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An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Dehumanization during the
Holocaust

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An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Dehumanization during the Holocaust

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Abstract

The body of literature surrounding the Holocaust and dehumanization is extensive. Multiple theories have been proffered to try and explain the Holocaust's causation, each with varying degrees of acceptance from the Jewish and global communities. Meanwhile dehumanization has been studied however often through the lens of a singular field. Despite the abundance of research on the Holocaust, the subject of perpetrators has had limited exploration as of yet. The present analysis seeks to examine the mechanics of dehumanization and how these mechanics could explain the behaviors behind the perpetration of the Holocaust and by extension, other genocides. This analysis will pull from multiple fields of thought and inquiry in order to develop a holistic perspective on perpetrators. Two pivotal conclusions emerge from this analysis. First that dehumanization as a behavior is fluid in nature, therefore it is present in multiple contexts and cannot be limited. Supplementing this is that there is no definitive perpetrator archetype given the large range of potential motivating factors for perpetration.

Keywords: dehumanization, perpetrators, genocide, holistic analysis, interdisciplinary,

An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Dehumanization during the Holocaust

Throughout the body of Holocaust research, there has been a lack of inquiry and focus on psychohistory, largely in part because of past misguided use and analysis of psychological theories (Kauders, 2021). Despite this hesitancy past historians have made use of concepts within psychology, particularly the work of Sigmund Freud, to provide cursory answers to their questions about Holocaust perpetration (Kauders, 2021). Additionally, literature on the Holocaust's causation has been, to say the least, divisive. Theorists point to a range of reasons for its occurrence which all share the commonality that the Holocaust was a German-oriented operation. While there is some truth to this, this line of thought doesn't completely account for the observed variance in genocidal patterns during the Holocaust in several regions of Eastern Europe (King, 2013). The present study seeks to discuss and synthesize the findings from several fields of research to develop an intersectional analysis of dehumanization and how this process led to the development of the Holocaust and facilitated its perpetration. The present study recognizes that multiple ethnic groups were targets and victims of the Holocaust and its perpetrators, however this analysis will focus primarily on the Jewish population as this was the group that was impacted the most and has been the target of oppression, hostility, and violence since the third century BCE (Flannery, 2004).

Dehumanization is defined as the process of depriving an individual or group of traits that are identified as belonging to humans. "Dehumanization... rests on a separation within humanity itself" (Steizinger, 2018, p. 141). It is a "nexus of connected behaviors that exists at the meeting point of identity and ideology, of individual and group" (Savage, 2013, p. 148). Luna (2018) described characteristics typically found within dehumanization including:

- the presence of dichotomies (two things are represented as being opposed to each other)
- a social group's loss of status at the hands of another group
- the presence of hierarchies and inequality

Some studies have found that the recognition of humanity in other individuals is necessary for dehumanization to occur and continue (Steizinger, 2018). Steizinger (2018) set out to examine Nazi ideology in order to gain a different perspective on dehumanization and its effect on mass violence and genocide. A fundamental aspect of Nazi ideology was its redefinition of the world, history, and the multifaceted nature of humanity (Steizinger, 2018). With this redefinition comes the ability to manipulate concepts and values into those that suit the purposes and goals of a group's ideology such as the targeting of a specific population or group (Steizinger, 2018). Steizinger's (2018) model of dehumanization involves the reduction of human status in dehumanized victims to the degree in which the victim is perceived as animalistic but not so much as to completely remove traces of humanity. Basic human qualities must remain for perpetrators to maintain the dehumanization process (Steizinger, 2018). With this model it was determined that dehumanization stems from dividing the concept of humanity into naturalistic and metaphysical humanity (Steizinger, 2018). A perceived lack of metaphysical humanity means that the individual isn't completely considered a human being (Steizinger, 2018). It is also important to note that this model uses the Nazi's definition of humanity. True humans were those that fit within the parameters of the 'Aryan master race'; in other words, those that contained the 'more valuable' genetic and physical features of the 'Nordic race' (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum [USHMM], n.d.). The ideology behind racial

eugenics was legitimized by German biomedical experts, making it seem valid and acceptable for the German public to dehumanize certain groups (USHMM, n.d.).

Types of Dehumanization

Dehumanization is a broad concept which can be divided into several classifications. However current classifications don't accurately mirror the vast range of problems that stem from dehumanization. They neglect to account for the use of symbology and social division within dehumanization, such as the use of the Star of David to physically identify Jews within any social environment (Luna, 2018). This is a prime example of cultural dehumanization, a process that designates cultural values and practices as attributable to beings that are not human through systematic cultural changes and the shifting of understanding of cultural values (Luna, 2018). Recognizing this process, Luna (2018) analyzed transcripts from 74 interviews with Holocaust survivors; these interviews were selected if they contained anecdotes in which animal terminology was attributed to the survivors and their experiences during the Holocaust. From this analysis, four themes became apparent: internalized dehumanization, natural/living conditions, things done by animals, and things done to animals (Luna, 2018). For clarification, internalized dehumanization pertains to animal-like descriptions which were found to have become common or accepted ideas by some survivors (Luna, 2018). Upon a later read-through, Luna (2018) found other nonhuman terms throughout the transcripts and subsequently grouped them into three coded categories:

- Supernatural/Divine: heaven, paradise, devil, angel, and God
- Miscellaneous: dirt, garbage, gold/goods, sacks, bread, meat, wood, and stones
- Other Natured: ghost, corpse/dead, alien, robot/machine, not human, slaves, beasts, vegetable, skeletons

A comparison between both sets of codes, showed the presence of dehumanization within language, the suspension of traditions and rituals towards the dead, emotions, behaviors and physicality, and even in hygiene (Luna, 2018). Demonstrating that dehumanization as a behavior is fluid and not confined to a singular area (Luna, 2018). Dehumanization can be found within several structural, cultural, social, and institutional practices observed during the Holocaust. Such examples include the status of *schutzjuden* (meaning ‘protected Jews’), the physical separation of the Jewish population from their communities and into ghettos, and the loss of names. *Schutzjuden*, created during the Middle Ages, was a title given to a select number of Jews who, after paying money for it, were given a protected legal status that guaranteed privileges such as exemption from taxation and the ability to live in territories that were typically off limits to Jewish peoples (“German History in Documents and Images”, n.d.). With the designation of this title comes a passive form of social division in which a social group becomes divided amongst itself due to the establishing of degrees of protection. This can then lead to tension developing amongst the social dynamics of the group, thereby presenting a distraction so that further social divisions can occur both in and outside of the group.

