

The Psychology of Bystanders, Perpetrators, and Heroic Helpers

What leads groups of people or governments to perpetrate genocide or mass killing? What are the characteristics and psychological processes of individuals and societies that contribute to such group violence? What is the nature of the evolution that leads to it: What are the motives, how do they arise and intensify, how do inhibitions decline?

A primary example in this article will be the Holocaust, the killing of between 5 and 6 million European Jews by Nazi Germany during World War II. Other examples will be the genocide of the Armenians in Turkey in 1915–1916, the “autogenocide” in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979, the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, and the disappearances and mass killing in Argentina, mainly between 1976 and 1979. Many of the same influences are also present both in the widespread uses of torture and in terrorist violence.

In the United Nations charter on genocide the term denotes the extermination of a racial, religious, or ethnic group. Although not included in the charter, and although some scholars call it politicide (Harff & Gurr, 1990), the destruction of a whole political group is also widely regarded as

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genocide (Kuper, 1981). In mass killing, the boundaries of the victim group are less well defined, and the elimination of a whole racial, religious, or ethnic group is not intended. For example, in Argentina the victims included Communists, people seen as left leaning, and liberals who wanted to help the poor or supported social change. Usually, although not always, mass killings have fewer victims. The Holocaust, the killings of the Armenians, and the killings in Rwanda were genocides; the killings in Cambodia were genocidal but with less well defined group boundaries, in that Khmer as well as members of minority groups were killed; the disappearances in Argentina were a mass killing. Genocides and mass killings have similar psychological and cultural origins.

This chapter will focus on the psychology and role of both perpetrators and bystanders. Bystanders to the ongoing, usually progressively increasing mistreatment of a group of people have great potential power to influence events. However, whether individuals, groups, or nations, they frequently remain passive. This allows perpetrators to see their destructive actions as acceptable and even right. As a result of their passivity in the face of others' suffering, bystanders change: They come to accept the persecution and suffering of victims, and some even join the perpetrators (Staub, 1989a, 1989b, 1999a, 2000a,b).

All of us are bystanders to many events – neither actors nor victims but witnesses. We witness discrimination and the fate of the homeless. We have known about torture in many countries, the death squads in Guatemala and El Salvador, the use of chemical weapons by Iraq to kill its own Kurdish citizens while our government and many others supported Iraq, the imprisonment of dissidents in mental hospitals in the Soviet Union (Bloch & Reddaway, 1977, 1984), and the nuclear policies of the United States and the USSR. Examination of the role of bystanders in genocides and mass killings may enlighten us about our own role as bystanders to others' suffering, and to policies and practices that potentially lead to the destruction of human beings.

Another focus of this chapter is the psychology of those who attempt to save intended victims, endangering their own lives to do so. Bystanders, perpetrators, and heroic helpers face similar conditions and may be part of the same culture: What are the differences in their characteristics, psychological processes, and evolution?

BRIEF REVIEW

A conception is presented in this chapter of the origins of genocide and mass killing, with a focus on how a group of people turns against another group, how the motivation for killing evolves and inhibitions against it decline. The conception identifies characteristics of a group's culture that create an enhanced potential for a group turning against others. It focuses

on difficult life conditions as the primary activator of basic needs, which demand fulfillment. Conflict between groups is another activator. The pattern of predisposing cultural characteristics intensifies the basic needs and inclines the group toward fulfilling them in ways that turn the group against others. As they begin to harm the victim group, the perpetrators learn by and change as a result of their own actions, in ways that make the increasing mistreatment of the victims possible and probable. The perpetrators come to see their actions as necessary and even right. Bystanders have potential influence to inhibit the evolution of increasing destructiveness. However, they usually remain passive and themselves change as a result of their passivity, becoming less concerned about the fate of the victims, some of them joining the perpetrators.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PERPETRATORS

Violence against a subgroup of society is the outcome of a societal process. It requires analysis at the level of both individuals and society. Analysis of the group processes of perpetrators, an intermediate level, is also important.

Instigators of Group Violence

Difficult Life Conditions and Basic Human Needs. Why does a government or a dominant group turn against a subgroup of society? Usually difficult life conditions, persistent life problems in a society, are an important starting point. They include economic problems such as extreme inflation, or depression and unemployment, political conflict and violence, war, a decline in the power, prestige, and importance of a nation, usually with attendant economic and political problems, and the chaos and social disorganization these often entail.

Severe, persistent difficulties of life frustrate powerful needs, basic human needs that demand fulfillment. Certain "predisposing" characteristics of the culture and social organization tend to further intensify these needs (Staub, 1989a, 1996, 1999b). These include needs for security, for a positive identity, for effectiveness and control over important events in one's life, for positive connections to other people, and for a meaningful understanding of the world or comprehension of reality. Psychological processes in individuals and social processes in groups can arise that turn the group against others as they offer destructive fulfillment of these needs.

Germany was faced with serious life problems after World War I. The war and defeat were followed by a revolution, a change in the political system, hyperinflation, the occupation of the Ruhr by the French, who were dissatisfied with the rate of reparation payments, severe economic depression, conflict between political extremes, political violence, social chaos, and disorganization. The intense conflict between political extremes and

the collapse of traditional social mores were both manifestations and further causes of life problems (Craig, 1982; A. DeJong, 1978). Intense life problems also existed in Turkey, Cambodia, Rwanda, and Argentina (Staub, 1989a, 1999a). For example, in Argentina, severe inflation, political instability, and repression, followed by wide-scale political violence, preceded the policy of disappearances: the kidnapping and torture of tens of thousands of people and the killing of at least 9,000 but perhaps as many as 30,000 people (Nunca Mas, 1986).

The inability to protect oneself and one's family and the inability to control the circumstances of one's life greatly threaten security. They also deeply threaten identity or the psychological self – self-concept, values, beliefs, and ways of life – as well as the need for effectiveness and control. The need for comprehension of reality (Epstein, 1980; Janoff-Bulman, 1985, 1992; Staub, 1989a), and a conception of the world, one's place in it, and how to live is frustrated as the social chaos and disorganization render the existing views of reality inadequate. The need for connection to other people and the group is frustrated at a time when people need it most, by the competition for resources and self-focus that difficult life conditions foster. Finally, people need hope in a better future. These psychological needs join material ones, such as the need for food and physical safety, and rival them in intensity and importance. Since the capacity to control or address life problems and to satisfy material needs is limited, the psychological needs become predominant in guiding action (Staub, 1989a, 1996, 1999b).

The motivations just described can be satisfied by joining others in a shared effort to solve life problems. But constructive solutions to a breakdown in the functioning of society are difficult to find and take time to implement. Certain cultural-societal characteristics, present in most societies but to greatly varying extents, add to the likelihood that these needs will be fulfilled in ways that turn the group against another group. They create a predisposition for group violence.

In Germany a two-step process led to the genocide. The difficult life conditions gave rise to psychological and social processes, such as scapegoating and destructive ideologies, which are described later. Such processes do not directly lead to genocide. However, they turn one group against another. In Germany, they brought an ideological movement to power and led to the beginning of an evolution, or steps along the continuum of destruction, also described later. Life conditions improved, but guided by ideology, the social processes and acts of harm-doing they gave rise to continued to intensify. In the midst of another great social upheaval, created by Germany, namely, World War II, they led to genocide.

Group Conflict. Another instigator that frustrates basic needs and gives rise to psychological conditions in individuals and social processes in

groups that may lead to genocide is conflict between groups. The conflict may revolve around essential interests, such as territory needed for living space. Even in this case, however, psychological elements tend to make the conflict intractable, such as attachment by groups to a particular territory, unhealed wounds in the group, or prior devaluation and mistrust of the other.

