalter of Physicians for Human Rights in a testimony to the Congressional Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Operations (1998) urged that Presidential Directive 25, which limited US support for UN missions, “be replaced with another directive which explicitly authorizes US support for a United Nations-sanctioned military intervention to deter or stop genocide and to protect the victims.” The UN and the US both acknowledged that a lot more could be done; and a lot more should be done. It finally seemed that these main actors in there internationally community accepted that this reactive form of prevention was not working. It seemed that they accepted they could no longer neglect their responsibility as leaders in the international community to establish new norms surrounding genocide.

In 2004 the UN established a new office called the UN Special Advisor on Prevention of Genocide. The responsibilities of this office include bringing Security council’s attention to situations that could turn into genocide, make recommendations to the Security Council to prevent genocides or stop those that are already occurring, and “enhances the United Nations’ capacity to analyze and manage information regarding genocide or relation crimes” (United Nations Security Council, 2004). The UN Special Advisor’s job is to identify risks and be the catalyst for action in the UN.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), in partnership with Dartmouth College, established the Early Warning Project. The Early Warning Project uses statistical risk assessment combined with an expert opinion pool in order to “assess a country’s general level of relative risk for the onset of a future mass killing in which a government acts against its own citizens” (Early Warning Project, n.d.). The project looks for three specific
indicators of genocide: (1) “bad regime” model which looks at the characteristics of national politics, (2) “elite threat” model which looks at the possibility of future coups and civil wars, and “random forests” which looks at “experts’ beliefs about the origins of mass killing as its jumping-off point” (Early Warning Project, n.d.).

These reforms were clear acknowledgement from the UN and the US that the process for responding to genocide does not work. These reforms are helping to restructure the current genocide norms by recognizing the need to get early warning signs and the need for more international support for the UNGC. These reforms added some new tools to the toolkit for genocide prevention. The Special Advisor’s job is to conjure support for the UNGC and the Early Warning Project “seeks to expand opportunities for preventive action before violence breaks out and to help generate pressure for early and effective response” (USHMM, 2015b). I certainly applaud these efforts and I do not deny that they have their place in the framework for genocide prevention. However, while these projects are improving methods for genocide prevention, I believe they will ultimately be ineffective. In July 2014, Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General, said, “prevention means acting early; to do that, we need to know what to look for” (United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, 2014, p. iii). I argue that the UN Special Advisor and the Early Warning Project have not fully identified ‘what to look for’ in order to make genocide prevention successful. The international community can have all conventions, task forces, strategies, and programs in the world, but if they are all founded on an incorrect understanding of genocide then they will never be truly successful.
AN ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE PROBLEM

The UN and US reforms were geared toward conjuring the political will to act once early warning signs are identified; these early warning signs, which is all well in good assuming that political will is the number one problem with genocide prevention. If it is to be understood that political will is the problem, this means the UNGC itself is just fine, but the execution of the document is the problem. In other words, all the tools are in the toolkit, but no one knows how to use them. This interpretation means that the UNGC is sufficiently equipped for the task at hand. To tease this out, UNGC must be compared with other UN conventions. Subject matter aside, its structure is not much different than other UN conventions. Other UN conventions lack enforcement mechanisms and ambiguous language just like the UNGC. The conundrum, then, is that member states seem more willing to uphold the principles expressed in other treaties than the UNGC. This would mean that the world is much more concerned with things like trade, or corruption, or climate change than they are with genocide.

This knowledge could very well support the argument of the lack of political will of the UN and its member states surrounding genocide. But, to accept this argument, we would have to accept that the UN and its member states simply do not want to do anything more to prevent genocide than they are already doing. This is very troubling. This would mean that the UN and its member states adopted the UNGC without any real intention of upholding it, but rather wrote it to appease a world still in shock after Holocaust. It would mean that millions of government and donor dollars have been spent in investigative reports and projects to try to come up with better ways to prevent genocide, not so that a ‘Never Again’ might become a reality someday, but to appear as if they are doing something without ever actually planning to implement the reforms and suggestions of these reports and programs. This is too appalling to accept. Instead I
offer a different interpretation to the problem, that the UNGC as it is currently written is a document ill-equipped to prevent genocide. The next section will introduce an alternative explanation for why the UNGC isn’t working, why after the Holocaust we have had so many genocides, and why we have genocide occurring in the world as I write.

*The Missing Link*

Since the creation of the UNGC there has been a missing link between how genocide is perceived, and what actually happens on the ground. I believe this link is that the UNGC’s ineffectiveness is directly related to the fact that it is an outdated document. The UNGC was written shortly after the Holocaust ended. The definition of the ‘crime’ was brand new (genocides had happened before, but there was no name for such crimes). Obviously at time the idea of having a definition was important to naming the crime, and important for victims like Lemkin who needed to know the world understood the uniqueness of the crime. But, issues arise from giving such a complex issue a strict definition. Definitions have their limitations because they put genocide into a certain scope, which often can be either too broad or too narrow, making any action difficult. A fundamental concept of genocide is that it is unique to other forms of violence. Genocides uniqueness creates a conundrum when trying to create a singular definition. A structured definition resulted in the UN and signing member states continuous questioning of whether or not actions are considered genocide. Take the case of Serbia and Croatia during the Balkan Wars. Genocide Watch estimates that Croatia’s government killed about 650,000 Serbs, and Serbia’s government murdered roughly 100,000 Croats during the Balkan Wars. Yet, only last year the he UN’s highest court concluded “crimes had been committed by both countries forces during the conflict, but that the intent to commit genocide – by ‘destroying a population in whole or in part’ – had not been proven against either country” (“UN Court says Serbia and
Croatia...”, 2015). Legally the UN found its own definition too narrow to be applied to this specific case. Yet, study these atrocities and one would most definitely disagree with the court’s findings, even with a surface understanding of genocide. So, perhaps the problem lies in the fact that the UNGC’s definition and interpretation of the crime does not match what actually happens when genocide occurs.

The definition matters because it is continuously invoked to justify both action and inaction. Those who take a harder interpretation of the definition are “guided by concerns that ‘genocide’ will be rendered banal or meaningless by careless use,” whereas those who use ‘soft’ definitions are concerned that “rigid framings...rule out too many actions that, logically and morally, demand to be included” (Jones, 2011, p.20-1). Issues like ‘intent’ and group membership are called into questions when deciding if genocide has occurred. However, “genocide may not be intended, but the outcomes of certain actions may be very likely to be genocidal” so is it actually “necessary to have a coherent, articulated plan or policy at the outset” (Spencer, 2012, p. 18)? Does the absence of implicit intent mean the absence of genocide? Or, can the UNGC be used with tacit intent? The UNGC doesn’t include political or socio-economic groups, does it mean that targeted killing of these populations should not fall under the jurisdiction of the UNGC? The UNGC is structured on identifying perpetrators, but if perpetrators are not easily identified does this mean the UNGC cannot be used? These issue just scratch the surface of issues with the definition of the UNGC. Consider for a moment that if UN definition is in fact one based on a misunderstanding of genocide; then everything based off of the definition would be based on this misunderstanding as well. Following that logic is not so difficult to believe, and it it helps to explain why there have been so many genocides since the Holocaust. This concept does not necessarily excuse the efforts of the UN and its member states,
but it does put their failure into a different perspective: they have had the wrong tools to prevent genocide.

If the UN was to draft the *UNGC* now, there would be significantly more material to study to come up with an understanding of the process to allows genocide to unfold. No one can argue that the UN has been effective in its efforts in genocide prevention, so why not look to the original source to ask why. Therefore, I argue that to make actual lasting changes to the norms that surround genocide prevention, we would need to change the current accepted legal definition of genocide. This definition would need to include a broader understanding of the process, preconditions and warning signs of genocide, making the prevention of genocide a real future possibility. This would mean a deviation from the traditional representation of genocide, and a move towards what I believe to be a much more compelling understanding of genocide. Even with this change, there will still be some problems with political will, like there is with every issue; however, if the tools in the toolkit will actually work, then political will is easier to conjure. The UN and states do not like to get involved in things they do not understand, but they also do not want to appear as if they are doing nothing about genocide. So, if more is done to understand the process that leads to genocide, then we will be more equipped to combat it, making it a more appealing issue for major actors to get involved in.

**ORDINARY MEN**

The typical representation of genocide portrays political systems and leaders as the perpetrators, and genocide as a result of top-down policies that imposed the genocide onto the people. This is a typical representation of the Holocaust, one that blames Hitler and other Nazi party leaders for the genocide that lead to the slaughter of two thirds of Europe’s Jewish
population. To put it simply: a government, or a few leaders in a government, target(s) a particular group, they decide to rid its country of said group, they draft a plan, they execute plan. The genocide is thought up and carried out by a few ‘evil’ perpetrators who represent unimaginable cruelty. Grouping these leaders together as the select few who represent ‘evil’ ideology is a representation of genocide that most can comprehend. For example, this is the concept of genocide that the Early Warning Project subscribes to. They look to identify place where “government acts against its own citizens” and where “bad regimes” are present in national politics (Early Warning Project, n.d.). They subscribe to this same top-down portrayal of genocide the international community has been accepting since the UNGC was adopted. These perpetrators are part of a disturbing category of people that we view as separate from ‘normal’ people. This representation is based on the idea that those that subscribe to extremist ideologies that lead to genocide are ‘abnormal’.

As I have already alluded to, I argue there is another piece to genocide that needs to be addressed in order to have a more complete understanding of genocide. This other piece of genocide deals with the fact that identifying perpetrators in genocide is not always so black and white. While there are of course state officials and leaders to blame in most genocides, there are also innumerable cases of ordinary people that also become genocide perpetrators. The concept is one that challenges all sorts of traditions of thought, but it must not be ignored.

In *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Jones (2011) touches on this concept when he identifies a potential prevention mechanism: “mobilizing along the lines of communal cleavages” (p. 569). He suggests that to prevent genocide societies must “evolve an appreciation of alikeness and a feeling of connectedness” and to do this “members of subgroups of society must live together, work together, play together; their children must go to school together...to
reduce prejudice require positive contact” (p. 569). This preventative mechanism directly correlates to what I believe causes genocides. In theory, this type of connectedness should create a sense of community that is strong enough to withstand propaganda and discriminatory policies, and if the people do not buy into the regimes genocidal ideology, then there would be no genocide. Oppositely, if the people *do* buy into the discriminatory ideology, the genocide will be successful. Unfortunately, in most cases where genocide has occurred people can live together, work together, go to school together, play together, and even marry each other; and genocide still happened. In societies where genocide is successful, there seems to be three possible choices for individuals who are not the intended victims: (1) actively participate, (2) do not interfere, but do not actively participate, or (3) defy authority and fight against the genocide (Campbell, 2013). Understanding why all people do not choose to defy authority and fight against genocide is a piece of genocide that needs to be the main focus moving forward in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of how thousands, or sometimes millions of people are killed in genocide.

