TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON GENOCIDE EDUCATION

A Master’s Research Project Presented to
The Faculty of the College of Education
Ohio University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

By
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Summer 2013
This Master’s Research Project has been approved

For the Department of Teacher Education

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Background

Genocide education has, in recent years, gained a more prominent place in secondary education programs in the United States. Furthermore, a narrow focus on the teaching of the Holocaust has begun to broaden, with teachers (and policy makers) shifting to a more expansive approach to the topic (Cohan & Sleeper, 2010). These changes are due to a number of factors. First, the incorporation of genocide education into state academic content standards has helped to expand genocide education beyond Holocaust education and increase the number of teachers addressing the topic. According to a 2007 report published in the trade periodical *Education Week*, “eleven states direct schools to include materials about the Armenian genocide in history courses. More than 30 recommend or require teaching about the World War II-era destruction of European Jews by the Nazis, or genocide generally” (Bess, Kennedy, & Vaishali, 2007, p. 3). Along with increasing teacher interest due to recent events such as the genocide in Darfur, another influential factor fostering these changes is the increasing availability and dissemination of new curriculum resources, including lesson plans, unit plans, primary source documents, and other materials (Bess, et al., 2007). Popular curricula, unit plans, and individual lesson plans on the Holocaust and other genocides are available from – among other sources – The Choices Program (based at Brown University), the Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Zinn Education Project. Video games, tablet applications (apps), and other forms of digital media have been or are being created with the intention to educate students and the wider public.
Academic interest in genocide studies has also heightened. For example, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, founded in 1994, launched its flagship journal *Genocide Studies and Prevention* in 2006. The quarterly *Journal of Genocide Research*, which saw its first issue published in 1999, led to the formation of the International Network of Genocide Scholars in 2005. These, the two major scholarly associations in the field and their associated academic publications, emerged roughly alongside the increasing interest in genocide education.

Despite this increased interest in genocide studies and education, comparatively little attention has been given to teachers’ perspectives on teaching genocide and their instructional methods. Teaching strategies and the materials teachers utilize, not just those that are available, have not been explored in the literature beyond self-reporting – in other words, teaching professionals describing their approaches to teaching about genocide. Understanding what methods are utilized is necessary in order to assess the efficacy of current teaching practices, improve teaching practices, and build a foundation to address wider issues that arise in the increasingly multicultural and intersectional American classroom, such as questions of ethics, representation, and inclusion.

Research Question

This Master’s research project aims to answer the following question: *What are the perspectives of high school teachers in southeastern Ohio and the western region of West Virginia on teaching genocide?* Assuming this question as a guiding principle, this project also seeks to answer a series of sub-questions:

1) What concept of genocide do these teachers work with?

2) How do these teachers approach the teaching of genocide?
3) What historical events are taught as genocides by these teachers, and how do they understand these events?

4) What importance do these teachers believe learning about genocide has for students?

Limitations

A number of limitations should be noted in regards to this research project. First, the generalizability of the research findings is problematic both due to the qualitative nature of an interview approach to data collection and the limited number of participants. An extension of this project’s findings to other cases would be unjustified. Second, investigations of teachers’ perspectives on their own teaching encounter a specific set of problems. Teachers’ descriptions of their teaching strategies might not and cannot be assumed to represent their actual classroom practice. Teacher biases to view and represent their own practice in positive terms can skew the accuracy of teacher self-reporting during interviews (Moorman & Podsakoff, 1992). Third, much of the extant literature on teachers’ approaches to genocide education focuses on controversies not relevant to this project, such as whether the genocide education should be provided at the primary level, or focuses on higher educational practice.

Organization of the Study

The second chapter of this project presents a review of the literature on genocide education, focusing on the literature addressing secondary education and teachers’ perspectives on genocide education or their suggestions for practice. This chapter also briefly reviews the literature on the instances of genocide focused on questions presented to participants.