Or the conflict may be between superordinate or dominant groups and subordinate groups with limited rights and limited access to resources. Such conflicts deeply affect the needs for security and positive identity, as well as other basic needs. They have often been the originators of mass killing or genocide since World War II (Fein, 1993). When group conflict turns into war and the other predisposing conditions are present, mass killing or genocide becomes especially likely (Harff, Gurr, & Unger, 1999). In Rwanda, preceding the genocide by Hutus of Tutsis in 1994, there were both difficult life conditions and conflict between groups, a combination that is an especially intense instigator. Starting in 1990, there was also the beginning of a civil war (des Forges, 1999; Staub, 1999a).

Cultural-Societal Characteristics

Cultural Devaluation. The differentiation between in-group and out-group, us and them, tends by itself to give rise to a favoring of the in-group and relative devaluation of the out-group and discrimination against its members (Brewer, 1978; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel, Flamant, Billig, & Bundy, 1971). Devaluation of individuals and groups, whatever its source, makes it easier to harm them (Bandura, Underwood, & Fromson, 1975; Duster, 1971).

A history of devaluation of a group, negative stereotypes, and negative images in the products of the culture, its literature, art, and media, "preselect" this group as a potential scapegoat and enemy (Staub, 1989a). In Germany, there had been a long history of anti-Semitism, with periods of intense mistreatment of Jews (Dimont, 1962; Girard, 1980). In addition to early Christian theological anti-Semitism (Girard, 1980), the intense anti-Semitism of Luther (Hilberg, 1961; Luther, 1955-1975), who described Jews in language similar to that later used by Hitler, was an important influence. Centuries of discrimination and persecution further enhanced anti-Semitism and made it an aspect of German culture. Even though at the end of World War I German Jews were relatively assimilated, anti-Semitism in the *deep structure* of German culture provided a cultural blueprint, a constant potential, for renewed antagonism against them. In Turkey, deep-seated cultural devaluation of and discrimination against Armenians had existed for centuries. In Rwanda, there was intense hostility by Hutus toward Tutsis, as a result of prior dominance by Tutsis.

At times devaluation of the potential victims is the result of a newly emerging ideology that designates a group as the enemy. The ideology usually draws on existing differentiations and divisions in society. For example, in Cambodia, there had been a long-standing rift between the city, inhabited by those who ruled, the officialdom, the aristocracy, and the educated, and the country, with its peasant population (Chandler, 1983; Etcheson, 1984). The Khmer Rouge ideology drew on this division, defining all city dwellers as actual or potential enemies (Staub, 1989a).

This is a probabilistic conception, with different elements enhancing or diminishing the likelihood of one group turning against another. Not all probabilities become actualities. For example, intense anti-Semitism had existed at least in parts of Russia before the revolution of 1917. While it was perhaps not as embedded in the deep structure of the culture as in Germany, it did create the potential for Jews to become scapegoats or ideological enemies. Deep divisions had also existed between rulers and privileged members of society, on the one hand, and the peasants and workers, on the other. The ideology that guided the leaders of the revolution led them to focus on this latter division.

Respect for Authority. Overly strong respect for authority, with a predominant tendency to obey authority, is another important cultural characteristic. It leads people to turn to authorities, old or new, for guidance in difficult times (Fromm, 1965). It leads them to accept the authorities' definition of reality, their views of problems and solutions, and stops them from resisting authorities when they lead them to harm others. There is substantial evidence that Germans had strong respect for authority that was deeply rooted in their culture, as well as a tendency to obey those with even limited authority (Craig, 1982; Girard, 1980). German families and schools were authoritarian, with restrictive and punitive child-rearing practices (Miller, 1983; Devereux, 1972). Strong respect for authority has also characterized the other societies that engaged in genocide or mass killing, such as Turkey, Cambodia, and Rwanda, although in some cases it was especially strong in the subgroup of the society that became the perpetrator, as in Argentina, where the military was both the architect and the executor of the disappearances (Nunca Mas, 1986).

A Monolithic Culture. A monolithic in contrast to pluralistic society, with a small range of predominant values and/or limitations on the free flow of ideas, adds to the predisposition for group violence. The negative representation of a victim group and the definition of reality by authorities that justifies or even necessitates the victims' mistreatment will be more broadly accepted. Democratic societies, which tend to be more pluralistic, are unlikely to engage in genocide (Rummel, 1994), especially if they

are "mature" democracies, with well-developed civic institutions (Staub, 1999a).

German culture was monolithic: It stressed obedience, order, efficiency, and loyalty to the group (Craig, 1982; Staub, 1989a). As I noted earlier, the evolution of the Holocaust can be divided into two phases. The first one brought Hitler to power. During the second phase, Nazi rule, the totalitarian system further reduced the range of acceptable ideas and the freedom of their expression. In the other cases, the societies, and at times particularly the perpetrator groups in them, such as the military and paramilitary groups in Argentina, were also monolithic. In the frequent cases of genocide or mass killing when the political-ideological system was highly authoritarian and even totalitarian, monolithic tendencies were further intensified.

Cultural Self-Concepts. A belief in cultural superiority (that goes beyond the usual ethnocentrism), as well as a shaky group self-concept that requires self-defense, can also contribute to the tendency to turn against others. Frequently the two combine, a belief in the superiority of one's group with an underlying sense of vulnerability and weakness. Thus the cultural self-concept that predisposes to group violence can be complex but demonstrable through the products of the culture, its literature, its intellectual and artistic products, its media.

The Germans saw themselves as superior in character, competence, honor, loyalty, devotion to family, civic organization, and cultural achievements. Superiority had expressed itself in many ways, including proclamations by German intellectuals of German superiority and of their belief in Germany's right to rule other nations (Craig, 1982; Nathan & Norden, 1960; Staub, 1989a). Partly as a result of tremendous devastation in past wars (Craig, 1982; Mayer, 1955) and lack of unity and statehood until 1871, there was also a deep feeling of vulnerability and shaky self-esteem. Following unification and a brief period of strength, the loss of World War I and the intense life problems afterward were a great blow to cultural and societal self-concept.

The combination of a sense of superiority with weakness and vulnerability seems to have been present in Turkey, Cambodia, and Argentina as well. In Argentina, progressively deteriorating economic conditions and political violence deeply threatened a belief in the specialness and superiority of the nation, especially strongly held by the military, and an elevated view by the military of itself as protector of the nation (Crawley, 1984). In both Cambodia and Turkey, a past history of empire and national glory were deeply embedded in group consciousness (Staub, 1989a). The existing conditions sharply contrasted with the glory of the past. Difficult life conditions threaten the belief in superiority and activate the underlying feelings of weakness and vulnerability. They intensify

the need to defend and/or elevate the self-concept, both individual and cultural.¹

To a large extent, people define themselves by belonging to groups (Mack, 1983), which makes their social identity important (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1987). Group self-concepts become especially important in difficult times as the inability to deal with life problems threatens personal identity. Over time, the group's inability to help fulfill basic needs and societal disorganization also threaten group self-concept, people's vision and evaluation of their group.

Unhealed Wounds Due to Past Victimization. Another important cultural characteristic that contributes to a sense of vulnerability is a past history of victimization. Just like victimized individuals (Herman, 1992; McCann & Pearlman, 1990), groups of people who have been victimized in the past are intensely affected. Their sense of self is diminished. They come to see the world and people in it, especially outsiders, individuals as well as whole groups, as dangerous. They feel vulnerable, needing to defend themselves, which can lead them to strike out violently. Healing by victimized groups is essential to reduce the likelihood that they become perpetrators (Staub, 1998, 1999a).

The limited evidence, as yet, indicates that the effects of group victimization are transmitted through the generations. This is suggested both by the study of individual survivors and their offspring, and group culture. For example, Craig (1982) has suggested that long-ago wars in which large percentages of the German population were killed led to the strongly authoritarian tendencies in Prussian and then German society. People in authority became especially important in providing protection against danger.