Jones (2011) astutely says “understanding genocide requires probing the minds to those who commit, and those who seek to prevent or limit it” (Jones, 2011, p. 383). Studying perpetrators is often controversial because many look at it as giving voices to the perpetrators, excusing the perpetrators, forgiving the perpetrators, or giving value to perpetrator testimony over victim testimony. Though I understand why there are concerns with using genocide perpetrator testimony, I feel that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. Learning about perpetrators is central to a more comprehensive understanding of the genocide process to attempt to try to stop genocides in the future. The only way to do this is to understand past participants as they understand themselves, everything else would be pure conjecture. I believe if interviews
with perpetrators are conducted with the desire of simply trying to understand, not to excuse, then it would be neglectful not to study perpetrator testimony. I of course recognize there are issues with personal testimony, however these issues are found in all personal testimony whether it is of the victim or perpetrator. There is always human error involved as people do not recall things with 100 percent accuracy, and people often try to portray themselves in a better light (especially perpetrators). However, “the truth lies somewhere between the accounts of the victims and perpetrators,” so we should use both whenever possible (Ea & Sim, 2001, p. 5). The more we try to tap into the “many undiscovered facts in the memories of survivors—both victims and perpetrators” the better equipped we will be to combat genocide (Ea & Sim, 2001, p. 5). As Gross (2001) points out, “The greater the catastrophe, the fewer the survivors,” and genocides often leave us with very few surviving victims; therefore, we must not only rely on this group as a way to learn about these atrocities (p. 92). Having these testimonies allow us to have a bigger picture of the context in which past genocides arose and the context that lead ordinary men and women to participate. Scholars that study genocide look to prevent genocide in the future, but how can you prevent something if you don’t understand if from all angels? Prevention can only come when people understand more about genocide, are able to recognize when it is happening, and are willing to stop it.

METHODS, THESIS & LIMITATIONS

This thesis is a qualitative analysis of the concept of ordinary people participating in genocide, as well as an analysis on current genocide prevention strategies. While there has been a shift in genocide literature to acknowledge the centrality of ordinary participants to the process of genocide, it remains on the fringes of the genre. Therefore, my qualitative analysis is limited
to a small number of sources simply by the fact that this is an emerging concept. Works such as Primo Levi’s *The Drowned and Saved*, Christopher Browning’s *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101*, *The Final Solution in Poland*, *Neighbors: A Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne Poland* by Jan T. Gross, and *Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*, all address the central question of how ordinary people became genocide participants during the Holocaust. They address how ordinary citizens of Nazi occupied territories, acting on their own accord, became murderers.¹ I will go into much greater detail of these texts in later chapters, but for now it is important to address that these texts force us to think of genocide in the context of ordinary people and neighbors who became perpetrators in genocide, not just a state and a few leaders. They force us to attempt to comprehend how seemingly anyone could become a perpetrator in genocide. Another limitation to this study is the fact that I predominately focus on the Holocaust. While, there is literature on ordinary participants in other genocides, the sources are even more limited than those that focus on the Holocaust. I made the decision to focus primarily on the Holocaust to show the centrality of *ordinary men* to genocide for two reasons. The first reason is simply because there is a lack of the lack robust studies on this concept for other genocides. The second reason is since the Holocaust is almost exclusively associated with state-lead mass violence. If I could help alter that common perception to show the importance of lower level perpetrators for this particular genocide, then making the same case for other genocides will be rather easy.

Those that are unfamiliar with this concept may ask: if this is such an important part of genocide, then why is it largely absent from the norms and laws we currently have in place? I

¹ All future references to the titles of these books will use the following short handed titles: *Drowned and Saved, Ordinary Men, Neighbors, Bullets.*
argue that this is because it is an uncomfortable concept. Looking at genocide as a phenomenon that is dependent on the involvement of ordinary people forces us to rethink our own ideas about the human condition because it blurs the lines between perpetrator and victim in a society in which we far more comfortable with clear-cut categories. In addition, accepting this concept would force the internationally community to admit that its current foundation for genocide prevention is based on an outdated understanding of genocide.

My primary hypothesis is: we (the international community) are failing the pledge of ‘Never Again’ because we fail to recognize the importance of the concept of ordinary men in genocide prevention strategies. This project (1) explores the concept of ordinary men in-depth to show the impact it can have on our understanding of genocide, (2) addresses in further detail why this concept is absent from the norms and laws currently in place on which prevention are based, and (3) aims to propose ways in which to include ordinary men prevention strategies.
CHAPTER TWO
UNDERSTANDING ORDINARY MEN

"…in spite of our natural desire for clear-cut distinctions, the history of the camps ‘could not be reduced to the two blocs of victims and persecutors’”
—Christopher Browning

INTRODUCTION

Genocide prevention has not worked despite a pledged commitment from the International community to ‘prevent and punish’ genocide with the UNGC. The 70 years since the end of the Holocaust have seen many upwards of 20 genocides (See Demuynck, S., Hladikova, L., Migdal, D., Tylawska, A., Walters, G., & Wright, N., n.d.; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.; Genocide Watch, 2010). It’s abundantly clear that this document has failed to prevent genocide. That failure has been largely attributed to the UN and its member states adhering to ineffective norms in response to genocide, and lacking the political will to change them.

However, there is an alternative argument to why genocide prevention efforts have not worked. I argue that the UNGC and the norms that have gown around it are founded on an incorrect understanding of how genocide is carried out. Central to these norms is the necessity of identifying potential perpetrators and punishing them. If you have one or a few to blame, you can remove these people and the problem will go away. This strategy only makes sense alongside the traditional representation of genocide as state-led violence. Unfortunately, the leaders of the state are hardly the only perpetrators in genocide; rendering the typical representation of genocide an ineffective guide for preventative methods and strategies. Since prevention has yet to be successful, it is time the international community starts allowing other interpretations to guide their policies.
In order to come up with better prevention strategies we must have a clear understanding what we are actually trying to prevent, and a large part of that is understanding the process that leads to genocide. This Chapter focuses on the environment that must be created in order for genocide to occur, and how this environment seemingly eliminates the clear-cut categories of \textit{perpetrator} and \textit{victims}.

\textbf{STATE-DRIVEN VIOLENCE}

When one learns of extraordinary acts of evil, it is normal to ask: who are these people that commit such horrific violence? Typical responses to this question would be the state leaders charged with spreading hatred and propaganda in of each respective genocides: Hitler, Pol Pot, Slobodan Milosevic, the Hutu-led government, etc. This list of genocide perpetrators includes names synonymous with some of the evilest acts of human violence. Of course these would be the correct answers that coincide with the standard interpretation that it is “virtually impossible to imagine genocide that is not planned and organized either by the state itself or by some clique associated with it” (Spencer, 2012, p. 18). In some ways, knowing who the perpetrators are and associating them with the state offers some comfort. To explain what I mean, I use Hitler as an example. When Hitler was elected Chancellor of Germany in 1933, those who voted for him did so because of “Hitler’s perceived political, economic, and international success…not to persecute and murder Jews” (USHMM, 2002). Although anti-Semitism was an important part of the Nazi party ideology, it was downplayed in the years before Hitler was elected. The German people, for the most part, did not vote for him because they hated Jews. However, quickly after Hitler became chancellor in 1933, he “seized total control of [the] German state, abolishing its federalist structure, dismantling democratic government and outlawing political parties and trade
unions” and “immediately thereafter, the Nazis’ persecutory stance towards Jews became plain” (Jones, 2011, p. 236).

Logic would follow that Hitler and the Nazi party leaders are to blame for the deaths of millions of people during the Holocaust because of their ideology. With this logic the average German person holds little responsibility because they were not aware of Hitler’s plans when they elected him—in a sense they were victims too. This is where the idea of comfort comes in—we like to believe that if the Germans had hindsight to know how electing Hitler would turn out, they would not have voted for him. This is a classic defense for those living in a genocidal environment: “they did not know and could not have known at the time” (Spencer, 2012, p. 50). But the reality of the situation is that there is “a distinction…between what people knew and what people chose not to know” (Spencer, 2012, p. 50). As a result of the events that followed World War I, the majority of Germans felt shamed and full of resentment; and they needed a scapegoat. Hitler and the Nazis present the Jewish people as the ultimate scapegoat that. Hitler was generally viewed as someone who would “return Germany to social order, economic stability, and world-power status” and the non-Jewish Germans were more afraid of their economic livelihood than for their fellow Jewish citizens (Jones, 2011, p. 236). Hitler’s campaign against the Jews started with boycotting shops and lead to the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 that “stripped Jews of citizenship and gave legal shape to the Nazi’s race-based theories,” and eventually lead to the events we now call the Holocaust (Jones, 2011, p. 236). One of the largest consequences of Nazi anti-Semitism was that it created an environment of “complicity with Nazi crimes against Jewish neighbors” creating a state of exception where ghettos, camps, and mass murder became an accepted reality (Gross, 2001, p. 123). By blaming Hitler and the Nazis, the Germans have taken “on a sense of victimization since it alleviated, in a manner of
speaking, the burden of responsibility of the war and the suffering inflicted on countless victims” (Gross, 2001, p. 96). After the Holocaust the international community followed this top-down philosophy by placing the legal blame on the state leaders. The famous Nuremburg Trials focused solely high-ranking Nazis party members, Germany military leaders, and the Nazi financial backers—i.e. the leaders. The Nuremburg Trials set the precedent for how the world would deal with all future genocide perpetrators with trials of “war criminals in Tokyo (1946-48); the 1961 trial of Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann (1906-62); and the establishment of tribunals for war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia (1993) and in Rwanda (1994)” (Nuremberg Trials, 2016.). And just this year, Radovan Karadzic, a wartime leader of the Bosnia Serbs was found guilty for being a chief architect of the Srebrenica genocide through the UN’s International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The focus on how genocides are carried out remains exactly the same after all this time.

Framing the epoch of history as such, puts Hitler and his Nazi party on a list of people who possess such unimaginable evil. Identifying these men in this way creates the illusion that these perpetrators are abnormal; they are not like us—the average person. Separating these perpetrators from us helps to explain why they did what they did. If they are unlike us then we have nothing to fear in ourselves, we only have to fear possibility that another abnormal person possessing such evil will start another genocide again in the future. Framing the Holocaust this way “brings to mind twisted individuals, ill-born, sadists, afflicted by an original flaw;” different than the average person (Levi, 1989, p. 202). Some scholars have even gone so far to make it clear these men are abnormal that they have identified particular traits a person has which would make them more likely to reveal fascist tendencies. The Authoritarian Personality (1950) by Theodore Adorno “was an attempt by a group of researchers to explain the conditions that
allowed Nazi-ism to gain a foothold in Europe,” and it used a test coined as the “F-Scale” which “purported to measure Fascist tendencies by evaluating responses to a series of weighted questions” (“Authoritarian Personality…”, n.d.). Although this study was widely criticized, it proves a deep need for people to place genocide perpetrators in a group separate from themselves. We want to believe that “there is something wrong with these people and that’s why they participated” (Spencer, 2012, p. 55).