A vital element of social dynamics is the perception of another person’s mind and therefore their consciousness; perception of mind is determined through a person’s perceived agency, experience, warmth, and competency (Waytz et al., 2010). Morera et al. (2018) conducted linked studies to examine two different models of dehumanization: metaphor-based and attribute-based. These studies expand upon the field of research on dehumanization as they explore the dehumanized perception of ordinary people, regardless of whatever social group(s) they belong to. The targets used in both studies were selected due to them representing varying levels of perceived warmth and competence. Additionally, the targets belonged to one of three

‘target types’: *Professional people* (a radiologist and veterinarian), *Evil people* (a mercenary and terrorist), and *Lowest of the Low* (a homeless person and a drug-addict) (Morera et al., 2018).

The first study, pertaining to the attribute-based model, sought to determine if people would negate certain mental capabilities i.e., experience (the capability to experience feelings and sensations) and agency (the ability to act), depending on if the target belonged to a typically dehumanized group or not (Morera et al., 2018). These mental aspects are what is used to differentiate between humans, animals, and machines (Waytz et al., 2010). Participants viewed pictures and read accompanying descriptions about the targets, and afterwards were asked to report the extent to which they perceived the targets as having agency and experience. The *Professional people* group was attributed with having high agency and high experience, whereas the *Lowest of the Low* group were perceived to have the lowest level of agency but a medium level of experience, which is in line with animalistic dehumanization (Morera et al., 2018). Animalistic dehumanization pertains to when groups are perceived as animals/ animal-like because they are believed to not have qualities that are unique to humans. The *Evil people* group was perceived as having some agency but less experience which follows mechanistic dehumanization (Morera et al., 2018). Mechanistic dehumanization involves the removal of human nature and qualities from an individual, thereby relegating them to being an object or robot.

Morera et al.’s (2018) second study focused on the assignation of metaphorical categories (human, animal, or machine) to the same target groups. The study followed a similar format to the first but with the addition of presenting participants with 33 words related to the metaphorical categories. Participants had to designate each target as either animal, machine, or human depending on the perceived levels of traits. Echoing the results of first study, *Professional people*

were rated high in human perception and low in animal perception (humans with machine-like skills), *Lowest of the low* scored high in animal words and lowest in mechanical (humans that are animalized but recognized as human), and *Evil people* scored high in both machine and animal categories, having the lowest humanity score (Morera et al., 2018). The results from both studies demonstrate how subjects can be perceived and thus dehumanized based on those perceptions. Additionally, the findings point to mechanistic and animalistic dehumanization seeming to overlap and being interrelated concepts rather than independent of each other. In relation to these two types of dehumanization Waytz et al. (2010) noted another type called dementalization, a two-pronged process that denies a person of both agency and experience.

Neuroscience of dehumanization

Several other studies have dedicated their focus towards dehumanized perception, in which a person fails to immediately consider the mind or humanity of another individual which can lead to the facilitation of inhumane acts. Harris and Fiske (2011) conducted two interrelated studies, the first had participants imagine a typical day for designated social targets, their descriptions of the targets were coded and analyzed for mental-state verb use. The targets were paired up based on the emotion they corresponded with on the Stereotype Content model (Morera et al., 2018):

- envy (rich man and businesswoman)
- disgust (drug addict and homeless person)
- pride (American firefighter and a college student)
- pity (disabled woman and elderly man)

Following this, participants were asked to rate the targets based on several dimensions of human-perception such as warmth, perceiver's empathy, intelligence, and complex emotionality

(Harris & Fiske, 2011). The results revealed that participants rated dehumanized targets significantly lower than other social targets in 10 out of 14 human perception dimensions (Harris & Fiske, 2011). For example, significantly fewer mental-state verbs were used to describe dehumanized targets meaning that the participants were less able to spontaneously surmise the goings-on of dehumanized targets compared to other targets (Harris & Fiske, 2011).

Given the results from the first study, Harris and Fiske (2011) performed fMRI scans on the participants while they viewed the same target photos to see which neural regions shared a correlation with the dimensions that tend to distinguish dehumanized targets from others. After this they were asked to rate the targets using the same dimensions as Study 1 (Harris & Fiske, 2011). Seven out of ten dimensions were found to activate regions of interest (ROI) within the brain (Harris & Fiske, 2011). Typically, less activation of the right anterior insula indicates a high level of warmth elicited by the targets, however there was increased activation in this ROI which demonstrates a higher level of dehumanization which could potentially enable behaviors such as torture (Harris & Fiske, 2011). Additional correlations were found between the superior temporal sulcus and the dimensions of familiarity and similarity, as well as humanity and the anterior cingulate cortex (Harris & Fiske, 2011).

This is further corroborated by Bruneau et al. (2018) which sought to analyze neural activity that has been connected to blatant dehumanization. Bruneau et al. (2018) noted that prior neuroimaging research has not explored neural activity during the active judgment of a person's humanity. The approach for used by Bruneau et al. (2018) called for the active contemplation of a target's morals and human capabilities which can have an impact on multiple areas of intergroup decision-making. The targets used were high-status humans (Surgeons, Europeans, and Americans), low-status humans (Muslims, homeless, and gypsies), and animals (rat and

puppy) (Bruneau et al., 2018). The participants were asked to rate these groups based on four scales: likability, blatant dehumanization, heterogeneity, and similarity (Bruneau et al., 2018). Whilst making their judgements, the participants' brains were also scanned with an fMRI (Bruneau et al., 2018). The results determined that there was significant dehumanization towards low-status targets in addition to them being seen as homogenous (a collection of nonindividuals) and dissimilar from the self (Bruneau et al., 2018). Brain activity correlated with dehumanization was found in four areas: the left inferior frontal cortex (IFC), two areas of the left inferior parietal cortex (IPC), and the dorsomedial precuneus; dehumanizing judgments were significantly correlated to the left IFC and IPC (Bruneau et al., 2018). The implications of these findings are that the degree of dehumanization put on a group is a reflection of the dehumanizer's belief in that group's complete difference from themselves and by extension humanity (Bruneau et al., 2018).