A History of Aggressiveness. A history of aggression as a way of dealing with conflict also contributes to the predisposition for group violence. It makes renewed aggression more acceptable, more normal. Such a tradition, which existed in Germany before World War I, was greatly strengthened by the war and the widespread political violence that followed it (Kren & Rappoport, 1980). It was intense in Turkey; it existed in Cambodia as well (Chandler, 1983), intensified by tremendous violence during the civil war between 1970 and 1975; it expressed itself in repeated mass killing of Tutsis in Rwanda (des Forges, 1999); and it existed in Argentina, intensified by

¹ In Cambodia, especially, the focus on past national glory may have been not so much an expression of a feeling of superiority as a defense against feelings of inferiority. The glory of the Angkor empire faded hundreds of years earlier, and in the intervening centuries Cambodia was frequently invaded by others and ruled for very long periods by Vietnam and France.

the mutual violence between guerrilla groups, right-wing groups and the government preceding the disappearances (Staub, 1989a).

In Germany, an additional predisposing factor was the presence of war veterans. We now know about the existence and prolonged nature of post-traumatic stress disorder in Vietnam War veterans. The disorder was probably widespread among German veterans who had similar experiences – direct combat, a lost war, and lack of appreciation by society. Decline in self-esteem, loss of faith in the benevolence of the world and in legitimate authority, and a search for alternative authority are among the characteristics of this disorder in Vietnam veterans (Card, 1983; Egendorf, Kadushin, Laufer, Rothbart, & Sloan, 1981; Wilson, 1980; see also Herman, 1992). In Germany, they would have intensified needs created by the difficult life conditions and added to the guiding force of cultural predispositions. For example, they would have given special appeal to alternate authority, given the weakness and collapse of traditional authority.

Turning Against Others: Scapegoating and Ideology

Scapegoating and ideologies that arise in the face of difficult life conditions or group conflict are means for satisfying basic needs. However, they offer destructive satisfaction of basic needs in that they are likely to lead to harmful actions against others.

In the face of persistently difficult life conditions, already devalued out-groups are further devalued and scapegoated. Diminishing others is a way to elevate the self. Scapegoating protects a positive identity by reducing the feeling of responsibility for problems. By providing an explanation for problems, it offers the possibility of effective action or control – unfortunately, mainly in the form of taking action against the scapegoat. It can unite people against the scapegoated other, thereby fulfilling the need for positive connection and support in difficult times.

Adopting nationalistic and/or “better-world” ideologies offers a new comprehension of reality and, by promising a better future, hope as well. But usually some group is identified as the enemy that stands in the way of the ideology’s fulfillment. By joining an ideological movement, people can relinquish a burdensome self to leaders or the group. They gain connection to others and a sense of significance in working for the ideology’s fulfillment. Along the way, members of the “enemy” group, usually the group that is also scapegoated for life problems, are further devaluated and, in the end, often excluded from the moral realm. The moral values that protect people from violence become inoperative in relation to them (Staub, 1989a).

The ideology that the Nazis and Hitler offered the German people fit German culture. Its racial principle identified Aryans, and their supposedly best representatives, the Germans, as the superior race. The material

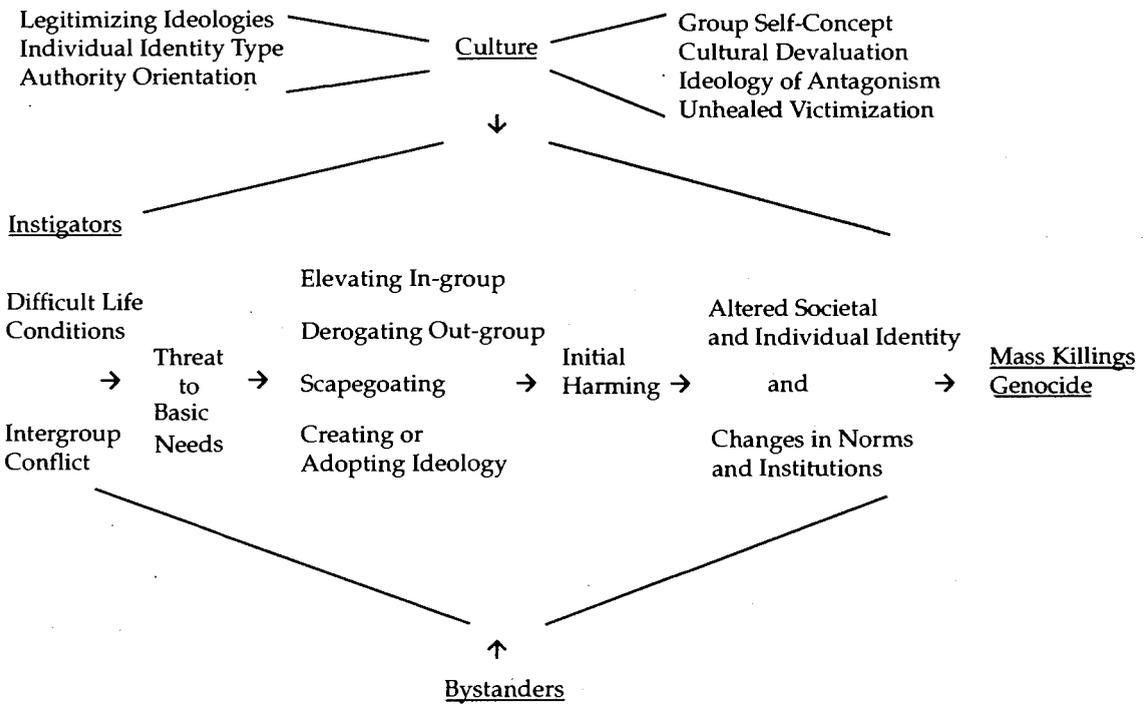


FIGURE 22.1. Influences and processes contributing to genocide and mass killing.

needs of the German people were to be fulfilled (and their superiority affirmed) through the conquest of additional territories, or living space. The ideology identified Jews as responsible for life problems and as a primary barrier to the creation of a pure, superior race. Later Jews were also identified as the internal enemy that joined the external enemy, the Soviet Union, to destroy Germany (Dawidowicz, 1975; Hilberg, 1961; Kren & Rappoport, 1980). In the *Führerprinzip*, the leadership principle, the ideology prescribed obedience and offered the guidance of an absolute authority.

Ideology has been important in all the other instances of genocide as well. We may differentiate between “better-world” ideologies, which offer a vision of a better future for all human beings, and nationalistic ideologies, which promise a better life for a nation (Staub, 1989a). Although the German ideology was nationalistic, it had better-world components, in that racial purity was supposed to improve all humanity – except, of course, the impure, who were to be destroyed or subjugated.

In Turkey, the genocide of the Armenians was guided by a nationalistic ideology: pan-Turkism. Part of this was a vision of a new Turkish empire. In Cambodia, the genocide was guided by a Communist better-world ideology but with intense nationalistic components. To create a world of total social equality, all those privileged by their position, wealth, or education had to be eliminated or totally subjugated. In Rwanda, “Hutu power,” the total elevation of Hutus over Tutsis, was a form of ideology (des Forges, 1999; Staub, 1999a). In Argentina, the mass killings partly evolved out of

a conflict of interest between more and less privileged groups. However, the perpetrators of the mass killing were also protecting their worldview and subscribed to an intense anti-Communist ideology and visions of a Christian society (Staub, 1989a).