Since the Holocaust there have been debates “between those who think that only certain kinds of people, with particular dispositions, are perpetrators of genocide [like Adorno], against those who think that genocidal violence is rooted in the situation in which quite ordinary people find themselves” (Spencer, 2012, p. 45) Those that argue that it’s the situation, recognize these leaders do not necessarily possess certain characteristics that make them fundamentally different from the average person. Accepting the situation argument helps to comprehend how seemingly anyone could become a perpetrator in genocide given the right situation. The leaders may be the source of the ideas that lead to the situation that allowed a genocide to materialize, but they did not carry out the genocide all on their own. In fact, the leaders must have help if a genocide is to be successful. With genocide “the question of participation is not confined only to perpetrators,” or those that we typically view as perpetrators (Hitler, etc.), but includes a much more complex understanding of the the meaning of the word (Spencer, 2012, p. 41). Therefore, it is imperative to understand the situation that these ordinary people find themselves in.

In a speech given at the USHMM (2002) genocide scholar, Christopher Browning, identified three categories of perpetrators—ideologues, managers, and ordinary men. Browning describes ideologues as those that whole heartedly subscribe to the ideology. In this group is where you will find the leaders and their loyal followers driven to participate by their beliefs—
Hitler and Nazi party members, or Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge members. This category of participator matches our typical understanding of genocide—you participate because you believe in the ideology. However, the other two categories of participators complicate things. The managers are those that help organize and carry out the plans of the ideologues, but their participation is not belief-driven. Even further removed from our typical understanding are the ordinary men that are “below the management level who were assigned to kill…victims face to face” (USHMM, 2002). While the managers are also important to understand, this thesis is concerned with the ordinary men because their participation in genocide is so shocking. It is important to note here that I believe the leaders are very much to blame. By studying ordinary men, I do not wish to takeaway any of that blame, but rather I seek to understand how and why the others participate. The ideologues make sense; the ordinary men do not. They are different than the ideologues, yet they often play major roles in the success of a genocide; without them it is likely that many genocides would not have happened. The ordinary people during genocide raise the question: “can one…be at the same time a victim and a perpetrator? Is it possible to suffer and inflict suffering at the same time?” (Gross, 2001, p. 96). Answering this question is central to developing a better understanding of the conditions that lead to genocide is learning what makes these unlikely participators participate.

For the remainder of my paper I will be using the following definition for the concept of ordinary men. Ordinary men are individuals who fit the typical representation of men or women in their country: the demographic profile of the ordinary perpetrators is similar to the demographics of other men or women in their country, and they have no prior history of violence, no military training, and no connections to leaders (Straus, 2006; Browning, 1998). The concept is rooted in the idea that these participators are men and women that are/were average
citizens that no one could have predicted would have become killers. The remainder of this chapter will address the environment that breeds ordinary men participators. This will show that the traditional representation of genocide does not get at the core cause of genocide; it just scratches the surface.

‘THE GRAY ZONE’

In order to understand how ordinary men become genocide participants, it is important to first address an important aspect of human nature. Of the commonly accepted Eight Stages of Genocide, the first stage is Classification. This stage is when groups of us and a them are formed in a society—Germans vs. Jews (Stanton, 1998). This stage is important because “by invoking groups, they seek to evoke them, summon them, call them into being;” the leaders create the idea of homogenous groups that did not form organically (Wimmer, Goldstone, Horowitz, Joras & Schetter, 2004, p. 37). This stage most likely happens in the beginning of genocide because it is so easy to achieve due to the fact that placing people or things into groups is such a basic tendency of humans (Wimmer et al., 2004). These groups are a way to acknowledge that some people’s lives are different than our own, and most of the time they are innocent in nature. In the case of genocide, when leaders are classifying people into groups they are deciding which group should be included and which group should be excluded. In other words, they decide which group is the in-group, or the us, and which group is the out-group, or the them—for example, the in-group was the Germans, the out-group was Jews. Hitler’s classification of Jews as the excluded them created an environment that allowed to the genocidal ideology to take hold.

Paradoxically, the theory behind the Classification stage of genocide is very similar to how we commonly evaluate perpetrators in genocide. We like to think of ourselves as different
form those that participated in genocide—the us are the average people, the them is genocide perpetrators. We easily accept that genocide perpetrators are inherently bad because we find it easier to separate ourselves form them. The way society has evolved offers a certain comfort in placing people and things into groups. However, putting things into groups takes the uniqueness of each individual (person or thing) away and causes us to analyze the group as something homogenous. This becomes a problem when trying to understand genocide perpetrators. Not all genocide participants are ideologues; therefore, so we cannot study them as such. If this is the case, should we evaluate all involved in genocide as perpetrators? And if so, what about the participants who were also prisoners in concentration camps? Putting individuals involved in genocide into the defined homogenous groups of perpetrators and victims raises a lot of issues for trying to apply black and white categories to a situation that is ‘gray’ in nature.

To explore this further, I use the concepts presented by Primo Levi (1988) in The Drowned and Saved. Levi explores the the depth in which lines are blurred between perpetrators and victims. In The Drowned and Saved Levi (1989) advances the concept of zones of ambiguity within genocide. He talks about life in Lagers (Nazi concentration camps), and how within them the line between perpetrator and victims is blurred. Levi (1989) discusses how in the world of the Lagers there were privileged prisoners and the unprivileged prisoners. To be a privileged prisoner meant that you might receive special advantages like an extra ration of food in an environment where “the food ration was decisively insufficient for even the most frugal prisoner” (Levi, 1989, p. 41). This extra small ration of food meant that you may live a little longer in a place where people were dying all around you from disease and starvation. In addition to more food, these prisoners had better jobs and more advantages all because because those in power deemed them as worthy.
The privileged prisoners were of the minority, but they had control in the camps. They would torment the new comers and exercise their small shreds of power over the weaker prisons, demonstrating the idea that “where power is exercised by few or only one against the many, privilege is born and proliferates, even against the will of the power itself” (Levi, 1989, p. 42).

So once power is granted to one group, and stripped from another, natural emotions (jealously, anger, shame, etc.) emerge, causing a rift between the two groups. In the cases with privileged prisoners in Lagers, they became collaborators at the hands of the guards who aimed to “burden them with guilt, cover them with blood, compromise them as much as possible, thus establishing a bond of complicity so they can no longer turn back” (Levi, 1989, p. 42). If the guards forced the privileged into the zone of ambiguity, or the ‘the gray zone’ as Levi (1989) calls it, where they were no longer innocent victims, but manipulated collaborators with those that had put them there in the first place. This “ascent of the privileged, not only in the Lager but in human coexistence, is an anguishing but unfailing phenomenon” across all societies and is one of the leading causes to genocide (Levi, 1989, p. 42). In other words, the ascent of the privileged is often what leads to the development of the ‘the gray zone’. The leaders take the first step towards genocide, Classification, and elevate one group over another creating an environment where ordinary men become genocide participators. Remember—ordinary men do not share the same ideology as the leaders, and they are unlikely to be perpetrators, until the situation they find themselves in progresses and they become participators.

It is very difficult not to pass judgment and ask ourselves “Why did they accept the task? Why didn’t they rebel? Why didn’t they prefer death?” (Levi, 1989, p. 58). Levi reminds his readers that we can never truly know the answers to these questions because we will never know what it would be like to be one of these prisoners in this situation. Levi asks the reader to
Imagine, if he can, that he has lived for months of years in a ghetto, tormented by chronic hunger, fatigue, promiscuity, and humiliation; that he has seen die around him, one by one, his beloved; that he Is cut off from the world...he is loaded onto a train...travels into the unknown” and ends up in a Lager. (Levi, 1989, p. 59)

The privileged prisoners that became perpetrators fell victim to “the state of compulsion following an order” (Levi, 1989 p. 59). In other words, they no longer had anything left inside them to give them the strength to choose any other path, they were “gray, ambiguous persons, ready to compromise” (Levi, 1989, p. 49).

The “the gray zone possesses an incredibly complicated internal structure and contains within itself enough to confuse our need to judge” (Levi, 1989, p. 42). I use Levi’s example of ‘the gray zone’ in concentration camps in order to make it very clear that it is not always easy to understand who is a victim and who is a perpetrator in genocide. ‘the gray zone’ is not only relevant to the Lager environment, but also in other genocide environments. In Rwanda, for example, Tutsis were being slaughtered by their Hutu neighbors, family, friends and coworkers. In the wake of the genocide, Rwanda was left with victims and perpetrators living amongst one another. The government and people of Rwanda had to deal with trying to decide who are the true perpetrators, and who fell into similar categories as the privileged prisoners. Who was it okay to prosecute and judge, and how was this to be determined? In Rwanda there were so many ordinary men participating “it was the ordinary Hutu peasants, who were the main perpetrators of the genocide” and “without massacres by machete-wielding civilian mobs, in the hundreds of thousands, there would have been no genocide” (Mayersen, 2014, p. 175). Levi (1989) reminds us that while “privileged prisoners were a minority within the Lager population; nevertheless,
they represent a potent majority among survivors” because the privileged prisoners were more likely to survive with more food and better jobs (p. 40). The same rings true for Rwanda, where many of the survivors in Rwanda are the perpetrators.

We generally look at survivors of genocide as victims, and they are often portrayed as heroes. We ask them to continuous relive their horrifying experiences to share their stories, without thinking of how this ‘gray zone’ they lived in may make talking about their experiences incredibly difficult. We need to consider that they may in fact fall into these indistinct groups where it is hard to understand what should be done and how to judge them. Levi points out, he himself was never one of these *perpetrators* within the Lager, and there were plenty of other Jews that remained true *victims*, and there many Rwandans who never participated in the genocide. These people are what makes studying *ordinary men* participants so important—there is smilingly no fundamental differences between Levi and a privileged prisoner participant, or one Hutu peasant who decides to participate and another Hutu peasant that never participated. So the question is, what made these *ordinary men* do what they did? If they aren’t motivated by the ideology and hatred, why participate? And, why do some ordinary people make the choice to participate and others do not? This is the conundrum that makes studying *ordinary men* so important.

**NOT BLACK & WHITE**

Each modern genocide is full of seemingly unimaginable atrocities being committed by humans against other humans on a large scale. So while each genocide has its own story, and its own unique place in history, this similarity is what makes this a unique crime. This concept of *ordinary men* killing other ordinary people, neighbors killing neighbors, friends and families
killing friends and families; shatters so many things that we hold true about the human condition. As if genocides were not already terrible, this representation of genocide puts the atrocities into much more alarming perspective. Likely most of us will never be in these situations, but because this is the case, it is very hard to honestly place ourselves in that situation and know what we would do. Levi (1989) asks his readers not to judge those who have lived in ‘the gray zone’ since we can ever really know what it would be like to be in the shoes of the people have lived through genocide. I find myself asking would I too “be dazzled by power and prestige” like so many before me? I do not know. The best I can do is to learn why some living in ‘the gray zone’ end up becoming perpetrators while others do not.

I argue that this representation of genocide is necessary in order for us to understand how genocides come to be, and it must be integrated into finding possible solutions. The traditional “the narrative of genocide tends to oversimplify…by defining groups solely as victims or perpetrator; and by overlooking social and historical complexities that could offer insight into the core problems” (Totten & Parsons, 2009, p. 620). Instead, the international community must accept that there is a blurred line between perpetrators and victims, not with the aim of absolving the perpetrators, but with the aim of learning what it is about the process of genocide that seemingly permits ordinary people to behave certain ways, and why people make the choices they make whilst living in ‘the gray zone’. ‘The gray zone’ makes an argument for understanding the genocide from all perspective, including the perpetrators.