Factors Contributing to Dehumanization

Moral Disengagement

The concept of morality is one which dictates general standards for right and wrongful conduct (Bandura, 2002). While these standards are known, past research has explored psychosocial methods through which our moral regulators can be disengaged (Bandura, 2002). To examine this concept further, Bandura (2002) conducted an analysis of various mechanisms of moral disengagement that can facilitate the perpetration of inhumane acts. One such mechanism is moral justification where the definition of harmful behaviors and conduct are disassembled and then redefined to provide a person with moral imperative to cause or allow harm to befall others (Bandura, 2002). Examples of this are murder being made justifiable when it is done

under military command and the persecution of Muslims who were dehumanized and bestialized during the Crusades (1095-1291) (Bandura, 2002).

Other mechanisms studied and discussed by Bandura (2002) are the sanitization of language, exonerating social comparison, victim blaming, and diffusion of responsibility. Sanitized language involves the manipulation of words or phrases to change a person or group's perception of a normally negatively viewed action or behavior. For example, Hitler's phrase, the 'Garden of Eden' was used to refer to a region beyond the Ural Mountains designated for future German expansion that would be free from 'undesirable groups' (King, 2012). Exonerating social comparisons compare an unforgivable act with another in order to garner a more positive perception of the horrible act. The testimony of Heinrich Steinmetz, commander of the Third Platoon of Second Company in Reserve Police Battalion 101, exemplifies this exoneration; despite having aided in the Parzew deportations of Jews to the Treblinka camp and knowing these Jews were likely going to die, Steinmetz' men "spared direct participation in the killing, the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 seem scarcely to have been disturbed by this awareness" (Browning, 1992). The men didn't feel any guilt or shame for their actions because they weren't directly causing the deaths of the deported Jews, therefore they viewed themselves as not doing a really bad thing. The diffusing of responsibility works by dividing an overall negative behavior into smaller, more perceptually harmless tasks so that an individual's total assumed responsibility for their actions is reduced significantly (Bandura, 2002). This is often done through a displacement of responsibility, involving the extricating of responsibility from one individual and assigning it to another (Bandura, 2002).

The experiments conducted by Milgram and Phillip Zimbardo encapsulate the effects of a diffusion or absolvment of responsibility for an individual's actions. In Milgram's study,

participants were told they would be testing another person on memory and responsible for administering shocks for every wrong answer that was given (Hale, 2020). With each incorrect answer the participants would be prompted by an experimenter to press a button to shock the person. The shocks rose in increments each time starting at 15 and going to 450 volts (Hale, 2020). No person was actually shocked, both the experimenter and the responder were in on the experiment; the responder would vocalize their 'distress' at the shocks increased (Hale, 2020). The results of this study were shocking to the public when they were released as they demonstrated that people were likely to reach high voltages without stopping despite hearing the responder scream in pain or go silent, indicating that the need to adhere to authority was able to override a person's sense of personal responsibility (Hale, 2020). The objective of Zimbardo's study was to look into the impact that roles and labeling theory can have on human behavior (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., n.d.). To do this, Zimbardo simulated a prison environment and had participants be either a prisoner or a guard and essentially observed the participants' behaviors (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., n.d.). Things quickly went awry as the participants playing the guards became cruel and relentless with the 'inmates' (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., n.d.). The experiment had to be stopped completely after several days due to the 'prisoners' becoming too traumatized to continue (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., n.d.). In the case of Zimbardo's study, the participants that played the guards were told that Zimbardo would assume full responsibility and to do what they thought was best in handling the 'inmates'; it is because of this diffusion of responsibility that the 'guards' felt they could do whatever they wanted to the 'inmates' (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., n.d.).

Returning to Bandura (2002), victim blaming is a process in which the victim is wrongfully made responsible for the crimes done to them (Bandura, 2002). For instance, the

Jews were blamed for bringing the acts of discrimination, death, and torture on themselves for their supposed role in aiding Germany's loss of WWI after the United States stopped supplying resources to Germany during the war (Browning, 1992). Moral disengagement isn't immediate, it's progressive and essentially conditioned as the person gradually becomes desensitized to their actions.

Houwing and Bussey's (2017) study supports Bandura's (2002) claim that an individual's mechanisms of self-regulation can be turned off in order to prevent self-condemnation of certain actions, in other words circumventing cognitive dissonance. In light of this, Houwing and Bussey (2017) sought to create a physical punishment moral disengagement (PPMD) scale and see if higher levels of PPMD could imply the increased use of physical punishment. While the primary focus of the study was to determine PPMD in parents when disciplining children, the findings can and should be considered in other contexts such as the actions of perpetrators to their victims. It was found that those that approved of higher moral disengagement levels also displayed a higher likelihood of using physical punishment (Houwing & Bussey, 2017); a correlation was also found between high levels of moral disengagement and reported levels of low self-censure for use of physical punishment (Houwing & Bussey, 2017). An example of this correlation would be the tolerance and sometimes endorsement of physical abuse that Jewish prisoners had to deal with on a daily basis by Nazi enforcers (Holocaust Encyclopedia, 2019); "military-style discipline, beatings, humiliation at the hands of the guard personnel, and sentencing to mindless inactivity marked the daily existence of the prisoners" (Megargee, 2009). Houwing and Bussey's (2017) study provides support for prior literature on moral disengagement in that its usage is more so situation-based rather than indiscriminate use.

Cognition and Dissonance

A dehumanized perception of others bypasses social cognition in which other people are recognized as human and thus deserving of moral treatment (Harris & Fiske, 2011). Every human has a social-cognitive network that activates in response to stimuli related to other individuals however this network has been found to fail in igniting when a person is exposed to targets that are traditionally dehumanized (Harris & Fiske, 2011). Harris and Fiske's (2006) previous findings have determined that members belonging to an out-group tended to elicit less activity from the medial prefrontal cortex, an area of the brain whose function revolves around the perception of others and their minds. Which implies that the deactivation of social cognition can have an impact on several neurological processes and illustrates one of several intricate psychological mechanisms which are used to perform inhumane acts and atrocities (Harris & Fiske, 2011). Two theories can explain the deactivation of social cognition, social identity theory and cognitive dissonance. Social identity theory involves a self-categorical shift from an individual to a group perspective (Kauders, 2021). In other words, an individual alters their line of thinking and adopts the thoughts and ideas of an overall group rather than developing and maintaining their own beliefs. Cognitive dissonance on the other hand is generated when an individual's learned moral mandates are put in conflict with the individual's decision to participate in immoral behaviors or actions. "Restructuring one's self-image in such a manner as to conform to the morally problematic beliefs and actions is a typical strategy of dealing with cognitive dissonance" (Kauders, 2021).