SELF-SELECTION AND THE SELECTION OF PERPETRATORS

Those who supported Hitler at the start, by voting for him, were quite heterogeneous with regard to class and occupation (Abraham, 1987; Platt, 1980). Initially, those who were perpetrators of violence were SA and SS members, and over time, increasingly SS members. They were joined by others as the evolution of violence progressed. A by now well-known example of this is the German auxiliary police, who were sent to kill Jews before the machinery of killing in the concentration and extermination camps was established (see Browning, 1992; Goldhagen, 1996). Some people in areas occupied by the Germans, like the Ukraine, Lithuania, and Latvia, also joined in the killing (Goldhagen, 1996), probably motivated by a combination of factors, including hostility toward the Soviet Union, of which they were part, which led them to join its enemy, the Germans; deep-seated anti-Semitism; and subservience to the occupiers and conquerors and the desire to gain their favor.

Members of the SS, who were central in the killing process, had strong authority orientation, along with a preference, and perhaps need, for a hierarchical system (Dicks, 1972; Steiner, 1980) that was even stronger than the general German orientation to authority. This may have been partly the result of self-selection (Staub, 1989a), partly of special training in obedience (Kren & Rappoport, 1980), partly of learning by doing (see later discussion). Other characteristics of SS members were belief in Nazi ideology and a preference for military-type activities (Steiner, 1980). The early SS joined Hitler to serve as his bodyguards at political meetings. Fighting political opponents was their first major task. Those who joined had to accept, if not welcome, violence.

The importance of ideology was also evident in the selection of ideologically devoted Nazi doctors for the euthanasia program, where they were the direct perpetrators of murder, and for the extermination camps, where they directed the killing process (Lifton, 1986). Given a cultural devaluation, the people who are attracted to an ideology that elevates them over others and promises them a better world need not be *personally* prejudiced against a devalued group that is designated as the enemy. They might have greater needs aroused in them by life problems or might carry more of the cultural predispositions that shape motivation and guide modes of dealing with them. However, in research concluded in 1933 on SS members, although not all respondents reported personal anti-Semitism, most of them were openly and viciously anti-Semitic (Merkl, 1980). The SS members

who expressed the most intense anti-Semitism tended to be in leadership positions (Merkl, 1980).

The Role of Obedience

Since the dramatic experiments of Stanley Milgram (1965, 1974), obedience to authority has been viewed as a crucial determinant of the behavior of perpetrators. The importance of obedience is also suggested by the training that direct perpetrators receive in fostering submission to authority, whether the SS (Kren & Rappoport, 1980) or torturers in Greece (Gibson & Haritos-Fatouros, 1986; Haritos-Fatouros, 1988). It is suggested by the self-selection for the SS of individuals oriented to obedience (Dicks, 1972; Steiner, 1980) and the greater obedience in the Milgram experiments (Elms & Milgram, 1966) of high scorers on the F Scale, a measure of the "authoritarian personality." In Greece, the authorities selected especially obedient – as well as ideologically sympathetic – military police recruits for training as torturers (Gibson & Haritos-Fatouros, 1986; Haritos-Fatouros, 1988).

However, many of the direct perpetrators are usually not simply forced or pressured by authorities to obey. Instead, they *join* leaders and decision makers, or a movement that shapes and guides them to become perpetrators. Decision makers and direct perpetrators share a *cultural-societal tilt*. They are part of the same culture and experience the same life problems; they probably respond with similar needs and share the inclination for the same potentially destructive modes of their fulfillment. Many who become direct perpetrators voluntarily join the movement and enter roles that in the end lead them to perpetrate mass killing.

The Role of Leaders

Leaders who propagate scapegoating and destructive ideologies are often seen as acting to gain followers or consolidate their following. Even Gordon Allport (1954) suggested that this was the case with Hitler. However, leaders are members of their group, affected by the instigators that affect the rest of the group and by cultural characteristics that predispose the group to violence. For example, in previously victimized groups the leaders, like the rest of the population, tend to carry unhealed wounds. It is this joining of the needs and inclination of populations and leaders that creates great danger of mass killing or genocide.

While in difficult times groups often turn to leaders with the potential to generate violence, and while leading the group toward constructive resolution of life problems and group conflicts can be difficult and dangerous, except under the most extreme conditions leaders still have the potential to try to do so. Instead, unfortunately, leaders and elites often propagate

scapegoating and destructive ideologies, use propaganda against devalued groups and "enemies," and create paramilitary groups or other institutions that become instruments of violence (Staub, 1999b).

LEARNING BY DOING, EVOLUTION, AND STEPS ALONG THE CONTINUUM OF DESTRUCTION

Mass killing or genocide is usually the outcome of an evolution that starts with discrimination and limited acts of harm-doing. Harming people changes the perpetrators (and the whole society) and prepares them for more harmful acts.

In a number of studies with children, my associates and I found that involving children in efforts to help other children – for example, having them spend time making toys for poor, hospitalized children or teaching younger children – increased their later helping behavior (Staub, 1975, 1979, 1986). Prior helping (Harris, 1972) and even the expressed intention to help (W. DeJong, 1979; Freedman & Fraser, 1966) also increase adults' later helping. Similarly, harming others increases the degree of harm people subsequently inflict on others. When "teachers" shock "learners" who make mistakes on a task, teachers who set their own shock levels increase the intensity of shock over trials (Buss, 1966; Goldstein, Davis, & Herman, 1975). This is the case even with control for the learner's error rate (Goldstein et al., 1975).

People learn and change as a result of their own actions (Staub, 1979, 1989a). When they harm other people, a number of consequences are likely to follow. First, they come to devalue the victims more (Berkowitz, 1962; Goldstein et al., 1975; Sykes & Matza, 1957; Staub, 1978). While in the real world devaluation normally precedes harm-doing, additional devaluation makes greater mistreatment and violence possible. Just-world thinking (Lerner, 1980; Lerner & Simmons, 1966) may be an important mechanism in this. Assuming that the world is just, and that people who suffer must have brought their fate on themselves by their actions or character, ironically, perpetrators are likely to devalue people they themselves have harmed. The self-perception of perpetrators is also likely to change (Bem, 1972; Grusec, Kuczynski, Rushton, & Simutis, 1978; Staub, 1979). They come to see themselves as able and willing to engage in harmful, violent acts – against certain people, and for good reasons, including higher ideals embodied in an ideology.

Personal goal theory (Staub, 1980) suggests moral equilibration (Staub, 1989a) as another mechanism of change. When a conflict exists between moral value(s) and other motives, people can reduce the conflict by replacing the moral value with another value that either is less stringent or is not a moral value but is treated like one. Eisenberg (1986) reported research findings that support such a process: Cost and other conditions led both

children and adults to shift to less evolved moral reasoning. The Nazis replaced respect for the lives of certain people with the values of racial purity, and obedience and loyalty to leaders.

Consistent with this model, in Nazi Germany there was a progression of "steps along a continuum of destruction." First, Jews were thrown out of government jobs and the military, then from other important positions. They were pressured into selling their businesses and later were forced to sell. Marriage and sexual relations between Jews and Aryan Germans were prohibited. Having lost all their property, earning their livelihood with menial jobs, and identified by yellow stars, the Jews were moved into ghettos. In addition to sporadic violence against them, there was organized violence (e.g., the Kristallnacht, in 1938). Many Jews were taken to concentration camps (Dawidowicz, 1975; Hilberg, 1961) before mass extermination.

Steps along a continuum of destruction often start long before those who lead a society to genocide come to power. In Turkey, the legal rights of Armenians and other minorities were limited for centuries. Armenians were the frequent victims of violence. From 1894 to 1896, over 200,000 Armenians were killed by special troops created mainly for this purpose (Greene, 1895; Toynbee, 1915). In Rwanda, about 50,000 Tutsis were killed in 1959, with massacres of large numbers of Tutsis in the early 1960s and 1970s and sporadic killings of smaller numbers after that (des Forges, 1999; Prunier, 1995).