The next chapter will address the theories presented by major pieces of literature centered around the concept of ordinary men. Christopher Browning’s Ordinary Men is a case study of 210 members of a German police battalion comprised of 500 middle-aged, family men, from the lower-middle classes of Hamburg, Germany. Battalion 101 was sent to Poland as part of the
Final Solution and were responsible for the shooting deaths of more than 38,000 Jews and the deportation of 45,000 others. Jan T. Gross’ *Neighbors* is a case study that explores the motivations behind the non-Jewish town members of Nazi occupied Jedwabne, Poland murdering all but seven of the Jewish townspeople in the Summer of 1941. Father Patrick Desbois’ *Bullets* deals with Desbois’ personal mission to discover the gravesites of Jews exterminated by the Nazi death squads in Ukraine. These Jews were murdered by German death squads as a part of the Final Solution. What these texts all have common is they force us to think of genocide in the context of *ordinary men* perpetrators. Unlike most literature dealing with the Holocaust, these authors introduce genocide as a phenomenon that can take hold at the grassroots level in a country. These texts challenge the reader to alter their preconceived notions of genocide in order to open their mind up to accepting that genocides take place because “at the most basic level individual human beings killed other human beings in large numbers” (Browning, 1998, p. xvii).

Understanding that in most genocide there is a blurred line between *perpetrators* and *victims* is not aimed at absolving the perpetrators, but aimed at learning what it is about the human condition that allows for a person to enter into this ‘gray zone’ so easily. The idea of ‘the gray zone’ makes an argument for understanding the genocide from all perspective, including perpetrators, which is a concept that is not widely accepted. To do this, those tasked with genocide prevention must alter their thinking to look at genocides with the understanding that genocide presents ambiguity in a society. Are there no longer innocent victims? Are collaborators manipulated? Are there any innocent bystanders? Who are the victims and who

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2 Bystanders is an even more complex issue than *ordinary men* perpetrators. Bystanders are the people in genocidal environments that that do not end up participating, but do not stand up against the regime. Bystanders raise many questions about whether or not one is responsible if one is present. Regarding
are the perpetrators? Who is to blame and who is to be judged? Again, when you look at the Holocaust from a top-down perspective, there are very clear perpetrators whom no sane person would have a problem judging. These people do not fall into this zone of ambiguity. But, what about the privileged prisoners who willingly attacked other prisoners? What about the prisoners in Lagers whom were selected to be part of the Special Squads that ran the crematoria? How do we judge them? What are we to make of privileged prisoners who abused their small shreds of power? What do we make of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 members who collectively murdered 40,000 without being told they had to participate? How do we comprehend the Polish people who willingly rounded up and murdered their fellow townsmen? What do we make of the willing Hutus who murdered their Tutsi neighbors, friends and family? When genocide occurs distinct categories of victim and perpetrators are not helpful because genocide is far more complex than the black and white pictures that these categorizations paint for us. Genocide provides many examples of how ordinary people become killers under the right circumstances and we are left with the question: what group of people could not become killers?

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bystanders, Spencer (2012) says that “there is a fundamental difference between carrying out acts of destruction and and watching, between commission and omission” (p. 50). In this sense, they must be treated differently than perpetrators, however, the question still remains if they hold responsibility. While I do think bystanders are an important group to study, I have left them out of this paper because I do not want to confuse my primary aim of this paper which is to show that the mobilizing of ordinary men as perpetrators is central to the success of a genocide.
CHAPTER THREE
THE MOTIVATIONS OF ORDINARY MEN

“At crucial junctures, every individual makes decisions, and… every decision is individual”
—Raul Hilberg

INTRODUCTION

Mass murder takes mass participation. Given this, the ideologues, cannot be the only group the international community focuses on. When the international community spends too much time in both the name of prevention and punishment focused on the leaders, this is a problem because “genocide is not an act that is committed by individual perpetrators, it is an organized act which forms a collective intent to destroy” (Campbell, 2013, p. 35). Moreover, any definition, treaty, programs or organization that “assumes that genocide unfolds as a consequence of individual agents… is fundamentally flawed” (Campbell, 2013, p. 35). If we only look at the few state officials orchestrating the genocide, we would only be looking at part of the problem. So, to better understand how genocides come to be we have to look beyond the ideologues to understand what motivates a larger, more complex group of genocide perpetrators, the ordinary men. As a reminder, the definition of ordinary men is: individuals who fit the typical representation of men or women in their country—the demographic profile of the ordinary perpetrators is similar to the demographics of other men or women in their country, and they have no prior history of violence, no military training, and no connections to leaders—they are the average citizens that no one could have predicted would have become killers (Straus, 2006; Browning, 1998). This chapter will tease out the various reasons why ordinary men participate in genocide. Since I myself have no conducted interviews with genocide perpetrators, I use the findings and theories from the texts I have previously mentioned—Browning’s
Ordinary Men, Gross Neighbors, and Desbois’ Bullets—as the basis for my commentary on ordinary men.

MOTIVATIONS

When examining the ordinary men perpetrators, we must remember that there are many different reasons why they participate, so to “undertake any general explanation of their collective behavior is…hazardous” (Browning, 1998, p. 188). It would be impossible to list all the different motivations since not every ordinary men participator has been interviewed, we have to come up with a list of common reasons for participation based past research and interviews conducted. A compilation of the conclusions found Browning (1998), Gross (2002), and Desbois (2008), I have created a list of the most commons reason why ordinary men participated: (1) wartime brutalization, routinization and propaganda, (2) fear of the ‘other’, (3) careerism (4) coercion and following orders, and (5) social conformity. While I am positive these categories do not perfectly capture all motivations, they do provide a good overview of the most common reasons found. While reading the next five sections keep in mind that it is possible one individual is motivated by one or many of these factors. It is also possible that even though a perpetrator has given a particular reason for participation in his or her testimony, this may not be the actual reason. It is also most likely true that for each act of genocide a perpetrator commits, they may have different reasons. Also, a key to understanding ordinary men is acknowledging that each individual has a considerable degree of choice, regardless of the situation they find themselves in.

Wartime Brutalization, Routinization, & Propaganda
Wartime brutalization, routinization and propaganda are often used to explain the motivations of ordinary men. Before I get into what these entail, I want to discuss the difference between these motivations and hatred. My understanding of hatred in the context of genocide is:
hatred that is rooted in genocidal ideology. For a perpetrators motivation to be rooted in hatred (the ideologues), hatred would need to exist in the beginning of the genocide, and often part of spreading the ideology of the genocide. Those that posses this type of hatred would not fall into ‘the gray zone’, rather they would be responsible to helping create and environment conducive to it. So, a major difference between hatred as a motivation for participation and brutalization, routinization and propaganda is the fact that the latter three exist as a result of ideological hatred being perpetuated onto a society. In other words, they are only possible once the genocide ideology is introduced. When perpetrators use Wartime brutalization, routinization and propaganda as reasons for participation, it is often confused with hatred, but these concepts are a result of hatred rather than forms of hatred in their own right. In other words, hatred creates the environment that would bread wartime brutalization, routinization and propaganda. To use Browning’s (1998) findings as an example, Heinrich Bekemeier, one of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 “was described as a ‘very unpleasant man’ who proudly wore his Nazi insignia at all times” and was “disliked by his men” (p. 152). The majority of the Battalion did not approve of his outright hatred and support for Nazi Ideology. The majority of the Battalion also had harsh judgments towards Poles who turned in their neighbors in hiding to the Battalion. One member interviewed said “I found it very disturbing at the time that the Polish population betrayed these Jews who had hidden themselves” (Browning, 1998, p. 156). So even though they were highly hypocritical due to the fact they were part of the group tasked with killing Jews, they viewed this as a ‘betrayal’ on the part of the Poles who did this. If hatred had been their motivation, then they
would have welcomed this behavior from Bekemeier and the Polish, and viewed them as people who held similar ideology instead of judging them for their actions.

While I have housed wartime brutalization and routinization together; they are not exactly the same thing. Wartime brutalization means that war creates “a polarized world in which ‘the enemy’ is easily objectified and removed from the community of human obligation” (Browning, 1998, p. 162). The logic behind wartime brutalization is that when there are deep seeded negative racial stereotypes, it will be easier to kill, but this is most often true for actual soldiers. Quite possibly this would help explain the SS soldiers and the German military; or even the actions of United States military units in the Pacific during WWII, but it most likely does not explain many of the actions of ordinary men (See Dower, 1993). Although it is possible that they became brutalized as a result of war, this is most likely after they initial began to participate. Because ordinary men by definition did not have any prior military experience, previous brutalization leading to their initial participation is highly unlikely. It is far more likely that brutalization is being confused with routinization. As Browning describes this experience for the Reserve Police Battalion 101, “once they began killing…the men became increasingly brutalized” and “as in combat, the horrors of the initial encounter eventually became routine, and the killing became progressively easier” (Browning, 1998, p. 161) Therefore, “brutalization was not the cause but the effect of these men’s behavior,” as is routinization (Browning, 1998, p. 161).

Another argument that goes along with this is the Nazi’s ‘brainwashed’ ordinary men into participating with propaganda materials produced by the bureaucracy. This concept is the result of the typical understanding of the Holocaust “that in order to kill millions of people, an efficient bureaucracy is necessary, along with a (relatively) advanced technology” (Gross, 2001,
Yet, Browning (1998), Gross (2001), and Desbois (2008) all paint a different picture of the Holocaust. In each of these case studies, the ordinary participants are murdering Jews with guns, clubs studded with nails, axed, spades and burning them alive—all of which are actions far removed from the systematically and technological means of killing we almost always envision when we think of the Holocaust. The argument often made to explain this behavior is that Nazi propaganda material prepared the men for the job enabled them to participate in this killings. Browning (1998) found in his case study that while the materials “immersed the men in a deluge of racist and anti-Semitic propaganda,” most of the material was not to specifically designed to harden the policy to complete their task. For Browning (1998) This argument is put to rest by the fact that no surviving indoctrination materials remain that prepared policemen to kill unarmed Jewish women and children. Similarly, Gross (2001) found that due to the timing of the incident the “Jebwabne residents and peasants from Lomza County could not yet have managed to soak up the vicious anti-Jewish Nazi propaganda” (p. 80). In addition, even if they were exposed to some propaganda materials, “in some two hundred [propaganda] issues altogether, relatively little space was devoted explicitly to anti-Semitism and the Jewish question” (Browning, 1998, p. 178). So, the odds that they even received such material are very slim.

Even if the general public was receiving these propaganda materials, they were not convincing enough to completely undo past beliefs. Most adults at the time, who account for the majority of ordinary men perpetrators, were old enough to have been “educated and spent their formative years in the pre-1933 period” and “they knew perfectly well the moral norms…before the Nazis” (Browning, 1998, p. 182). In other words, they knew a world where they lived amongst Jews with relative peace, and knew enough to know that the materials produced by the Nazis was more propaganda than truth. However, while hate propaganda may not have been the
main motivating reason why *ordinary men* participated, it did have an effect on them. Browning (1998) recounts Reserve Police Battalion 101 Lieutenant Drucker’s comments on this subject:

> I received National Socialist ideological training…under the influence of the times, my attitude to Jews was marked by a certain aversion. But I cannot say that I especially hated Jews—in any case it is my impression now that was my attitude at the time. (p. 151)

Drucker’s comments provide insight to the opinions most likely held by many at the time. That although they didn’t necessarily hate the Jews, they had negative stereotypes towards them. For example, when many of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 were asked how they were able to tell the difference between Poles and Jews, they responded that “the Jews were ‘dirty,’ ‘unkempt,’ and ‘less clean’ in comparison to the Poles” (Browning, 1998, p. 152). It is fair to assume that these negative stereotypes are not enough to cause motivation for murder, but they most likely contributed to the routinization of killing once it started.