"Us" versus "Them" Ideology

For an ideology to be deemed effective: 1) it has to already exist and be adaptable to specific social context, 2) it must influence dialogue and belief systems pertaining to that context, 3) be able to sway public opinion, and 4) guide how the public should think about

political topics (Sibley & Osborne, 2016). The “Us” versus “Them” ideology entails the instilling of trust in both preached philosophies and in the figureheads that promote these philosophies (Sapolsky, 2017). Normally, “priming people to think of a victim as an ‘Us’, rather than a “Them”, increases the odds of their intervening” (Sapolsky, 2017). Meaning that when a victim is associated with the in-group it is more likely that people will get involved to help them. Regarding the Holocaust, the Nazis inverted this process and primed the perception of Holocaust victims to be seen as “Thems” or belonging to the out-group, resulting in a lack of intervention from those that were aware of the violence and atrocities being committed against the victims (Sapolsky, 2017). This priming was subliminal and frequently reinforced negative stereotypes, as seen in the propaganda used by the Nazis particularly regarding the Jews, which facilitated social division and in-group/out-group distinctions (Sapolsky, 2017). When looking at the progression of antisemitic views and the beginning of the Holocaust, there is a noticeable transition of the perception of Jews from being individuals with low/warmth and high competence to beings with low warmth and competence (Sapolsky, 2017). This is due to the adoption of an essentialist perspective which promotes the viewing of an out-group as homogenous and lacking individuality (Sapolsky, 2017). Essentialism follows the belief that members of category all share a common “essence” which is the cause behind certain notable features of the category (Prentice & Miller, 2007). Additionally essentialism is based on two observations, the proclivity to essentialize between categories and category types and the impact on people’s perception of different categories and their respective members (Prentice & Miller, 2007). Some categories are more likely to be essentialized such as gender, ethnicity, race, and physical disability (Prentice & Miller, 2007).

Through the development and maintenance of an “Us” versus “Them” ideology, a difference between execution and killing becomes clear due to the symbolic meaning behind each concept despite technically being the same action. The act of killing someone is often viewed as reprehensible however there are rare situations in which it can be perceived as moderately acceptable such as in the killing of a dangerous criminal or in the name of self-defense. On the other hand, the act of execution is allotted to individuals that are classified as evil, unfeeling, and who deserve to be killed. Given the general prioritization of human rights, how does an “Us” versus “Them” ideology change our understanding of when perceived “Thems” are designated as executable (Glick, 2013)? Philosophers Giorgio Agamben and Judith Butler argue that humanness is determined based on the ability of the person to have a politically meaningful death, adding further that individuals who become disenfranchised politically then become executable (Glick, 2013). This phenomenon is dubbed ‘bare life’ where political meaning is removed from a person, thereby diminishing the person to a simple biological state of being (Glick, 2013). Being reduced to a state of being as opposed to being human is precisely what leads to a person being viewed as subhuman or homogenous with their equally disenfranchised social group (Sapolsky, 2017; Bruneau et al., 2018; Steizinger, 2018). This also stands true when one considers the line between man and animal and how historically humans have arranged racial categories along and across this line. The complete negation of political meaning and removal of the capacity to feel grief toward the disenfranchised individual leads to them being defined as executable (Glick, 2013). This capacity for grief can be removed when the dehumanized individual is made out to be unworthy of moral value or a danger to society, as demonstrated in several propaganda efforts aimed at specific minority groups over the course of history. Others argue that how deaths are distributed can have an impact on states of existence,

such as defining who must die or live; this is seen in racist, anti-semitic, and anti-muslim philosophies, with race often being a characteristic that differentiates humans from subhumans (Glick, 2013; Prentice & Miller, 2007). In line with this, the concept of necropolitics, the repetition and designation of disposable versus indispensable people becomes a form of justification for the killing/execution of certain individuals (Glick, 2013). In the context of the Holocaust, those that were indispensable were the victims and prisoners that were strong enough to work.

A theory that supplements “Us” vs “Them” is social dominance theory (SDT), a process in which group conflict is minimized through the acceptance of ideologies that promote a group’s superiority over another (Trounson et al., 2015). A factor that influences SDT is social dominance orientation (SDO), the scope of a person’s desire that their group comes out as superior to out-groups (American Psychological Association, n.d.). Esses et al. (2008) found that dehumanization serves as a legitimizing myth for people that are high in SDO because it justifies the negative attitudes they hold towards out-groups.

Sibley and Osborne (2016) proposed an update to the Dark Duo social model on Post-Colonial Ideology, that it is contingent on the ideological processes of symbolic exclusion and historical negation to exert social control, legitimize inequalities, and maintain the status quo. Symbolic exclusion requires a controlling of the membership aspects which make-up a social category or group (Sibley & Osborne, 2016). In other words, the qualities that define who belongs in a social group are moderated and controlled which assists in legitimizing social division and hierarchy. Historical negation involves the invalidation of a social group’s need to rectify any historical misdeeds (Sibley & Osborne, 2016). Sibley and Osborne (2016) noted that individuals that present high levels of SDO and Right-Wing Authoritarianism are very likely to

draw on historical negation and symbolic exclusion to impose and preserve group-based dominance as well as safeguard their ingroup through myths that legitimize the group's values.

Historical Perspective

The Holocaust, through the lens of political science, should be viewed as a matrix composed of multiple variables (King, 2013). The Final Solution cannot be credited singularly to the plans and efforts of Hitler and his circle; multiple contextual state factors, especially antisemitism, contributed to what eventually became a "state policy of genocide" (King, 2013, p. 330). Perpetrator occupation of areas with significant Jewish populations and the eventual execution of these populations were initially motivated by the political incentives of rooting out 'traitors', and retribution for WWI and their alleged crimes against European nations (King, 2013). In truth these so-called 'traitors' were anyone who was non-Aryan although particular emphasis was placed on the Jews.

It is important to note that perpetrators of the Holocaust weren't just German, rather several forces from various European nations played a role in facilitating the Holocaust (King, 2013). An example of this is the knowledge that more of the eradication of Jews happened in Poland as opposed to the expected belief that most of the mass murder occurred in Germany. As the Holocaust progressed, a hierarchy of perpetrators was formed by these collaborating nations with Germany acting as the head of the hierarchy. As highlighted by King (2013) political alliances were crucial to advancing the antisemitic agenda; the allied eastern European governments 'shared the burden' of mass killing the Jews, however this was under the condition that Germany was going to win the war. However once it became apparent that Germany was losing, its allies in genocide began to drop off, leaving Nazi perpetrators to scramble and complete the Final Solution (King, 2013).