Harm doing and violence normally expand. Even when torture was part of the legal process in Europe, in the Middle Ages, over time the circle of its victims enlarged. First it was used only with lower-class defendants, later also with upper-class defendants, and then even with *witnesses*, in order to obtain information from them (Peters, 1985). In Germany, in addition to the increasing mistreatment of Jews, other forms of violence, such as the euthanasia program and the killing of mentally retarded, mentally ill, and physically deformed Germans (Dawidowicz, 1975; Lifton, 1986) – who in the Nazis' view diminished the genetic quality of the German race – contributed to psychological and institutional change and the possibility of greater violence. In Rwanda, in addition to Tutsis, Hutus who were seen as politically moderate or as not supportive of the leadership were also targeted (des Forges, 1999). In the course of the genocide, some Hutus were killed for personal reasons, and in addition to Tutsi women, some Hutu women were also raped.

In both Argentina and Cambodia, the form of the evolution was not simply increasing violence against the victim group but a cycle of increasing violence between opposing parties. In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge and government forces fought each other with increasing brutality from 1970 to 1975. In Argentina, left-wing guerrilla groups abducted and killed people, blew up buildings, and created chaos, while right-wing death squads were killing people identified as left-wing enemies. In both cases one of these

parties became the perpetrator of extreme violence. The circle of victims was tremendously enlarged beyond those who participated in the initial cycle of violence.

In the course of this evolution, the perpetrators exclude the victims from the moral universe. Moral principles become inapplicable to them (Staub, 1989a). The prohibitions that normally inhibit violence lose force. The killing of the victims can become a goal in its own right. Fanatic commitment develops to the ideology and to the specific goal of eliminating the victims. Even goals basic to persons and groups, like self-protection, come to be subordinated to this "higher" goal (Staub, 1989b; von Maltitz, 1973), which becomes the dominant guide to action. There is a reverse of morality, so that killing becomes the right thing to do. The example of terrorist groups shows that even life itself can be subordinated when overriding fanatic commitment has developed to a murderous cause.

Group processes come to dominate the psychology of perpetrators. Embedded in a group, trained in submission to authority, and further indoctrinated in ideology, people give up individual decision making to the group and its leaders (Milgram, 1974; Zimbardo, 1969). The "We" acquires substantial power, in place of the "I." With the boundaries of the self weakened, there will be emotional contagion, the spread of feelings among group members (Milgram & Toch, 1969; Staub, 1987; Staub & Rosenthal, 1994), and shared reactions to events. The members' perception of reality will be shaped by their shared belief system and by the support they receive from each other in interpreting events. Deviation from the group becomes increasingly unlikely (Staub, 1989a; Toch, 1965).

As a whole society moves along the continuum of destruction, there is a *resocialization* in beliefs, values, and standards of conduct. New institutions emerge that serve repression, discrimination, and the mistreatment of identified victims. They represent new realities, a new status quo. Paramilitary groups develop into institutions of murder (des Forges, 1999). For example, in Guatemala a civilian group was created, "who killed and abducted on the orders of G-2," the intelligence division of the Guatemalan army. This group acquired a life of its own and also began to initiate killings (Nairn & Simon, 1986).

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BYSTANDERS

In the face of the increasing suffering of a subgroup of society, bystanders frequently remain silent, passive – both *internal* bystanders and *external* ones, other nations and outside groups (Staub, 1989a, 1999a). Bystanders also learn and change as a result of their own action – or inaction. Passivity in the face of others' suffering makes it difficult to remain in internal opposition to the perpetrators and to feel empathy for the victims. To reduce their own feelings of empathic distress and guilt, passive bystanders

will distance themselves from victims (Staub, 1978). Just-world thinking will lead them to see victims as deserving their fate, and to devalue them. While in Cambodia the population was completely brutalized, in Turkey and Germany, and initially in Argentina, the majority accepted, if not supported, the perpetrators' actions. In Rwanda, a small but significant percentage of the population participated in killings.

Most Germans participated in the system, in small ways such as using the Hitler salute (Bettelheim, 1979) and through organizations and group activities. Moreover, as bystanders, most Germans were not just passive: They were *semiactive participants*. They boycotted Jewish stores and broke intimate relationships and friendships with Jews. Many benefited in some way from the Jews' fate, by assuming their jobs and buying their businesses. Repeatedly the population initiated anti-Jewish actions before government orders, such as businesses' firing Jewish employees or not giving them paid vacations (Hilberg, 1961).

The German population shared a societal tilt with perpetrators – the cultural background and difficult life conditions, and the resulting needs and the inclination to satisfy them in certain ways. This might have made the Nazi movement acceptable to many who did not actually join. Moreover, after Hitler came to power, the lives of most Germans substantially improved (Craig, 1982): They had jobs and they were part of a community in which there was a spirit of togetherness and shared destiny.²

Their passivity, semiactive participation, and connections to the system had to change the German people, in ways similar to the changes in perpetrators. Consistency theories, and specifically balance theory (Heider, 1958), suggest that given Hitler's hatred for the Jews, the Germans' gratitude to and admiration of Hitler (Craig, 1982) would have intensified their anti-Jewish attitudes. The majority apparently came to accept and even support the persecution of Jews (Staub, 1989a). Others became perpetrators themselves.

The Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute

Some members of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute provide an example of bystanders who became perpetrators (Staub, 1989b). Many members left Germany. Those who remained presumably had at least tolerance for

² In June 1987, I gave a lecture at the University of Trier, in Germany, on the psychology of genocide. I asked my hosts beforehand, and they kindly arranged for me a meeting with a group of older Germans who lived under Hitler – 20 individuals aged 60 to 75. In our 4-hour-long discussion, these people repeatedly and spontaneously returned to the satisfactions they experienced under Hitler. They could not keep away from it. They talked about far more than just the material security or the existence of jobs and a livelihood. The camaraderie and feelings of community sitting around campfires, singing songs, and sharing other experiences of connection and group spirit stood out in their memories.

the Nazi system from the start. Over time, they changed. They accepted a new name, the Goering Institute, and a new head, the cousin of the second-ranking Nazi, Hermann Goering. They were silent when Jewish colleagues were removed (and used ideologically based euphemisms to refer to them – e.g., not pure Germans). Some of the members advanced ideas or reinterpreted psychoanalytic concepts to support the Nazi ideology (Friedrich, 1989). Ideas, such as the theory of sluggish schizophrenia used in the Soviet Union to place dissidents in mental hospitals (Bloch & Reddaway, 1977), can be important steps along the psychological continuum of destruction. In Germany, the evolution of ideas about eugenics before Hitler came to power formed a basis of the euthanasia program (Lifton, 1986) and probably contributed to the Nazi ideology itself. In the end some institute members participated in the euthanasia program, and some became perpetrators in the extermination of Jews (Lifton, 1986; Staub, 1989a).

In the other instances as well, bystanders were either passive or supportive of perpetrators. In Argentina, the violence by guerrilla groups created fear in the population. When the military took over the government, a recurrent event in Argentina during the post-World War II years, the population initially supported the kidnappings the military began. Discomfort and protests, limited by the fear that the military generated, began only much later, as it became apparent that anybody could become a victim. In Turkey, much of the population either accepted or supported the persecution of Armenians (Staub, 1989a). In Cambodia, once the Khmer Rouge won the civil war and the killings and the use of people in slave labor began, most people were part of either the perpetrator or the victim group.

Other Nations as Bystanders

Fear contributed to the passivity of internal bystanders, in Germany and elsewhere. External bystanders, other nations and organizations outside Germany, had little to fear, especially at the start of Jewish persecution, when Germany was weak. Still, there was little response (Wyman, 1984). In 1936, after many Nazi atrocities, the whole world went to Berlin to participate in the Olympics, thereby affirming Nazi Germany. American corporations were busy doing business in Germany during most of the 1930s.

Christian dogma was a source of anti-Semitism in the whole Western world. It designated Jews as the killers of Christ and fanned their persecution for many centuries in response to their unwillingness to convert (Girard, 1980; Hilberg, 1961). It was a source of discrimination and mistreatment, which led to murder and further devaluation. In the end, profound religious-cultural devaluation of Jews characterized many Christian nations.