While wartime brutalization, routinization and propaganda are often used to explain the motivations of *ordinary men*, it is unlikely that any of these are the actual reasons why *ordinary men* being to participate in genocide. It if far more likely that the former two are a result of participation and the latter, although it had an effect, was not enough to convince *ordinary men* to murder innocent people on their own.

*Fear of the ‘Other’*

Another common reason given for the motivation of *ordinary men* is fear of the ‘other’. This concept relates to the previous motivation category in so far as propaganda can lead to fear. Another way I like to describe this motivation is: *kill or be killed*. In times of genocide where the majority of people are living in a heightened state of anxiety and fear, it is highly plausible that some *ordinary men* participated due to fear of Jews—with rumors, propaganda and age-old
stereotypes clouding their judgment. Although European Jews were experiencing a relatively peaceful time in the decades before Hitler’s rise to power, and Germany was widely viewed as a tolerant European society; old stereotypes existed (Jones, 2011, p. 234-237). For centuries, the Jewish population in Europe had been persecuted, marginalized and viewed as “uprooted, troublesome, malevolent, shiftless...thirsty bloodhounds and murderers of all Christendom” (Jones, 2011, p. 234). So, with a history of stereotypes that painted Jews as violent individuals it easy to see that under the extraordinary environment of the genocide—where the ordinary men are witnessing violence, death, and death murder—that this could be a motivator for some ordinary men participates. For the Reserve Police Battalion 101 participants, “even if the men…. had not consciously adopted the anti-Semitic doctrines of the regime, they had at least accepted the assimilation of the Jews into the image of the enemy” (Browning, 1998, p. 73).

To support this, we can look at Major Trapp of the Reserve Police Battalion 101’s early morning speech before the battalion’s first assault on Polish Jews where he says “men should remember, when shooting Jewish women and children, that the enemy was killing German women and children by bombing Germany” (Browning, 1998, p. 73). Similarly, in Poland, “in the background of anti-Jewish violence there always lurked a suspicion of ritual murder, a conviction that Jews use for the preparation of Passover matzoh the fresh blood of innocent Christian children” (Gross, 2001, p. 80). It is clear that old fears of Jews may have been been activated due to the situation. Nevertheless, I feel it’s safe to make the assumption that since these violent stereotypes that had existed for so long they would have remained non-pertinent to the everyday relations of Germans and Jews and Poles and Jews had their not been a genocidal environment to coax them into the forefront of the minds of ordinary men.

Careerism
Hitler and the Nazis gained support by spreading their belief “that the Germanic people of the Aryan race were entitled to rule the world, but the world Jewish international conspiracy and power—a devil which they had constructed—prevented them from doing so” (Chorbajian, 1999, p. 40). Hitler and his beliefs dominated all aspects of life at the time, so to get ahead in one’s career it would be best to align with the Nazis. Gross (2001) uses Zygmunt Laudanski as a perfect example of the effects that careerism had on ordinary men. Whilst in jail, Laudanski explained that he was a “misunderstood man” who was being punished for his “unbending conformism” (p. 75). He aimed to please and “he tried to anticipate what each successive carnivorous regime of this epoch [the Russians, the Nazis, the communists] might most desire of its subjects, and went to extremes in his zeal to please” (Gross, 2001, p. 75). Laudanski held no loyalty to any group or ideology, he simply had loyalty to himself and his career.

Browning also discuss careerism. In interviews with two of the most informative members of the Battalion that refused to take part in killing “explained their refusal to take part” was due to “the fact that they were freer to act as they did because they had no careerist ambitions” (Browning, 1998, p. 75). One of these man gave the following explanation: “because I was not a career policeman…but rather an independent skilled craftsman, and I had my business back home…thus it was of no consequence that my police career would not prosper” (Browning, 1998, p. 75). Lieutenant Buchmann provided a similar explanation: “I was somewhat older then and moreover a reserve officer, so it was not particularly important to be to be promoted or otherwise to advance, because I had prosperous business back home” (Browning, 1998, p. 75). It would seem that if any of the men of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 that didn’t have other jobs to fall back on, and were of the right age to be thinking of career advancement, then they would have felt that they were not able to opt out from participating.
Gross describes the careerism dynamic well when he says: “it is not just a question of character that plays itself out in this drama, but also the logic of incentives once encounters within the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century” (Gross. 2001, p. 75). In the environment of Nazi controlled Germany it is plausible that a lot of ordinary men gave into the ‘incentives’ offered and were motivated to kill for job security.

*Coercion & Following Orders*

Coercion and following orders are the reasons most commonly cited for ordinary men participation. I group these two together because they are similar in the sense that they are the most convenient for perpetrators insofar as they superficially take the blame away and place it solely on those doing the forcing or giving the orders. Take the townspeople of Jebwabne, Poland, or the Reserve Police Battalion 101; if someone says they only participated because they were following orders and were afraid of the consequences of non-participation, it is possible that those responsible for administering judgment may look at the situation differently. Although some may perceive the situation to be forced upon them, once you look beyond the surface it may not be an accurate depiction of the situation.

There were of course instances during the Holocaust where coercion and fear of authority was much more prominent. As I discussed in the last chapter, this was especially true for life in the Lagers. In the Lagers, privileged Jewish prisoners participated because they were either coerced or being obedient to the camp prison guards. The actions of these prisoners embodies Levi’s (1989) idea of ‘the gray zone’. Examining force and coercion raises the question: if someone is forced to participate are they really a perpetrator? In relation to life in the camps it is almost impossible to make that decision. And while I don’t like coercion and obedience hold up as acceptable reasons for Browning (1998) and Gross’ (2001) cases; Desbois’ (2008) case study
may show other cases beside the camp where force and obedience to authority were reasons why people participated. While he was investigating the Holocaust by Bullets that resulted in the deaths of 1.5 million Jews in Ukraine, he interviewed many towns people from all over the country to better understand the dynamics of these tragic events. Desbois (2008) found numerous examples of cases of people being ‘requisitioned’ by the German Police Battalions to assist with the murders of the Jews in their area. The ‘requisitioned’ were “not Ukrainian police, collaborators, or even sympathizers, but mostly young men, women, and children, or adolescents who, for one or two days, had been requisitioned from their homes, early in the morning by a man with a gun” (Desbois, 2008, p. 82). The requisitioning typically went like this:

A local policeman, an emissary for the mayor, or a German officer would go into people’s houses and order: ‘You come with me and bring a spade.’ They could be requisitioned to dig a pit at 5 in the morning. After they had finished digging, the Germans made them sit down while they brought in the Jews and shot them, and then they had them get up and fill in the pit…most of them were force to act at gunpoint. They had no choice. (Desbois, 2008, p. 75)

The ‘requisitioned’ participation falls under coercion. The ‘requisitioned’ absolutely fall into Levi’s (1989) ‘gray zone’, just like the oppressed privileged prisoners, when attempting to understand whether or not they were victims or perpetrators, especially since in all cases of the ‘requisitioned’ Desbois (2008) discussed they did not kill the Jews themselves, rather they disposed of their clothes and possession, helped line them up to be killed, and dug the graves. These ‘requisitioned’ must be treated a little different that the other cases I will describe in this section.
Desbois did find other examples of ordinary men participating separate from the ‘requisitioned’. The ‘Jewish Police’ were made up of Jews and were tasked “to maintain order and to take the Jews to work” in the ghettos (Desbois, 2008, p. 180). The Jewish police lived in the ghettos along with the other Jewish people but “they had food rations and clothes, they could go from one ghetto to the other” and “they thought that they were going to be allowed to live” (Desbois, 2008, p. 183; 186). These ‘Jewish Police’ participated in the rounding up and murdering of their fellow neighbors in order to better their living situation and save their lives. Yet, while “they stayed alive quite a long time…the order to kill them was given” and they fell victim to the same fate as all the other Jews in the area (Desbois, 2008, p. 186). The ‘Jewish Police’ are very closely related to the ‘privileged prisoners’ in Levi’s (1989) description of the Larger. They participated to save themselves, but in doing so hurt others. While truly understanding what the motivations behind their actions is impossible since they are no longer alive, it is likely that they would describe their situation as being forced into such a position in order to survive. It’s true that one could argue that both the ‘requisitioned’, ‘privileged prisoners’, and the ‘Jewish Police’ had choices and they chose to participate rather than face consequences. However, it could also be argued that these people saw themselves as having no real choice at the time because they believe their choices were to participate or die, and what kind of choice is that? I now move away from these more difficult cases to the cases where using coercion and following orders as their reason for participating does not seem to hold as much weight because their ability to make choices was much greater.

Both Browning (1998) found that ‘orders’ were the perpetrators more cited reason for participating. Browning found “orders have traditionally been the most frequently cited explanation for their own behavior” because “the authoritarian political culture of the Nazi
dictatorship…created a situation in which individuals had no choice. Orders were orders, and no one in such a political climate could be held responsible for their actions” (Browning, 1998, p. 170). The police of Battalion 101 had found “themselves in a situation of impossible ‘duress’ and therefore could not be held responsible for their actions” (Browning, 1998, p. 170).

As I said in the beginning of this section, claiming this motivation is attractive to perpetrators because it partially removes. The people of Jedwabne, Poland made similar claims that “in occupied Poland…people could not, under penalty of death, offer assistance to Jews hiding outside the German-designated ghettos” so when “the town council and the Germans agreed to the murder of the Jebwabne Jews,” the towns people had no choice but to participate (Gross, 2001, 87; 45).

However, those claims break down quite quickly with a little investigation by both authors. Gross (2001) found that “the Einsatzgruppen, German police detachments, and various functionaries who implement the ‘final solution’ did not compel the local population to participate directly in the murder of Jews” (Gross, 2001, p. 87). Specific to Jedwabne, on the day of the mass murder of all the towns Jewish people eye witnesses claim they “did not see a single uniformed individual either in the streets or by the group of people assembled in the square” (Gross, 2001, p. 52). While there were Germans present, “the polish population bestially massacred the Jews, and Germans only stood to the side and took pictures” (Gross, 200, p. 49). The Germans did not coerce the Poles into doing the murdering. They may have called for the Jews to be murdered, but they did not put Guns to the heads of the Poles of Jedwabne and force them to murder their neighbors. Since “in general nobody was forced to kill Jews…the so-called local population involved in killing of Jews did so of its own free will” (Gross, 2001, p. 87-8). So while the “the Nazis and the Soviets were indeed calling the shots in the Polish territories they
occupied during the war” it cannot be denied that “there were things people could have done at the time and refrained from doing; and there were things they did not have to do but nevertheless did” (Gross, 2001, p. xix).