The first targeted actions by the Nazis towards the Jews were through the legal system (Museum of Tolerance, n.d.). In the span of a month, laws pertaining to civil service and admission into the field of law were amended to prohibit and remove Jews from these professions (Museum of Tolerance, n.d.). Those that sought the consultation of non-Aryan doctors were not reimbursed for incurred expenses and in German schools Jewish students could only makeup 1.5% of the school's student body (Museum of Tolerance, n.d.).

Germany developed a policy called *Volksdeutsche* that was geared specifically towards its citizens that were living outside of Germany; the idea was that these German citizens could be used to clear the way for German expansion into other countries (King, 2013). After launching a blitzkrieg against western European nations and decimating nearly all of Germany's enemies in 1940, Hitler began the implementation of Operation Barbarossa, a planned invasion of the Soviet Union with the objective of expanding Germany's eastern lands (History.com Editors, 2009). Hitler made of language sanitization when talking about the invasion and framed it as a pacification program (Browning, 1992). He frequently used language sanitization when addressing his Nazi supporters, going so far as to create new definitions for words to gain the approval of the public. The invasion itself was Germany's largest during the war with almost 80% of the country's armed forces being sent eastward (History.com Editors, 2009). There were initial victories for the Germans however the operation eventually failed but not without substantial casualties from both sides (History.com Editors, 2009). During the operation, Germany's Einsatzgruppen received a Commissar order that stripped captured Russian civilians, particularly Russian Jews, of their prisoner of war (POW) status and declared that they were to be executed (Browning, 1992). Police Battalion 309's Major Weis stated that "the war... was a war against Jews and Bolsheviks, and he wanted it understood that the battalion should proceed

ruthlessly against Jews” (Browning, 1992). Supplementing this order was the Barbarossa decree which absolved German soldiers of the responsibility of their actions toward civilians and made it so that their actions couldn’t be tried by military courts (Browning, 1992). It can be seen here that early on in the war German soldiers are being conditioned to attribute responsibility to their superiors.

Despite the almost unceasing onslaught against the Jews, multiple examples of resistance efforts by the Jews were present throughout the Holocaust (King, 2013). Such examples include the establishment of Jewish partisan units, revolts in the ghettos, and resistance efforts in the camps (Museum of Tolerance, n.d.). It is morbidly ironic that the European regions which had been occupied by both Germany and the Soviet Union, prior to Germany’s invasion of the Union in 1941, were subject to the increased likelihood of Jewish mass murder but also the likelihood of Jewish defiance against their oppressors, particularly in the Warsaw ghetto (King, 2013); Museum of Tolerance, n.d.). The revolt in this ghetto lasted longer than the entire invasion of Poland (Museum of Tolerance, n.d.).

Historical Genocides

Cox (2017) defines the concept of genocide as:

An attempt to destroy any recognized, stable, and permanent group as it is defined by the perpetrator; it is a concerted effort to eliminate its individual members and to destroy the group’s ability to maintain its social and cultural cohesion and, thus its existence as a group. (p. 11)

The practicing of genocide has occurred repeatedly throughout human history as seen during the Third Punic War (149-146 BCE), the Crusades, Spanish conquests across the Americas, imperialism and colonization in Africa, and slavery (Cox, 2017). This atrocious act

did not end with the dawning of the 20th century, it continued through the Ukrainian Holodomor (killing by hunger) done by the Soviet Union, the Holocaust, and a plethora of post-WWII genocides across Asia, Central and South America, and Europe (Cox, 2017). A key factor behind genocide is genocidal intent which can be determined through an examination of the actions taken, established policies, and the resulting outcomes (Cox, 2017). For example, during the Armenian genocide, Turkish nationalists manipulated Turkish history and knowledge about prominent figures to fit the narrative of a glorious past and place blame on the Armenians for destroying the Ottoman Empire, later in time the Nazis would echo this exact strategy and incorporate it into their regime (Cox, 2017). “Groups tend to frame history in different ways in order to lend legitimacy to their group’s current actions” (Sibley & Osborne, 2016). The Armenian genocide wasn’t the only instance where the Nazis reused techniques from prior genocides. Germany has previously legitimized the genocide of a peoples such as in the case of the Herero and Nama people of modern-day Namibia (Savage, 2013).

The Herero and Nama genocide (1904-1907) was a precursor to what is dubbed the “Century of Genocide” which was aided by the rapid progression of technology and societies (Cox, 2017; USHMM, n.d.). German forces killed almost 80,000 people, making up 50% of the Nama and 80% of the Herero people with the intent of gaining access to the land inhabited by these indigenous people (USHMM, n.d.). This genocide was “a prelude to the Holocaust in both the ideology of racial hierarchy that justified the genocide and in the methods employed”, witnessing the creation of concentration camps (*konzentrationslager*) and the divide and rule principle which effectively denied any form of opposition from occurring in either genocide (Cox, 2017; USHMM, n.d.). Divide and rule, also known as ‘divide and conquer’, is a “political strategy to gain or retain power by cultivating disunity among potential opponents, often by co-

opting some individuals and groups while excluding others” (“Divide and Rule”, n.d.). This strategy works on multiple fronts and can be observed through the schutzjuden policy and the use of inflammatory propaganda.

A common thread amongst genocides is the use of a “propaganda offensive” (Cox, 2017) which is used by a regime or group in power to degrade and dehumanize a group of peoples to the point that the public becomes desensitized to the peoples’ plight and further crimes are allowed to occur against them, eventually culminating in mass murder. These offensives take advantage of present stereotypes and beliefs about groups and set about inflaming false information in order to turn public opinion against a particular group. Examples of this include the use of blackface to perpetuate Black stereotypes and racism in the United States, vilifying pictorial portrayals of minority groups that exaggerate prominent physical features that distinguish these groups.