In addition, people outside Germany were also likely to engage in just-world thinking and to further devalue Jews in response to their suffering in Germany. The German propaganda against Jews also reached the outside world. Moscovici's (1973, 1980) research suggests that even seemingly unreasonably extreme statements about attitude objects have influence, if initially not on behavior, then at least on underlying attitudes. As a consequence of these processes, anti-Semitism increased in the Western world in the 1930s, in the United States reaching a peak around 1938 (Wyman, 1968, 1984).

These were some of the reasons for the silence and passivity. Among other reasons for nations to remain passive in face of the mistreatment by a government of its citizens are their unwillingness to interfere in the "domestic affairs" of another country (which could be a precedent for others interfering in their internal affairs) and the economic (trade) and other benefits they can gain from positive relations with the offending nation (Staub, 1999a).

At the time of the genocide of the Armenians, Turkey was fighting in World War I. Nations already fighting against Turkey in the war, perhaps not surprisingly, did speak out against the atrocities. As Turkey's ally, Germany might have been able to exert influence on Turkish policy, but it did not try to do so (Trumpener, 1968). At the time of the disappearances in Argentina, most nations of the world were silent. The Carter administration did speak out against the policy and helped some people in danger, but it took no serious action, such as a boycott, against the Argentine government.

Rwanda presents a recent, disturbing example of international passivity. The civil war began in 1990, with the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a small group of Tutsis who were refugees from prior violence against Tutsis or their descendants, entering the country as a military force. The French immediately began to provide military aid to the government. France continued its aid in subsequent years without protesting the occasional killings of hundreds of Tutsi peasants. Before the genocide began in April 1994, there were warnings of impending violence by human rights organizations. The commander of United Nations peacekeepers received confidential information that a genocide was being planned and asked his superiors permission to destroy arms that were being assembled. He was instructed to do nothing. After the genocide began, most of the UN peacekeepers were withdrawn. The United States and other nations went to extreme lengths to avoid the use of the term *genocide*, while about 700,000 Tutsis were killed over a period of 3 months, between two thirds and three fourths of the total Tutsi population. Apparently the purpose in not using the word *genocide* was to avoid invoking the UN Genocide Convention and thereby the moral obligation to respond (des Forges, 1999; Gourevitch, 1998).

Silence and passivity change bystanders, whether they are individuals or whole nations. They can diminish the subsequent likelihood of protest and punitive action by them. In turn, they encourage perpetrators, who often interpret silence as support for their policies (Staub, 1989a; Taylor, 1983). Complicity by bystanders is likely to encourage perpetrators even more.

THE POWER OF BYSTANDERS

Could bystanders make a difference in halting or preventing mass killing and genocide? Some lines of research and the evidence of real events indicate bystanders' potential to exert influence.

Whether or not one person verbally defines the meaning of a seeming emergency as an emergency greatly affects the response of other bystanders (Bickman, 1972; Staub, 1974). When bystanders remain passive, they substantially reduce the likelihood that other bystanders will respond (Latané & Darley, 1970; Staub, 1978).

Real-life events also show the influence of bystanders, even on perpetrators. In Denmark, the climate of support for Jews apparently influenced some German officials. They delayed deportation orders, which gave the Danish population the time needed to mount and complete a massive rescue effort, taking the approximately 7,000 Danish Jews to neutral Sweden in small boats. In Bulgaria, the actions of varied segments of the population, including demonstrations, stopped the government from handing over the country's Jewish population to the Germans (Fein, 1979). Even within Germany, in spite of the Nazi repression, the population could exert influence. When the euthanasia program became known, some segments of the population protested: the Catholic clergy, some lawyers' groups, the relatives of people killed, and those in danger. As a result, the official program of euthanasia killing was discontinued (Dawidowicz, 1975; Lifton, 1986). There was little response, however, to the mistreatment of Jews. Added to anti-Semitism and other cultural preconditions, the *gradual* increase in mistreatment would have contributed to passivity.

Hitler's attitude also indicates the potential power of bystanders. He and his fellow Nazis were greatly concerned about the reactions of the population to their early anti-Jewish actions, and they were both surprised and emboldened by the lack of adverse reactions (Dawidowicz, 1975; Hilberg, 1961). As I have noted, the population even initiated actions against Jews, which further shaped Nazi views (Staub, 1989a) and stimulated additional official "measures" (Hilberg, 1961).

In the French Huguenot village of Le Chambon, under the leadership of their pastor, André Trocme, the inhabitants saved several thousand refugees, a large percentage of them children (Hallie, 1979). The behavior of the villagers influenced members of the Vichy police. Telephone calls to the presbytery began to inform villagers of impending raids, which enabled

them to send the refugees into the neighboring forest. The deeds of the village doctor, who was executed, and his words at his trial influenced a German major, who in turn persuaded a higher officer not to move against the village (Hallie, 1979).

There is also evidence that the practice of torture diminishes in response to negative publicity and reactions by "external bystanders." This was demonstrably the case in South American countries (Stover & Nightingale, 1985). But frequently there is resistance to taking action not only within nations but also in smaller institutions. The practice of putting dissidents into mental hospitals had continued for a long time in the former Soviet Union. A detailed case history showed the resistance of the International Medical Association to condemn this practice (Bloch & Reddaway, 1984). Often organizations, while they may encourage their members to act, do not want to act as institutions, even when their weight and influence are needed. Lack of punitive action or even of condemnation by important bystanders, or support by some, may negate the efforts of others and encourage and affirm perpetrators.

In Iran, after the fundamentalist revolution, the persecution of the Baha'i, a long-persecuted community, has intensified. Over 200 Baha'i were executed in a short period of time. Representations by Baha'i living in other countries to their own governments and to the international community led to UN resolutions, as well as resolutions by individual nations condemning the persecution of the Baha'i in Iran. This led to a cessation of further executions (Bigelow, 1993), although they resumed on a much smaller scale in the 1990s. The international boycott of South Africa apparently also had important influence, which contributed to the abolition of apartheid and the change in government.

By speaking out and taking action, bystanders can elevate values prohibiting violence, which over time perpetrators had come to ignore in their treatment of the victim group. Most groups, but especially ideologically committed ones, have difficulty seeing themselves, having a perspective on their own actions and evolution (Staub, 1989a). They need others as mirrors. Through sanctions bystanders can also make the perpetrators' actions costly to them and induce fear of later punitive action. The earlier bystanders speak out and act, the more likely that they can counteract prior steps along the continuum of destruction or inhibit further evolution (see Staub, 1989a; 1999a). Once commitment to the destruction of a group has developed, and the destruction is in process, nonforceful reactions by bystanders will tend to be ineffective.

THE RANGE OF APPLICABILITY OF THIS CONCEPTION

The conception presented in this chapter can be applied, with modifi-

groups. It can be used in a tight, even predictive, manner, or as a framework theory that offers understanding. To use it in prediction (and therefore hopefully in prevention), the degree to which the components are present in a specific instance – the level of difficult life conditions and of relevant cultural characteristics, the point at which the group is located on a continuum of destruction, and the activities of bystanders – must be carefully assessed (Staub, 1989a, 1999a). The theory needs to be appropriately modified as it is applied to varied forms of group hostility, in varied contexts. The history of a group, relationships between groups, and the form and nature of any group conflicts must be assessed, and the influences specified here examined in relation to the specific and particular context.

In certain cases difficult life conditions may increase the likelihood of a group turning against others, but they are not central starting points. Even group conflict, where each side wants something from the other, may not be important. The motivation for violence may not originate in the frustration of basic needs described earlier. This is primarily the case when genocide or mass killing develops out of self-interest, as in the destruction of the Ache Indians in Paraguay in the service of the economic development of the forests that were their home. In cases of mass killing or genocide of indigenous peoples (Hitchcock & Twedt, 1997), self-interest is often a central motive. However, difficult life conditions and a history of conflict between groups still make such violence more likely. Intense devaluation of the victim group, which is often present in extreme forms, and other cultural characteristics are central contributors.