Browning found that “a situation of ‘putative duress’ did not exist in the battalion,” since in the first assignment anyone “not up for it” was not forced to participate (Browning, 1993, p. 171). And in reviewing hundreds of postwar trials, Browning found “no defense attorney or defendant…has been able to document a single case in which refusal to obey an order to kill armed citizens resulted in the allegedly inevitable dire punishment” (Browning, 1998, p. 171). Walt Zimmermann of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 reported “in no case can I remember that anyone was forced to continue participating in the executions when he declared that he was no longer able to” participate (Browning, 1998, p. 128). Further more, Adolf Bittner, who did not want to participate describe what happened to him:

I left no doubt among my comrades that I disapproved of these measures and never volunteered for them. Thus, on one of the first searches for Jews, one of my comrades clubbed a Jewish woman in my presence, and I hit him in the face. A report was made, and in that way my attitude became known to my superiors. I was never officially punished. But anyone who knows how the system works knows that outside official punishment there is the possibility for chicanery that more than makes up for punishment.

Thus I was assigned Sunday duties and special watches. (Browning, 1998, p. 129)

Bittner did get ‘punished’ per say, and since this happened at the beginning of the Battalion’s stint in Poland, the other men would have heard about that fact that he was not officially punished for attacking another comrade who used excessive force, nor were his unofficial punishments bad. There is no way these men could fear such punishment. Simply looking at the
evidence, there is no way any of Battalion 101 could claim coercion because no one was forced to kill. Even Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler delivered a speech on October 4, 1943 to the SS leadership where he “explicitly noted an exception, namely, ‘ones whose nerves are finished, one who is weak. Then one can say: Good, go take your pension.’” (Browning, 1998, p. 74-5). Battalion 101 itself had orders, not the individual men and “individuals could still make their own decisions about shooting. The testimonies are filled with stories of whom who disobeying standing orders;” those who killed very clearly made the choice to do so(Browning, 1998, p. 171).

Social Conformity

The last type motivation that is the one that is least reported by perpetrators, yet makes the most sense when you look at the actions of ordinary men. Take the last section on coercion and following orders as an example for why social conformity is the most compelling reason why ordinary men participate. The evidence shows that the men in these cases were not forced to participate by the leaders of the Battalion 101 or the German police occupying the Jedwabne, respectively, yet this is the most commonly cited explanation. Why? The answer is quite simple: it is easier to say ‘I was following orders’ than it is to admit killing Jews for the numerous other reasons perpetrators give, or everyone else killed Jews, or due to fear of rejection and isolation from your comrades or neighbors if one didn’t share in the killing. So, many of those who claimed they were ‘just following orders’, were really following their comrades, co-workers, and neighbors, who were also probably also perceived themselves and the reason for their actions to be ‘just following orders’.

Browning found a lot of evidence to support social conformity as the reason why these men participated. One policeman reported:
It could not be avoided that one or another of my comrades noticed I was not going to the executions to fire away at the victims. They showed me with remarks such as ‘shithead’ and ‘weakling’ to express their disgust. (Browning, 1998, p. 66)

While this particular member of the Battalion kept himself out of participation in the executions, other men were not so strong. Since “the act of stepping out that morning in Jozefow meant leaving one’s comrades and admitting that one was ‘too weak’ or ‘cowardly,’ who would have ‘dared,’ one policeman declared emphatically to ‘lose face’ before the assembled troops,” so few men actually decided not to participate (Browning, 1998, p 72).

In *Bullets* Desbois (2008) uncovered that there was a similar group dynamic for the German battalions (like Reserve Police Battalion 101) that came into the Ukrainian towns and rounded up Jews for murder and ‘requisitioned’ the towns people to help. Desbois (2008) found records of these battalions where “each member had been obligated to kill at least one Jew. Everyone had to be implemented, so that no one could say: ‘I didn’t kill a Jew’” (p. 55). If everyone had killed a Jews, they would be less likely to tell what they had seen and did while in Ukraine. Moreover, they couldn’t pass judgment on their comrades. They were all in it together. Since “killing a Jew was an insignificant, legitimate, authorized, and encouraged act that conformed with the directives of the Reich” and “protecting a Jew led to capital punishment” it was easier to conform to your battalions’ way of life than risk capital punishment (Desbois, 2008, p. 194).

Gross (2001) found similar behavior in Jedwabne Poland. One perpetrator, Jerzy, Laudanski, demonstrated this behavior by explaining “in his own mind he had not been collaborating with the occupiers. He was a regular guy, a good patriot acting in collaboration, at most, with his own neighbors” (Gross, 2001, 77). The member of Jebwabne lived in a small
community where on a regular day “members of such a community will be suspiciously glancing over their shoulders, their shoulders, trying to guess what others think about that they are doing,” and this was heightened on that day of the massacre (Gross, 2001, p. 113). Everyone in the town that day that was “in possession of a sense of sight, smell, or hearing either participated in or witnessed the tormented deaths of the Jews of Jedwabne” (Gross, 2001, p. 54). In fact, the one family that did help the Jews of Jedwabne on this day lived outside the immediate town, less likely to have been swept up in the ‘frenzy’ of the day, and less likely to be noticed by those herding Jews to be murdered in town (Gross, 2001, p 84-5). Gross (2001) says “it is impossible to explain the passivity of the majority of the town’s population in the face of the crime and whether it was due to acceptance of the crime or resulted from intimidation by the brutality of immediate perpetrators” (Gross, 2001, p. 121). The intimidation would have come from the ‘immediate perpetrators’, who in this case were their fellow townspeople. The strong sense of collective obligation of the townspeople was evident even after the massacre:

Poles who had hidden Jews during the war at great peril and then, after the war, continued to hide this fact from their neighbors—all of them were not hated or feared as crypto-communists but rather as embarrassing witnesses to crimes that had been committed against the Jews. (Gross, 2001, p. 101)

The Poles who did participate felt threatened by those who did participate, especially in a small town where everyone knew everyone else. Because everyone knew everyone else, and the majority of the towns people were participating, it seems likely that this would have also prevented other towns people from going against the majority.

As humans are social beings, it is true that “within virtually every social collective, the peer group exerts tremendous pressures on behavior and sets moral norms” (Browning, 1993, p.
189). So since these conditions exist across many cultures and societies, it is logical to think that social conformity might well be one of the most prevalent reasons why these men participated in the killings. The idea of collective obligation meant that if one refused to shot, they were not doing one’s share. The men refusing to participate could be construed as moral reproach for comrades or neighbors, resulting in rejection, isolation and ostracism. In the case with the Reserve Battalion 101, these men were away from their homes and there was nowhere but the Battalion to turn for support and social contact. Same is the case for the German battalions in Ukraine. And in Jedwabne, if you showed moral reproach for your neighbors, then you would have live with the backlash that came with it indefinitely. This leads to one of the most important observations about ordinary men:

- what is clear is that the men’s concern for their standing in the eyes of their comrades was not matched by any sense of human ties with their victims. The Jews stood outside their circle of human obligation and responsibility. (Browning, 1998, p. 73)

At the end of the day, these participators chose to kill rather than risk being ostracized—the human lives of Jews meant very little next to their own personal comforts. Humans are social beings. We live in societies where we rely on others (in varying degrees) to survive. Because this is our nature, we are partly at the mercy of the societies we live in. However, people have the ability to make choices, and it is our choices that define us. The ordinary men participators made the choice to kill, or to be a part of a group that killed. They made the choice to do nothing. Whatever the motivation, we must not ignore that,

- Everywhere society conditions people to respect and defer to authority...everywhere people seek career advancement...in every modern society, the complexity of life and the resulting bureaucratization and specialization attenuate the sense of personal
responsibility of those implementing official policy. Within virtually every social collective, the peer group exerts tremendous pressures on behavior and sets moral norms.

(Browning, 1993, p. 189)

Given the right circumstances, similar situations to cases described in Ordinary Men, Neighbors, or Bullets could happen anywhere, and given the right circumstances anyone could become a genocide perpetrator.

No One Reason

Browning (1998), Gross (2001), and Desbois (2008) do not make definitive conclusions as to why ordinary men participate, instead they remind readers that making generalizations about the motivations of ordinary men can be hazardous. In this chapter I reviewed some of the most common reasons why ordinary men participate—brutalization, routinization and propaganda, fear of the ‘other’, desire for power, coercion and following orders, and social conformity. These categories do not perfectly encompass all the motivations that exist but they do capture a large portion of the reasons given by these men themselves, and scholars that have studied them. It is hard to truly know the motivations of other people, but the only way we can get close is to put as much effort into learning how ordinary men have become participators in genocide from past cases, so we can apply what we have learned to future cases.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ORDINARY MEN

What is important to take way from studying ordinary men is that these killers are created, not born. Ordinary men perpetrators became killers due to the situation they were in. In other words, they became killers because the ideologues created an environment where killing another person was not only possible, but accepted. They created Levi’s (1989) ‘gray
zone’ where the views of right and wrong became distorted. If this environment had not been created, I feel it is safe to say that most of the ordinary men perpetrators would not have become killers in their lifetime. The ordinary men need the ideologues in order to become killers.

So, why not just focus on the ideologues? While it’s true the ordinary men need the ideologues; the ideologues need the ordinary men just as much. The two are co-constituted. In our societies there are ideologues at every level. Although I have purposefully separated ideologues from ordinary men to explain the difference between the two types of perpetrators, in real life they are not separated. In real life, they live amongst each other, and the only real difference is that they have a different relationship with the ideology. The ideologues believe the ideology and he ordinary men perpetrators accept it. Just because ideologues are the leaders, does not mean that ordinary men are simply the followers. Ordinary men make the decision to become perpetrators in genocide. They had other choices, but they chose this path. This Chapter focuses on explaining why they made these choices, with the hope that understanding will eventually lead to preventing ordinary people from making these same choices in future genocides. Genocides unfold because “a core of eager and committed men, aided by an even larger block of men who complied with the policies of the regime more out of situational and organizational rather than ideological factors” (USHMM, 2002). Focusing on the ideologues “obscures the extent to which the lower downs play a pro-active part in expanding the killings;” therefore, “any historical or legal accounting must take full account of the importance of their role while recognizing that existence of ambiguities in some cases” (USHMM, 2002). The next chapter will address suggestions for prevention mechanism that include the concept of ordinary men.
CHAPTER FOUR
INCORPORATING ORDINARY MEN

“The biggest roadblock to action on genocide and other human rights crimes is ignorance.”
—John Prendergast

PREVENTION, NOT INTERVENTION

First and foremost, what I mean when I say ‘genocide prevention’ has failed, I mean the general process in which the international community responds to instances of genocide have not been effective. The UNGC, meant to be a document to prevent genocide, has really become a document invoked occasionally to intervene in genocides that are already happening. What the international community currently refers to as ‘prevention’ is actually intervention. Here are some examples. The UN was aware of pre-genocidal incidents in Rwanda for almost a year prior to the start of the genocide. The UN did nothing until hundreds of thousands of people had already been killed. Darfur was being called a genocide as early as 2004. The UN did nothing until 2008 when the UN passed Security Council Resolution 1769 on July 31, 2007 establishing UNAMID. The situation in the Central African Republic began to escalate in 2013. The UN did nothing until Security Council Resolution 2149 on April 10, 2014 authorizing MINUSCA. The international community does not get involved until it’s too late for any prevention strategies, so they resort to intervention too limited to be effective and follow up with punishment through Ad hoc courts of the ICC. These strategies are not working, and will never work as long as we continue to think about, talk about, and respond to genocides in the same manner. My definition of prevention is: a system that has the ability to identify warning signs in the early stages of genocide, and has the appropriate tools to stop it before thousands of people die (for stages see Stanton, 1998).
CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