Theories on Perpetrator Motivations

There have been researchers that have focused their studies on perpetrators and possible motivators. Browning (1992) discusses the psychological factors that made perpetration of the Holocaust easier such as conformity, the alteration of ethical norms, and obedience to authority. Additionally his study contains verbatim interviews about the motivations of perpetrators within Reserve Police Battalion 101, who took part in inhumane acts of execution against the Jews (Browning, 1992). Some researchers have hypothesized that the type of crime or offense committed aids in determining the type of dehumanization inflicted on others (Morera et al., 2018). Hale (2020) examined how Milgram’s obedience to authority studies provide one explanation for the perpetration of the Holocaust, in that when a person feels that they are no longer being held responsible for their actions, their self-perception changes from that of

perpetrator to a tool to be used in the name of another person. Hale (2020) also explores incorrect perceptions of the connection between the obedience studies and the Holocaust. For instance, there is a misconception that German soldiers partook in the perpetration of the Holocaust out of fear for their lives and were forced to follow through with such atrocities under the orders from their superiors; seemingly replicating the stress and pressure that was induced in participants of Milgram's obedience experiments. As Browning (1992) found in his research, when members of Reserve Police Battalion 101 were offered the opportunity to not participate in the apprehension and murder of Jews, most if not all officers opted to stay and follow orders, there was no pressure to take part. During the Nuremberg trials, the main justification for the actions of perpetrators was that they were simply following the orders from higher ups (Hale, 2020). Interestingly Browning (1992) highlighted an instance in which Reserve Police Battalion 101 were sent to towns with Jewish populations to ship them to the camps, however they faced a dilemma because they weren't given explicit orders from their superiors on how to go about the situation. What followed was a salient reason as to why the 'following orders' defense fails to provide a valid justification for the atrocities that were committed. Because they didn't receive direct orders, the battalion essentially interpreted and implemented their own orders based on the moral propaganda that had been conveyed by authority figures and that was reinforced by their own prejudices.

Additional incorrect beliefs include the idea that Holocaust perpetrators couldn't have been so evil as to commit these atrocious acts of their own volition and that Hitler was the primary authority figure; this essentially denies any culpability of Hitler's circle who were responsible for a majority, if not all, of the tangible actions enacted before and during the Holocaust (Hale, 2020). An important note must be made, the present reference to Milgram's

work is not in any way to reduce or eliminate the culpability of German perpetrators. The objective with doing so is to describe a proposed psychological theory that could provide a potential plausible reason behind the act of perpetration.

In relation to Browning's focus on ordinary people, Cox (2017) echoes the same sentiment that no cases of genocide have happened without effort from ordinary people. Cox (2017) presents a comparative analysis of four cases of genocide throughout the 20th century and discusses a range of influencing factors that can lead to genocidal violence such as racism, social Darwinism, genocidal precursors in Africa and the Americas, and lastly ideological drivers such as those examined by Steizinger (2018).

“The most successful ideologies should thus be close to invisible in the population, because they are neither challenged nor contested” (Sibley & Osborne, 2016). Steizinger (2018) discusses the work of Alfred Rosenberg, a Nazi theorist, who proposed the existence of an ethos called a ‘race-soul’ which pertains to the ability of a group to develop and maintain an encompassing identity. This ideology combines the naturalistic and metaphysical elements of humanity and lends credence to the Nazi's anthropological belief in and use of animalistic dehumanization against other social groups, namely the Jews. An example of this mindset is the incorrect belief that the Jews rely on an instinct of self-preservation which separates them from those that are classified as fully human and thus establishes that Jews are exempt from ever having a ‘race-soul’ (Steizinger, 2018).

While Steizinger (2018) emphasizes the recognition of humanity being necessary for dehumanization, Smith (2011) presents a different argument. Smith's study is one of the few which takes a holistic and intersectional approach in analyzing dehumanization and to an extent perpetrators. Like Cox (2017), Smith (2011) emphasizes the need to define dehumanization

although Smith continues by arguing that dehumanization is a gateway to genocide and other inhumane acts. This is due to dehumanization being a problem of both morality and cognition that is surrounded in legal rhetoric and policy in addition to social traditions that remove all moral inhibitions in viewing others as subhuman (Smith, 2011). In other words, the victims of dehumanization are attributed with a subhuman essence which removes any hesitancy on the part of perpetrators to harm the victims (Smith 2016). A notable limitation with his argument is that Smith uses a predominantly philosophical line of thought as the basis for the study's claim: that in the minds of perpetrators, the designation of subhumanity to an individual or group doesn't change or evolve over time (Smith, 2011). Additionally, for continuous dehumanization to occur, on some level the perpetrators must recognize the dehumanized as humans in order to be reminded that the victims are different from the rest of humanity. Smith (2016) later adjusted his theory by arguing that victims are simultaneously viewed as subhuman and human in order for dehumanization to fully occur, somewhat aligning his position with that of Steizinger (2018).

Rai et al. (2017) takes a different approach to perpetrator motivations. It is proposed that perpetrators shouldn't feel the need to dehumanize their victims when moral sentiments motivate the violence (Rai et al., 2017). The process of dehumanization facilitates instrumental violence, cases of violence in which perpetrators knowingly harm people to reach an objective, by reducing moral inhibition (Rai et al., 2017). Conversely dehumanization doesn't lead to moral violence, the act of harming people because it is believed that they deserve to be harmed, because it removes the qualities that are needed to commit the violence against the victim(s) (Rai et al., 2017). Dehumanization thus becomes a paradox in that human qualities are stripped or denied of an individual or negative attributes are designated to the individual, which in a way acknowledges the individual's humanness (Smith, 2016; Rai et al., 2017; Steizinger, 2018).

It has also been theorized that the political environment of European nations prior to WWI could have led to the condition of antisemitic attitudes (King, 2013). For example, the nations with socialist political leanings like the Soviet Union tended to show decreased rates of involvement in antisemitic violence whereas those with nationalist inclination, like Romania, demonstrated increased rates of engagement (Dumitru & Johnson, 2011). It must be recognized that there is no single perpetrator archetype, perpetrator motivations can range from ideological, violence for violence's sake, bureaucratic or materialistic logic, etc. (Cox, 2017). To gain further understanding of these motivations, efforts must be made to develop the body of research surrounding both dehumanization and perpetrators.

The Big Three Theorems

Of the numerous theories presented in Holocaust literature, three are more widely known and debated to this day. The 'big three' theorems of Holocaust perpetration were developed by Raul Hilberg, Christopher Browning, and Daniel Goldhagen.