In certain cases of group conflict, including what has recently been called *ethnopolitical violence*, “ideologies of antagonism” (Staub, 1989a, 1992a, 1999a) may be a cultural condition that easily gives rise to the motivation for violence. This refers to the outcome of a long history of hostility and mutual violence. Such ideologies are worldviews in which another group is perceived as an implacable enemy, bent on one’s destruction. The welfare of one’s own group is best served by the other’s demise. Economic or other gains by the antagonist group can be experienced as a threat to one’s own group and/or group self-concept and can activate hostile motives. While a history of hostility and violence can create a realistic fear of the other, usually the extremely negative view of the other is resistant to changes in reality. The group’s identity or self-definition has come to include enmity toward the other. Ideologies of antagonism seemed to have roles in the start or maintenance of violence in the former Yugoslavia, between Israelis and Palestinians, and in Rwanda. They can have an important role even if only a segment of a population holds the ideology.

Difficult life conditions are also not primary initiators of hostility and war that are based on essential conflicts of interest. The beginning of the

Palestinian-Israeli hostility is an example of this, with the two groups claiming the same territory as living space. While the conflict of interests has been real, certainly much more so than in a case like the Falklands War, negotiation resulting in compromise that fulfills the essential needs of both groups (Rouhana & Kelman, 1994) was slowed by psychological elements such as identification by both groups with a particular territory and perceptions or beliefs about the other that, among some part of the membership, probably amounted to ideologies of antagonism.

Using the theory presented here, for example, considering cultural characteristics other than devaluation by itself, which is a defining characteristic of racism, as well as instigating conditions, can help us better understand racism. It can help us understand other types of violence as well, for example, youth violence (Staub, 1996) and the unnecessary use of force by police against citizens (Staub, 1992a, 2002). Police violence involves intense us – them differentiation and the devaluation of citizens by the police, an evolution of increasing violence with changes in norms and standards as part of the group's culture, and passive bystanders (which includes fellow officers and superiors). It is intensified by difficult life conditions (Staub, 1992a, 2002).

Much of the theory is also applicable to terrorism. Terrorism is violence by small groups against noncombatants. It occurs in response to difficult life conditions and/or group conflict which frustrate basic needs, reduce opportunities and hope, create perceptions of injustice, and the experience of having been wronged. At times, great culture change and the inability of people to integrate tradition with new ways of life play a role. The impact of culture change is especially great on people living in societies that are both traditional and repressive.

Small terrorist groups are often less radical at the start. They may begin trying to bring about political and social changes working within the political system (McCauley & Segal, 1989). Over time, they become more radical, due to a combination of the difficulty in bringing about change and dynamics within the group, with members affirming their status and identity by advocating more extreme positions in the direction of already established ideology. The ideology, which is invariably present, becomes more radical, and the devaluation of and hostility toward the ideological enemy more intense. The violence, once it begins, intensifies.

When the theory requires some adjustment appropriate to types of violence and context, many elements of it are still usually present in generating group violence. These minimally include a history of devaluation of the other, the evolution of destructiveness (which has sometimes occurred over a long period preceding a flare-up of current antagonism), and the role of bystanders. Usually, some form of destructive ideology and then ideological justification for violence also exist. A further qualification of the theory in certain instances, such as deep-seated ethnic conflicts, would

be that when groups have already progressed far along the continuum of destruction, it is more difficult for bystanders to exert influence.

OTHER VIEWS OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT

We do not have psychological theories of the origins of group violence to compare with this theory. There are, however, varied theories of intergroup relations and conflict. Realistic group conflict theory (LeVine & Campbell, 1972) emphasizes conflicts over scarce, tangible resources. Frustration-aggression-displacement theory (LeVine & Campbell, 1972) identifies frustration within the group as a source of scapegoating and hostility toward other groups. Psychocultural interpretation theory (Volkan, 1988) points to dispositions in groups that lead to threats to identity and fears of survival, which interfere with the resolution of ethnic conflict. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1987) has stressed that individuals' identity is to a substantial degree a social identity, based on membership in a group. Social categorization, the classification of individuals into different categories, leads to stereotyping and discrimination. The desire for a favorable social comparison is an important motive that leads to elevation of one's group by diminishing and discriminating against others. This enhances group self-concept and individual self-esteem.

Aspects of these theories are congenial to the theory presented here, with realistic group conflict theory, which in its basic form assumes that conflict is purely over real, material resources, as well as power, without considering psychological elements, the least congenial. The present theory, which may be called *sociocultural motivation theory*, focuses on a multiplicity of interacting influences, with intense group violence as their outcome. They include cultural dispositions, life conditions, and group conflict. While life conditions and group conflict create frustration and the experience of threat, they do not directly lead to violence. The theory identifies the way groups attempt to satisfy basic needs as the starting point for the evolution of increasing violence.

While the social nature of individual identity is important, except when the role of prior devaluation or an ideology of antagonism is predominant, it is not social comparison but other motives that are regarded as central in leading a group to turn against others. The essential and unique aspects of the present theory include focus on change or evolution in individuals and groups, the potential of bystanders to influence this evolution, and the necessity to consider how a multiplicity of factors interact.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HEROIC HELPERS

In the midst of violence and passivity, some people in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe endangered their lives to save Jews. To do so, helpers

of German origin had to distance themselves from their group. Some rescuers were marginal to their community: They had a different religious background, were new to the community, or had a parent of foreign birth (London, 1970; Tec, 1986). This perhaps enabled them to maintain an independent perspective and not join the group's increasing devaluation of Jews. Many rescuers came from families with strong moral values and held strong moral and humanitarian values themselves, with an aversion to Nazism (London, 1970; Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Many were "inclusive" and regarded people in groups other than their own as human beings to whom human considerations apply (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Interviews with rescuers and the rescued indicate that individual rescuers were characterized by one or more of the three primary motivators that have been proposed for altruistic helping: a value of caring or "prosocial orientation" (Staub 1974, 1978, 1995), with its focus on the welfare of people and a feeling of personal responsibility to help; moral rules or principles, the focus on living up to or fulfilling the principle or rule; and empathy, the vicarious experience of others' suffering (London, 1970; Oliner & Oliner, 1988; Tec, 1986). These were often accompanied by a hatred of Nazism.

Marginality in relation to the perpetrators or to the dominant group does not mean that rescuers were disconnected from people. In the largest study to date, Sam and Pearl Oliner (1988) found that rescuers were deeply connected to their families and/or other people. They described a large proportion (52%) of rescuers as "normocentric," or norm centered, characterized by "a feeling of obligation to a special reference group with whom the actor identified and whose explicit and implicit values he feels obliged to obey." Some normocentric rescuers were guided by internalized group norms, but many followed the guidance of leaders who set a policy of rescue. Some belonged to resistance groups, church groups, or families that influenced them. In Belgium, where the queen and the government-in-exile and church leaders set the tone, most of the nation refused to cooperate with anti-Jewish policies, and the underground actively helped Jews, who as a result were highly active in helping themselves (Fein, 1979). But normocentric influence can lead people in varied directions. In Poland, some priests and resistance groups helped Jews, while other priests encouraged their communities to support the Nazi persecution of Jews, and some resistance groups killed Jews (Tec, 1986).

Many rescuers started out by helping a Jew with whom they had a past relationship. Some were asked by a Jewish friend or acquaintance to help. The personal relationship would have made it more likely that altruistic-moral motives as well as relationship-based motives would become active. Having helped someone they knew, many continued to help.