In Chapter One I discussed how political will is often described as the “missing ingredient for better prevention of and response to genocidal situations,” however political will can be best understood as the “will to do something that is already determined” and in the case with genocide, we know the process that ‘is already determined’ for responding to genocide is not working (Totten & Parsons, 2009, p. 632). An actor in the international community might have the political will to try to stop genocide, but if the strategies you do not work, they will never be able to stop it. Instead, Totten and Parsons (2009) argue that it is ‘political engagement’ which they describe as the “willingness to be responsive to the unique exigencies of a conflict so that the approach to resolving the problem is the one best suited to solving it” which has been the problem for genocide prevention (p. 632). The ‘political engagement’ of the international community has been lacking, they have been unable to come up with strategies ‘best suited to solving’ the puzzle of genocide prevention. To improve political engagement in genocide prevention we must change the way we talk about genocide. The concept of *ordinary men* is emerging in Holocaust and genocide literature and is “only now beginning to receive appropriate scholarly attention” so we are still a long way away form having *ordinary men* be central to our understanding of genocide (Gross, 2001, p. xxi). However, I argue that changing the conversation to include *ordinary men* will lead to changing the way we respond to genocide. The next sections are a discussion of the different ways in which we can include *ordinary men* in genocide prevention strategies. I do not propose solutions to genocide prevention, but I do raise topics for further exploration of how to actively include the concept of *ordinary men* into the mainstream genocide prevention conversation so that the internationally community will start to adopt a holistic approach to genocide prevention.
Education, Information & How We Remember

Including ordinary men as a central part of the process of how genocides unfolds into the formal education, education of the public, and the way we remember genocide will undoubtedly help change the conversation around genocide.

Think back to when you were in school and learned about particular genocides in History class. What can you remember? I can only truly speak for my own experiences, but I do believe that mine is not unique. I remember Hitler. I remember the Hutu lead governments. I remember Milosevic. I remember Pol Pot. I do not remember the ordinary men. I was never lead to believe that I could ever become a genocide perpetrator, because perpetrators were always flagged as exceptions of the norms of human behavior. I was never challenged to think about what might have been if Hitler spread his ideology but no one listened.

The way in which we are educated about a phenomenon will alter the way society thinks about a problem. So, if we are lead to believe that genocides occur wholly as a result of state-led violence based on exclusionary ideology, then we will constantly be looking at the top-level of perpetrators who we have an easier time at separating ourselves from because way we typically look at state leaders and those in power; they are exceptional. The focus on the top-level perpetrators perpetuates the thinking that we, as ordinary individuals, are inherently different that genocide perpetrators. Ordinary men teaches us a different lesson. Ordinary men teaches us that the decision of the individual matters in genocide. Genocide education rarely divulges into the complexity of genocide. Proper genocide education should approach it a heterogeneous phenomenon that:

…on the one hand, we have to be able to account for it as a system, which functioned according to a preconceived (though constantly evolving) plan…. simultaneously we
must also be able to see it as a mosaic composed of discrete episodes, impoverished by local decision-makers and hinging on unforced behavior, rooted in god-knows-what motivations, of all those who were near the murder scene at the time. (Gross, 2002, p. 81)

This depth of understanding shows that genocide has the potential to affect us all. The regular individuals living in a pre-genocidal environment who are educated on the process of genocide could potentially make better choices. Teaching about genocide needs to include:

1) teaching students to recognize when manipulation and othering are present; 2) teaching students to have the strength of their own ethical and moral convictions to identify manipulation for what it is; and 3) teaching students to have the personal courage to resist their own acts of classification, symbolization, and dehumanization of others despite strong pressure and propaganda. (Kennedy, 2005)

This level of genocide education could help others to not make the same mistakes the ordinary men perpetrators made during the Holocaust, or in any other place where there has been genocide.

How information is portrayed to the general public is central to prevention genocide because “whether accurate information about genocide is disseminated depends on whether mass media and other actors invest the necessary resources in documenting the events, and whether witnesses report honestly” (Jones, 2011, p. 595). The same messages are being given to the general public that are being taught in schools. To show how information is generally portrayed to the public, I will quickly take you through my experience at the USHMM. Visitors walk into the main exhibit and immediately hear audio of Hitler’s speeches. Visitors continue to walk through the main exhibit on a predetermined path—the museum had decided the narrative of the Holocaust for you. The narrative is not wrong; it is just not complete. The horrors of the
Holocaust are shown to visitors through the lens of state-driven violence, the exhibits are very clear that this was the process of in which the Holocaust came to be. Fortunately, since I was studying ordinary men I had known about an exhibit that was separate from the main exhibit halls called Some Were Neighbors. This exhibit did house the information that I was looking; however, the exhibit was in the basement and poorly marked, and for the first 45 minutes I was in the exhibit I had it entirely to myself. It is safe to assume that the majority of museum visitors do not end up seeing that exhibit unless they purposefully looking for it like I was. The exhibit itself is wonderful; and it addresses many of the tough questions that come up when studying ordinary men. However, the USHMM treats the Some Were Neighbors exhibit as a sort of a subplot of the Holocaust, rather than a phenomenon central to the Nazi’s ability to kill millions of people. To change the conversation to include ordinary men those responsible for the output of information have to want to change the conversation. Why not put the Some Were Neighbors exhibit with the rest of the museum? Why is it not central to the narrative the USHMM would like the public to experience when they come to the museum? These are the types of questions we should all be asking when we learn about genocides whether it is through the government, the media, books, the internet, or museums. Whose story am I hearing? Is it the reality of what actually happened on the ground, or is it what the curators of the information want us to believe? When we start to change the conversation we start to poke holes in the narratives we are so used to hearing in genocide; we start to ask questions.

This leads directly into changing how we remember these atrocities. Museums are a major part of how we remember genocides, but we also have memorials, and commemorative events, reflective space, the sites of atrocities, and gravesites. Similar questions need to be asked about these sites for remembering. What is the purpose of this site/event? Who paid for them to
be made or preserved? Who are they about and whose message is being portrayed—the victims, the government, the nation? Do they only represent a certain group? What are their limits to helping us understand what took place? Who benefits? These questions are all important to ask when visiting one of these sites or going to a related event.

We are at the mercy of those that output this information unless we take it upon ourselves to acquire a more complete picture from multiple sources, or unless we talk to the people that lived through the genocide, or the conversation around genocide starts to change to include a more accurate picture of how genocides come to be. These spaces designated to remembering genocides tap into the fact that “witnessing and transmitting are central to genocide prevention and intervention” and “the key is honest, accurate witnessing, combined with the capacity to communicate what one has witnessed” (Jones, 2011, p. 594). And even tough we can never truly perceive the experience of another, the need to remember and to learn “is all the more pronounced the more distant these experiences are from ours in time, space, or quality,” these sorts of sites and information outlets are a way to bridge this gap if they are done with the right intentions with the help of the people who lived through the genocide (Levi, 1988, p. 158). We must be clear of who on who is helping to decide what to remember and who is deciding what we should forgot.

Education is a powerful tool that can be used to help change the conversation. However, it should be done with care and caution, especially when you look at education in countries that have experienced genocide. In Germany, for example, for centuries after the Holocaust German youth were forced to watch movies and footage and read materials that portrayed Germans as responsible for the Holocaust. However, for decades now that children in Germany receiving this type of education were not even born at the time of the Holocaust. Young children in Germany
learned that because they were Germans, they were responsible is some way. That is a terrible education platform because all this method does is perpetuate feelings of unfairness to be held responsible for something they did not take part in. While the reasoning for these strategies may be on the same line as what I am suggesting, it goes too far along the spectrum and almost comes full circle to perpetuate ‘us’ verse ‘them’—this time with the non-Jewish Germans as the scapegoats, or the ‘them’. If we don’t want to see this type of education, we have to breach comfort zones to allow ordinary men to play more central role in the education of genocide.

Effective Warning Systems

The second recommendation is more effective warning systems. The programs I discussed in Chapter One, Early Warning Project and the UN Special Advisor on The Prevention of Genocide, are responsible for identify warning signs and getting governments involved in genocide situations early enough to stop them. To do this, early warning organizations need to be concerned with “separating out, paying attention to and documenting attacks focused on civilian populations,” with a particular eye when a state’s genocide ideology starts to spread to the masses (Totten & Parsons, 2009, p. 619). This is of course not an exact science, but with in-depth study of ordinary men perpetrators from past genocides, organizations tasked with monitoring signs and conjuring public support will start to identify warning signs specific to the mobilization of ordinary men. The typical warning signs that often point to genocide are propaganda, stereotyping, legal changes targeting specific groups, violent measures taken against groups. I think that the more we learn from ordinary men perpetrators, as well as from victims, it will be possible to develop a framework for identifying how ordinary men become mobilized so we can include this process in genocide prevention strategies.

Legal Efforts in Post-Genocide Countries
The laws of countries that have had genocides provide many lessons, both good and bad. Many countries with genocide in their recent past—Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia, Germany, etc.—have experience relative peace since the end of their respective genocides. This peace is often attributed to genocide prevention laws passed in these countries (See Prevent Genocide International, 2015). However, these laws can walk a fine line, and Rwanda provides a good example.

While the genocide in Rwanda only lasted about 100 days, the estimated death tolls range from 500,000 to 800,000, most of which were Tutsi. This genocide effectively eliminated roughly 75 percent of the Tutsi minority group. Rwanda’s genocide is what many call a ‘close’ genocide, which refers to two very important aspect of the genocide. The first meaning of ‘close’ refers to the fact that most people were killed at close range by machetes and other ordinary tools; while the second aspect of ‘close’ refers to the fact that many were killed by by people they were close to—family, friends, neighbors or other people in their community. Roughly 1/5 of the Hutu population, which consisted mainly of ordinary men participators in the genocide.

Present day Rwanda now is full of victims and perpetrators living amongst one another. In the aftermath of the genocide the people of Rwanda has had to deal with trying to decide who are the true perpetrators, and who fell into similar categories as the privileged prisoners described by Levi (1989). The ‘gray zone’ is so vast and complex in Rwanda, that it’s no surprise the Rwandan government has had a complicated twenty-plus years of trying to move the country forward. Besides the fact that there were retributive Tutsi-led violent episodes shortly after the 1994 genocide, there has been relative peace in Rwanda. This peace is often attributed to the
restorative justice practices of the Gacaca courts and the efforts of government run by Paul Kagame.