Raul Hilberg's *Destruction of the European Jews* (2019) was the turning point in the world's understanding of the events of the Holocaust (King, 2013). It was the earliest text to attempt to articulate the Holocaust's causation (King, 2013). Hilberg (2019) proposed that the German bureaucracy facilitated the Final Solution and the anti-Semitic policies that were set in place against the Jewish people. As Savage (2013, p. 144) notes, "the state does indeed remove the legitimate use of violence from the direct choice and hands of individuals; but it licenses the use of violence for many sectors of society". Furthermore that the Holocaust was a systematic, step-by-step, process that led to the elimination of millions (Hilberg, 2019). It began with the installation of anti-Semitic policies with the intent of demoting the Jewish peoples to subhuman status as seen in Luna's (2018) cultural dehumanization study and through the use of slanderous

propaganda. This transitions into Jews being defined as antihuman, observed through belief in the race-soul ethos of Rosenberg (Steizinger, 2018), followed by the physical destruction of the Jews; first by sporadic murder and then escalated to extermination efforts.

Christopher Browning (1992) argues that ordinary people can commit horrible acts when exposed to several motivating factors: the need to conform, obedience to authority, the manipulation of moral values and norms, and the distancing from and justification of their actions. He stresses the point that this was done to lessen the psychological burden on the perpetrators' conscience (Browning, 1992). Furthermore, that the persecution of the Jews was not systematic, contradicting Hilberg, and it was a blitzkrieg where a large-scale dissemination of life occurred in a relatively short period of time. While this seems to be a plausible theory, the claim that the Holocaust was a blitzkrieg rather than a systematic process is debatable. As Browning (1992, p. xix) says, "the mass-murder policies of the regime were not aberrational or exceptional events that scarcely ruffled the surface of everyday life. As the story of Reserve Police Battalion 101 demonstrates, mass murder and routine became one". How could mass murder become routine without some kind of transition that leads up to the murder? As an example, in cases of violent behavior, there is often an observable escalation in actions and behavior until the perpetrator eventually acts out against others.

It could reasonably be said that the rate of death and executions of Jews dramatically increased towards the end of the war upon Germany realizing its impending defeat at the hands of the Allied powers. Thus the idea of a blitzkrieg would apply in this situation as the Germans were attempting to wipe all trace of their crimes as well as the remaining Jews in camps before the Allies could uncover what was occurring throughout eastern Europe. For example, the Fünfteichen camp was evacuated on January 21, 1945 with an approximate total of 6,000

prisoners being forced to make a four day journey to the Gross-Rosen camp called a *Todesmarsch* or death march (Mergaree, 2009). Many died along the way but those that didn't ended up in other camps that had yet to be shut down such as Dachau, Mauthausen, and Buchenwald; just two days after the evacuation, Soviet soldiers arrived and liberated what small number of prisoners had been left behind (Mergaree, 2009). The entirety of the Holocaust cannot be limited to a blitzkrieg as this would negate the impact of factors such as anti-Semitic state policy, the progression of the war, and the gradual nature of moral disengagement.

Daniel Goldhagen (1996) presents the argument that many normal Germans were 'willing executioners' because of a concept called "eliminationist antisemitism" that had been developing within Germany's culture and history. He believes that the concept of genocidal antisemitism could not have simply risen from Nazi ideology and that it must have a historical reference point (Goldhagen, 1996). Goldhagen's theory is one of the more controversial and less accepted theories due to its implication that Germans knew about and continued to perpetuate the events of the Holocaust despite the sheer cruelty and evil being aimed at the Jews and other targeted minorities. Bandura's (2002) moral disengagement could serve as a possible explanation for why German soldiers would and could be perceived as willing executioners given the psychological elements at play. Many people contest this theory with the point that while most of German civilization may have held antisemitic views, the true scale of horror and death wasn't completely revealed to the public until after WWII.

These theories demonstrate the spectrum of ideas surrounding the Holocaust's perpetration. A notable gap within perpetration theory is a lack of attempted synthesis of ideas. Such an attempt could be beneficial to the existing body of literature in gaining a better understanding of perpetration. For instance, there are elements from the aforementioned theories

which could be viable contributing factors and when joined could provide a holistic explanation. For example, it could be proposed that it was a combination of systematic dehumanization, a historical precedent of antisemitism, and the mass-manipulation of human psychology which led to the perpetration and tolerance of the Holocaust. This combination of psychological, sociological, political, and historical factors is emphasized by the findings discussed throughout this analysis.

Dehumanization in the Present

A common understanding throughout both Holocaust and genocide literature is to not attempt to compare one genocide with another. In doing so, one genocide's intricacies can be invalidated or made out to be less significant because the other genocide is perceived to be more tragic or evil. While it is improper to compare genocides, the analysis of behavioral patterns and forming of connections are necessary to foster a deeper understanding into the causation of genocides. Two cases of current genocide and a case of asymmetrical conflict will be discussed due to displayed similarities in perpetrator behaviors and action with the Holocaust.

Bruneau and Kteily (2017) sought to examine blatant dehumanization through the 'power gradient', looking at dehumanization from both sides of a conflict rather than a singular side. They hypothesized that an active asymmetric conflict could demonstrate a bi-directional dehumanization phenomenon (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). In other words that dehumanization can be a top-down process but also it can be down-top, also called ascent dehumanization (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). To examine this phenomenon, Bruneau and Kteily (2017) looked at the 2014 Gaza War between Israel and Palestine, conducting two studies. Asymmetry in the case of this study relates to the differences in economic and military power between both countries (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). It was predicted that the combative dynamic between both groups would

surmount any humanization of an advantaged outgroup, leading to ascent dehumanization by Palestinians to Israelis (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). Participants from either country were used and tasked with reporting on hostile outcome measures that are connected to blatant dehumanization such as SDO, perceived group power, hope, group-based guilt, concession making, acceptance of civilian casualties etc. (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). Study 1 focused on the Israeli group whose results demonstrated a perception of higher group power compared to Palestinians, the participants that reported strong negative emotions towards Palestinians also displayed low concession making and willingness to negotiate (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). Notably, the acceptance of many Palestinian casualties was high when they were weighed against the life of a single Israeli soldier (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017).