Even in ordinary times a feeling of competence is usually required for the expression of motivation in action, or even for its arousal (Ajzen, 1988; Bandura, 1989; Staub, 1978, 1980). When action endangers one's life, such

“supporting characteristics” (Staub, 1980) become crucial. Faith in their own competence and intuition, fearlessness, and high tolerance for risk are among the characteristics of rescuers derived from interviews both with rescuers and with the people they helped (London, 1970; Oliner & Oliner, 1988; Tec, 1986).

Although this is less supported by a body of evidence, it seems that some rescuers were adventurous and pursued risky, dangerous activities in their earlier lives (London, 1970). Adventurousness might reduce the perceived risk and enhance the feeling of competence to help. According to personal goal theory, it may also partly transform the risk to potential satisfaction, adding a source of motivation.

Heroic helpers are not born. An analysis of two specific cases shows the roots and evolution of heroism. The many-faceted influences at work can be seen in the case of Raoul Wallenberg, who saved the lives of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews (Marton, 1982). Wallenberg was a member of a poor branch of an influential Swedish family. He had wide-ranging travel and work experience and was trained as an architect. In 1944, he was the partner of a Hungarian Jewish refugee in an import-export business. He had traveled to Hungary several times on business, where he visited his partner’s relatives. Earlier, while working in a bank in Haifa, he encountered Jewish refugees arriving from Nazi Germany, which was likely to arouse his empathy. In 1944, he seemed restless and dissatisfied with his career.

On his partner’s recommendation, Wallenberg was approached by a representative of the American War Refugee Board and asked to go to Hungary as a Swedish diplomat to attempt to save the lives of Hungarian Jews who were then being deported to and killed at Auschwitz. He agreed to go. There was no predominant motive guiding his life at the time, like a valued career, which according to personal goal theory would have reduced his openness to activators of a conflicting motive. The request probably served to focus responsibility on him (Staub, 1978), his connection to his business partner and his partner’s relatives enhancing this feeling of responsibility. Familiarity with Hungary and a wide range of past experience in traveling, studying, and working in many places around the world must have added to his feeling of competence. In Hungary, he repeatedly risked his life, subordinating everything to the cause of saving Jewish lives (Marton, 1982).

Wallenberg’s commitment seemingly increased over time, although it appears that once he got involved, his motivation to help was immediately high. Another well-known rescuer, Oscar Schindler (Keneally, 1982), clearly progressed along a “continuum of benevolence.” He was a German born in Czechoslovakia. In his youth, he raced motorcycles. As a Protestant, he left his village to marry a Catholic girl from another village. Thus, he was doubly marginal and also adventurous. Both his father and his wife were opposed to Hitler. Still, he joined the Nazi Party and followed the

German troops to Poland, where he took over a confiscated factory and, using Jewish slave labor, proceeded to enrich himself.

However, in contrast to others in a similar situation, Schindler responded to the humanity of his slave laborers. From the start, he talked with them and listened to them. He celebrated birthdays with them. He began to help them in small and large ways. In some rescuers, the motivation to help followed witnessing the murder or brutal treatment of a Jew (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Schindler had a number of such experiences. His actions resulted in two arrests and brief imprisonments from which he freed himself by invoking real and imaginary connections to important Nazis. Both Schindler and Wallenberg possessed considerable personal power and seemed to enjoy exercising this power to save lives.

To protect his slave laborers from the murderous concentration camp Plaszow, Schindler persuaded the Nazis to allow him to build a camp next to his factory. As the Soviet army advanced, Schindler moved his laborers to his hometown, where he created a fake factory that produced nothing, its only purpose to protect the Jewish laborers. In the end, Schindler lost all the wealth he had accumulated in Poland but saved about 1,200 lives.

Like perpetrators and bystanders, heroic helpers evolve. Some of them develop fanatic commitment to their goal (Staub, 1989a). The usual fanatics subordinate themselves to a movement that serves abstract ideals. They come to disregard the welfare and lives of at least some people as they strive to fulfill these ideals. I regard some of the rescuers as "good fanatics," who completely devoted themselves to the *concrete* aim of saving lives.

Probably in every genocide and mass killing there are heroic helpers, but there is a significant body of scholarship only on rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe. In Rwanda, as well, there were Hutus who acted to save Tutsis. A very few spoke out publicly against the killings, and some or perhaps all of these were killed (des Forges, 1999). In 1999, I interviewed a few people who were rescued and one rescuer in Rwanda, enough only to gain some impressions (Staub, 2000; Staub & Pearlman, 2001). Rwanda is a highly religious country, and while some high-level church leaders betrayed the Tutsis and became accomplices to genocide (des Forges, 1999; Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995), it seems from the reports of those who were rescued that some of the rescuers acted out of religious motives, living up to religious ideals. (Research by Oliner & Oliner [1988] suggested that about 15% of rescuers of Jews acted out of religious motives.) Another impression that came out of the interviews was that perhaps because of the horrible nature of the violence in Rwanda, where in addition to the military and paramilitary groups with many very young members, some people killed neighbors and some

even betrayed members of their own families who had a Tutsi or mixed ethnic background, some of those who were rescued did not trust the motives or character of their rescuers. They could not quite believe that these motives were truly benevolent rather than based on some kind of self-interest.

The research on rescuers of Jews and other information suggest that over time the range of concern of engaged helpers usually expands. For example, the Mothers of the Plaza del Mayo in Argentina began to march in the plaza to protest the disappearances of their own children. They endured persecution, and some were kidnapped. However, as they continued to march, they developed a strong commitment to universal human rights and freedom (Staub, 1989a), a concern about the persecution and suffering of people in general.

THE HEROISM OF SURVIVORS

The heroism of rescuers has slowly come to be known, acknowledged, and celebrated. The heroism of survivors has remained, however, largely unrecognized. Parents, often in the face of impossible odds that can immobilize people, took courageous and determined actions to save their families. Children themselves often showed initiative, judgment, courage, and maturity that greatly exceeded what we normally imagine children to be capable of.

In information I gathered, primarily from child survivors (who were less than 13 years of age when the Holocaust began), in conversations and questionnaires, they described many amazing acts, of their own and of their parents. Parents found ways to hide children, so that they might live even if the parents were killed. Young children lived with an assumed identity, for example, as a Catholic child in a boarding school. One survivor was a seven-year-old child in a hospital. She has already recovered from scarlet fever but to be safe remained in the hospital. There was a raid on the hospital, so she put on clothes that were hidden under her mattress and walked out of the building, through a group of uniformed men, to the house of a friendly neighbor ten blocks away who brought her the clothes in the first place.

Their actions, which saved their own lives and the lives of others, were in turn likely to shape these survivors' personality. It was probably an important source of the capacity of many of them, in spite of the wounds inflicted by their victimization, to lead highly effective lives.³

³ (Summary of material from E. Staub, Another form of heroism: Survivors saving themselves and its impact on their lives. Unpublished manuscript, University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Draft of chapter to appear in O. Feldman and P. Tetlock, *Personality and politics: Essays in honor of Peter Suedfeld*, in preparation).

THE OBLIGATION OF BYSTANDERS

We cannot expect bystanders to sacrifice their lives for others. But we can expect individuals, groups, and nations to act early along a continuum of destruction, when the danger to themselves is limited, and the potential exists for inhibiting the evolution of increasing destructiveness. This will only happen if people – children, adults, whole societies – develop an awareness of their common humanity with other people, as well as of the psychological processes in themselves that turn them against others. Institutions and modes of functioning can develop that embody a shared humanity and make exclusion from the moral realm more difficult. Healing from past victimization (Staub, 1998), building systems of positive reciprocity, creating crosscutting relations (Deutsch, 1973) between groups, and developing joint projects (Pettigrew, 1997) and superordinate goals can promote the evolution of caring and nonaggressive persons and societies (Staub, 1989a, 1992b, 1999a).

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