When it became clear that the ICC formal courts were not going to quickly or effectively bring justice to the people in Rwanda, the (Tutsi-led) government took it upon themselves to create Gacaca courts. The Gacaca courts were “legal proceedings and protections for speedy results and a focus on restorative justice rather than punitive” that began in 2005 and would eventually see 1.5 million cases (Jones, 2011, p. 362, 544). These proceedings offered a chance for victims and perpetrators to come face-to-face with one another in a place where perpetrators could confess and ask for forgiveness. One Gacaca participant said the following about Gacaca:

I think that Gacaca can bring people together because once you bring people together to dialogue, to discuss the issues that affect them directly, to discuss about whether they took part—once accused of murdering another, the other saying ‘you did this,’ ‘I didn’t do this,’ ‘I did this, I’m sorry, can you forgive me?’ That’s a very important dialogue…[and] once people come together, you will definitely come up with a changed attitude. (Jones, 2011, p. 545)

The Gacaca legislation helped to physically rebuild Rwanda’s society as well because if “an offender willingly accepts responsibility, takes ownership of his or her actions, and demonstrates his or her contriteness and willingness to tell the truth about the events that occurred” he or she “may receive a reduced sentence and an earlier return to the community” (Jones, 2011, p. 545). And since these courts were held in the communities where the crimes took place, the community would have heard the confession, so they were more likely to accept that person back into the community. Since so much of the adult male population was involved in the genocide, the country’s workforce was seriously depleted, so getting these men back into the community
would help the economy. While the Rwandan government has received criticism from the international community regarding the legality of the Gacaca court proceedings, it is clear that in many cases they have had a positive effect on the people in Rwanda. Nevertheless, it has not been a universally respected practice, and “these trials provoked anger among many genocide survivors who thought the Gacaca courts would let many killers off the hook by allowing them to enter plea bargains” (Kayigamba, 2012). In addition, the courts have been criticized for only dealing reprimanding Hutu perpetrators and ignoring the fact that there were also crimes committed by Tutsi (many of the RPF government) perpetrators. How does Rwanda reconcile this and what happens if this anger spreads?

Rwanda’s government is so afraid to have another genocide, that they have abolished the use of Hutu and Tutsi ethnic identities. A person in Rwanda may look Tutsi or Hutu, and historically belong to either ethnic group, but it is illegal for a person to identify as either; in present day Rwanda everyone is legally Rwandan (Moshman, 2014). But, Rwandans still continue to see themselves in these terms (Moshman 2014). The Rwandans are being coerced into new identities. Additionally, the government has gone to great lengths to prevent hate speech, and anything that might be misconstrued as such. In 2008 a law was passed that criminalized genocide ideology and “under this law one is punished for what one believes, not for what one says. Speech is evidence of belief. In Rwanda, genocide ideology is now a thought-crime” (Moshman, 2016). Rather than explain the peace in Rwanda, these legal practices show how fragile the country may still be. Limiting free speech, a technique commonly associated with dictatorships, is a slippery slope. Will other civil rights will be taken away? What other identities will the government deem as inferior? Getting ride of the labels of specific ethnic identities does not eliminate the physical characteristics that accompany them, so how do these
strategies promote peace? What happens if Kagame’s government decides to only imprisoning Hutus who violate this law? How far away is Rwanda really from another genocide with these oppressive laws? What is really needed for post-genocide countries “is education for peace and conflict resolution. Such education requires equal access for all, serious teaching of history, and respect for critical thinking and intellectual freedom, especially regarding history and identity,” and it seems that Rwanda has not yet adopted this policy (Moshman, 2014). The truth is the Rwandan genocide embodies the concept of \textit{ordinary men}, as most perpetrators fit into my definition. Therefore, effective peace building in Rwanda should focus on understanding how the \textit{ordinary men} were mobilized. This should not be done to excuse them, but to make sure future generations do not make the same mistakes. Restorative justice, like in the Gacaca, courts can help Rwandans understand that during the genocide there was a very fine line between perpetrator and victim.

\textit{Grassroots Prevention}

Since the success of a genocide is a result of the mobilization of \textit{ordinary men} perpetrators, it would make sense that prevention efforts should involve grassroots efforts to stop mobilization. It is unlikely that the United Nations will adjust their prevention policies in the near future, so there needs to be other avenues for prevention. Bottom-up strategies that combat hate ideology, educate about past genocides, teach restorative justice, and focus peace building would help push the world towards ‘Never Again’. This concept is very lofty; however, “Grassroots responses to the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, have proven that civilian groups can play a powerful role in determining how conflicts are understood” (Totten & Parsons, 2009, p. 620). Grassroots community outreach practices by nature do not provide all encompassing policy, but rather could work at the lowest level to help ordinary people understand that genocide really is
something that has the possibility to touch all of us. Grassroots efforts can focus on how individual choice can make all the difference in genocide. These types of efforts are especially important in countries that are considered to be high on the warning scale for genocide. Preventive methods must include grassroots community outreach and education geared towards extinguishing the genocidal ideology before the ideologues can gain large amounts of ordinary men participators by teaching the importance of individual choice and teaching how and when to resist authority.

GETTING CLOSER TO ‘NEVER AGAIN’

The ideas, issues, and questions I raised in this chapter do not explain how we get to ‘Never Again’, but aim to suggest ways in which we can start making progress towards it. The mainstream conversation around genocide provides a lot of excuses and perpetuates the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mentality. When we focus on the the state leaders as the only ones responsible for genocide, we make future genocides, not only probable, but definite. The strategy of ‘remove the leaders’ might end a genocide, but does not address the root causes. Yes, that strategy might work in the short term. But, it perpetuates the idea that genocides are a result of exceptional evil, and once that evil is gone, the problem is solved. These practices allow the countries that have yet to experience genocide to remain comforted by the belief that ‘it will not happen to here’ or ‘It does not concern me’, believing that this exceptional form of evil is rare. Once the leaders are dealt with, then the international community moves on and leaves the post-genocide country to deal with the aftermath on there own because the international community believes removing the leaders removes all the perpetrators. This process leaves countries in shambles as they the people are left trying to grapple with that fact that the leaders might be gone, but the other perpetrators
are left. What happens to them? Some get ignored, some get excused, some go to jail, so are forgotten; but because we do not acknowledge the central role this level of perpetrator plays in genocide, they are not properly dealt with. By ‘dealt with’ I do not mean punished, I simply mean that the *ordinary men* do not become part of lessons taught to prevent another genocide in a particular country and important opportunities are missed to demonstrate that every individual has a choice, even in ‘the gray zone’.

The argument I have woven throughout this paper is that strategies of ‘prevention’ do not work because the UN and the International community have failed to properly understand the process that leads to genocide. Since all the focus is on taking out the the state-officials and the leaders to stop a genocide, they wait until ‘mass violence’ or ‘mass atrocities’ start so they have the justification to intervene in a sovereign nation. This is unacceptable. Genocide scholars Totten and Parsons (2009) argue that to improve genocide prevention requires “a better informed cadre of professional policy-makers who recognize what genocide is and are expected to prioritize its prevention and effective response; better systems of warning and response; and finally a better informed public who can help make these issues mainstream political concern” (p. 632). I believe *ordinary men* is central to all three of these recommendations. If the international community does not understand the process of genocide, they will not get involved in the early stages of genocide before mass violence starts. Remember that mass violence requires mass participation, and what this really means is that the ideology of the *ideologues* is not necessarily important, but whether or not the ideology is infectious enough that the majority of people choose to collaborate and comply with it. Therefore, to prevent future genocide we have to have strategies that prevent the ideologues from mobilizing the *ordinary men*. To develop these sorts of strategies we have to first change the way we look at genocide. We cannot
accept a dialogue that paints genocide perpetrators as different than ourselves, we can not perpetuate the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ thinking of genocide. It is the responsibly of those that study genocide to remind the public that the majority of genocide perpetrators are not ‘evil’ in some exceptional sense of the word, they are banal, ordinary, regular people like you or I, whom when faced with difficult discussions due to the situation they were in, chose to participate. The conversation surrounding genocide prevention has to include this concept, and it has to acknowledge that this can happen anywhere, at anytime, and anyone could be a genocide perpetrator.
CONCLUSION

Genocide, from whichever angle you study it, is a taxing concept; and the concept of *ordinary men* adds an even heavier layer to genocide. Since I started studying *ordinary men* I have felt uncomfortable with my own understanding of human nature in general, and my own nature as an individual. A lot of these thoughts and feelings come from attempting to put myself into the shoes of the *ordinary men* perpetrators. It is easier than you might think to imagine yourself as one of these perpetrators after reading about the ordinariness of many of the perpetrators reasoning for participating. So many of the reasons are things we experience in our everyday life like falling orders, social conformity, careerism, etc. I think most of us would like to think that if we were confronted with killing another person, the life of that individual would take precedent over these far less important things; however, the many examples found in *Drowned and Saved*, *Bullets, Neighbors*, and *Ordinary men* show that making theses decision may not be so easy. I found myself making excuses for these perpetrators. I was never trying to forgive them not to forgive them but to understand them. I was say things like “but they were starving and needed food” or they were “scared they would be killed too if they did not participate”. You can even see my confusion in my writing where I could not decide whether to call *ordinary men* ‘perpetrators’ or ‘participators’, and I could not decide if that mattered. In my opinion perpetrator is a more judgmental world that implies a deeper meaning than participator, and sometimes it felt more appropriate to use one or the other. I eventually decided that it didn’t necessarily matter, but I my awareness of the meaning of the words was heightened. Was I using one versus the other when I felt the reasoning because involvement was more, dare I say, *acceptable*? I think that fact that we make these excuses for *ordinary men* is central to the problem. We cannot excuse them, because when all is said and done we always have the choice;
even if the choice is kill or be killed, we always have a choice. When we look at genocides there are always people that chose not to participate, and there are always people that choose to actively resist. We should not be accepting the ordinary men as a norm for behavior, we should be striving for a world where that participating is abnormal, and resisting hate ideology is normal. I do not know how we can get there, except to study ordinary men as much as possible. This thesis has its limitations due to the fact that it is only centered on interviews previously done, it does not provide any sort of quantitative analysis and the fact that it is primarily focused on the Holocaust. As I intend to continue my study of ordinary men when I pursue a Ph.D., I hope that I can expand the research I have done here to include my own interviews and to understand the role ordinary men in all genocide after the Holocaust. I would also hope to visit post-genocide countries to see how they have moved on after genocides to get a better picture of how peace can be maintained. Of course this is a major project, but I whole heartedly believe in its importance to preventing future genocides.

Lastly, I would like to comment on what I wish the future of genocide prevention could look like. Jones (2011) puts it beautifully:

…sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Whenever mean or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe. (Jones, 2011, p. 599)

I wish, and I think that Jones (2011) would agree, that moral outrage as to exist in order for ‘Never Again’ to become a reality. If we continue to weigh our sovereignty, our resources, our money, and our own people (‘us’), against the lives innocent individuals being murdered by their government and their fellow citizens (‘them’), then we cannot consider ourselves as any better
than *ordinary men* perpetrators. This sort of mentality is the same mentality *ordinary men* us to weigh the pros and cons of their participation. As a student of political science I know how taboo this might sound, but I could not in good conscious end this paper without these thoughts.

Genocide must be recognized as an immensely important issues that has the ability to touch us all. Genocide is not a country, region, or government-type, specific issue, it is a humanity issue and humankind must find a way to ‘Never Again’.
REFERENCES