In the second study, Palestinians reported on the same outcome measures as the Israelis although it was noted by Bruneau and Kteily (2017) that the nature of the asymmetrical dynamic would have an impact on certain measures such as the acceptance of casualties due to Palestine's low military capacity. This measure was thus changed to a willingness to sacrifice the lives of Israeli children for one Palestinian and a measure of parochial empathy was added as well (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). Parochial empathy pertains to the denial of empathy for members of an outgroup in favor of saving it for members of an individual's ingroup (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). This group's results displayed strong levels of blatant dehumanization towards Israelis, low levels of hope and group-based guilt, and high levels of both parochial empathy and emotional hostility (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017). Additional striking findings were that there was a moderate willingness to negotiate, higher levels of perceived group power tended to precipitate more dehumanization towards Israelis, and that both groups rated their respective outgroups as being closer to animals than humans (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017).

Recent examples of dehumanization and genocide include the crises currently happening in China and Burma. In Burma (Myanmar) the Rohingya people, a Muslim ethnic group, have been targeted, dehumanized, and subjected to persecution by the Burmese military since the mid-to-late 1900's (USHMM, n.d.). In 1991 the military launched Operation Pyi Thaya, meaning Clean and Beautiful Nation, to brutalize and assault the Rohingya, causing over 250,000 Rohingya to flee the country (USHMM, n.d.). Similar to the Star of David used to identify the Jews during WWII, white cards were given out just to Rohingyas to serve as their identification card, only to be taken away by the military government (USHMM, n.d.). Later in 2012 state-supported violence arises against the Rohingya by Buddhists (USHMM, n.d.). After suffering years of oppression and persecution, in 2016 the Rohingya lashed out and attacked Burmese police stations which incited a stronger violent reaction from the military and resulted in hundreds of Rohingya villages being burned to the ground and 9,000 Rohingya being killed (USHMM, n.d.). Two years later, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations refers to the goings-on in Burma as a genocide (USHMM, n.d.). On March 21, 2022, the US Secretary of State formally recognized the crisis in Myanmar as a genocide and condemned the actions of the Myanmar military (Human rights Watch, 2022).

Since 2017, it is believed that well over a million Uighur Muslims are being held in reeducation camps in Xinjiang by the Chinese government (Maizland, n.d.). According to leaked government documents, these people haven't ever been charged with a crime but they also have no way to challenge their imprisonment (Maizland, n.d.). Historically there have been social and religious tensions between the Han Chinese and the Uighur Muslims, but within the past several years actions taken against the Uighurs have dramatically escalated (Maizland, n.d.). Within these camps there are reports of women being forcefully sterilized, sexually assaulted, and raped,

forced labor, torture, and constant surveillance (Maizland, n.d.). The Chinese government claims that the Uighurs pose a threat to the country's populace and government system through their supposedly extremist ideals; the camps are meant to be a measure to combat and eliminate religious extremism (Maizland, n.d.). The international community has largely condemned China's actions against the Uighurs, calling for China to end use of the camps and to change its policies pertaining to Uighurs (Maizland, n.d.). Apart from the imposition of multiple sanctions against China, the situation has stagnated (Maizland, n.d.)

An overarching theme across genocides is the trend of little to nothing being done to end a genocide before a major loss of life can occur as is the case of the Rohingya. It is indeed extremely difficult to end a genocide once it has started without inciting international conflict, such as the Uighur crisis. This analysis offers an attempt at gaining a holistic understanding of the traits, behaviors, and multifactor influences that coalesce into a distinct pattern of perpetration that leads to mass murder. By learning and further developing knowledge surrounding this pattern of dehumanization, this acquired knowledge could be used to potentially develop counterstrategies towards dehumanization and models of intervention.

Questions for the Future

In line with furthering knowledge of dehumanization, two areas which merit further exploration are "Us" versus "Them" ideology and the neuroscience behind dehumanization. The literature for both topics is limited which is a detriment to the study of dehumanization and genocide. Expanding on the neuroscientific findings of Harris and Fiske (2006) and Bruneau et al. (2018) could help experts in multiple fields to develop a better understanding of the neurological mechanics and by extension a biological factor that contributes to the development and maintenance of dehumanization. Meanwhile, further exploration on the phenomenon of "Us"

versus “Them” thinking and how pertinent this thinking has been in past genocides could provide a frame of reference for current or developing genocides. This research could also give further insight into the conditions that are typically needed for a genocide to occur.

With this in mind, this analysis could be applied to the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia and used to determine if the conflict could potentially devolve into a genocide. Certainly there has been some evidence to support the presence of genocidal rhetoric from Vladimir Putin and other Russian officials (Maynard, 2022). Russian actions thus far against Ukraine have been established as war crimes but have yet to be completely declared as crimes against humanity or genocide (Maynard, 2022). It’s currently not possible to confidently declare the situation as it stands to be a genocide. However Maynard (2022) noted that the risk of further atrocities, including genocide, is on the rise.

Considering the current body of research on the Holocaust and its perpetration, it must be said that more scrutiny should be placed on Milgram’s studies and exactly how much they are able to explain or compare to the conditions of the Holocaust. As discussed in an earlier section, there are grievous misconceptions about the connection between Milgram’s work and the Holocaust which have yet to be corrected. In addition to this, Milgram’s studies are presented to students and scholars as a foundational pillar on perpetration despite the recognition that the conditions of his experiments were 1) completely unethical given today’s ethical codes for research so it does not establish a good precedent and 2) unable to accurately replicate the multiple factors that influenced the Holocaust’s perpetration. It is fair to say that Milgram explored a component of perpetration, but his findings should not be considered one of the authorities on the subject.

Bearing in mind the historical context that has been reviewed thus far, a subject worth further holistic deliberation would be Hitler's inner circle. They were the cogs that kept the Final Solution 'machine' from faltering. An interdisciplinary analysis of their roles and influence on the Holocaust's perpetration would reveal new understandings on the power of authority. A thought to ponder but would likely be extremely difficult to find an answer for is: what was the motivation of Hitler's circle, excluding Hitler himself, for implementing and facilitating the Holocaust? Furthermore, what was the consolation or compensation for playing an active role in the Holocaust's occurrence?

Given that the present analysis explored perpetrators and their motivations, a topic that could be a supplementary follow-up could be the studying of bystanders and upstanders and the psychosocial mechanisms behind each role. Bystanders could demonstrate similar mechanisms as those discussed previously or potentially present different mechanisms of social operation and engagement. The same could be said for upstanders, individuals who take action against a negative behavior or act. Perhaps upstanders have distinct areas of the brain which correlate with being an upstander or they make use of mechanisms that pose as opposites to those used by perpetrators. Consideration of these questions for the future have the potential to expand the body of knowledge about the Holocaust and human behavior and lead to answers not previously considered.

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