The third chapter outlines the methodology utilized in data collection and analysis for this project, while the fourth chapter presents and discusses the research findings arrived at through the interviews with teachers from southeastern Ohio and the western region of West Virginia.
The fifth and final chapter concludes the research project with an examination of the significance and implications this study has for research describing teachers’ perspectives on teaching about genocide. It also offers provisional suggestions for future research, educational practice, and teacher preparation programs.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to contextualize the data collected from the interviews conducted as part of this research project with teachers about their perspectives on genocide education, it is necessary to review the academic literature on genocide education. The first part of this literature review will narrow its focus to the literature describing teachers’ perspectives on genocide education, descriptions of their own classroom practice, and suggestions for practice from secondary education teachers, academics, and educational organizations or initiatives such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and the Facing History and Ourselves Foundation. In the second part of this literature review, attention will be turned to providing a brief synopsis of the genocides this research project’s participants were questioned about. These descriptions, based on the genocide studies literature, are provided in order to allow a richer and more nuanced discussion of the data collected and its implications.

Part I

Teachers’ Perspectives on Genocide Education

The literature on genocide education is replete with descriptions from teachers and teacher educators of the teaching strategies and methods they employ in order to educate students about genocides, as well as statements and reflections from education professionals about why teaching about genocide is important. Most articles dealing with genocide education focus almost exclusively on the Holocaust, with a smaller number focusing on Rwanda, and a still smaller number focusing on other genocides.
In the interviews with ten practicing history teachers in England that form the basis for her academic monograph, Lucy Russell (2006) found that teachers approached the teaching of the Holocaust from historical, social and moral, and emotional perspectives. Six of the ten teachers she interviewed cited “the moral lessons of the Holocaust being of primary importance” (p. 34, emphasis in original). Russell notes that a significant problem facing Holocaust education is debate over what the term ‘Holocaust’ means: whether it refers exclusively to the Jewish experience under National Socialist Germany leading up to and during World War II, or whether it refers more broadly to all victims of the Nazi regime targeted for elimination (p. 130). Despite this, she views the lack of a coherent program of Holocaust education due to the widely diverging approaches and devotion to instruction about the Holocaust among teachers as the most troubling obstacle to be overcome. The literature describing teachers’ perspectives on and approaches to including genocides other than the Holocaust and outside of Great Britain support her concerns.

In his article “Teaching about the Former Yugoslavia,” Brad Joseph (2005) describes four activities he uses in teaching students about the Bosnian genocide. One method described is a simulation in which students are divided into two separate villages representing different ethnic groups, informing students that their rival ethnic groups were going to possibly retaliate against them, and having students write down their suggested responses on pieces of paper for discussion. The second activity, intended to communicate to students how groups are dehumanized, involve the teacher projecting dehumanizing “racist propaganda” and having students analyze the images (p. 136). In the third activity, students read hand-outs about a genocide preceding the Bosnian case and identify causes of conflict and the “material winners and losers,” while in the final activity students place Bosnian Serbs on trial for crimes against
humanity. During the trial, Joseph recommends that students make explicit reference to the past to justify their perspectives on the case, as the “heart of conflict in the former Yugoslavia is that everyone points to the past to justify current actions” (p. 136).

Idit Gil (2009) represents an Israeli perspective on the issue, having analyzed a wide array of sources including high school curricula, textbooks, materials, final exams, and interviews with educational professionals dealing with Holocaust education. Heroism, resistance (both active and passive), and steadfastness on the part of Jewish victims of the Holocaust are mentioned as influential themes in Israeli Holocaust education, and – in contrast to British and American trends – there is an emphasis on the ghettos over eliminationist mass killings. Gil focuses on the importance of developing disciplinary skills such as document analysis and viewing history as a narrative versus as a chronology, and notes that after 2002 a new approach to the teaching the Holocaust as having primarily informative goals (as opposed to social or Zionist goals) was adopted.

Jeffrey Glanz (1999) offers ten suggestions to teachers approaching the Holocaust, including “hands-on, minds-on” experiences such as viewing films or taking field trips (p. 550), facilitating whole class discussions and reflective journaling, emphasizing the richness of Jewish culture before the Holocaust, inviting survivors as speakers, using pre-tests to stimulate student interest in the topic, and facilitating simulations in which students are cast as “a member of the Judenrate [sic]” (p. 561). He encourages teachers to engage students in activities that allow them to empathize with Jewish victims of the Holocaust and allow them to engage in “thinking about . . . moral implications” (p. 561).

Andy Lawrence (2010), a teacher at Hampton School in Middlesex, England, describes his use of an online exhibition builder to “encourage students to think creatively while learning
about such a difficult issue as genocide with historical rigour” (p. 47). This approach, he argues, helps to combat a number of problems research on teachers’ effectiveness in teaching about the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide has described: limited time, limited resources, and limited content knowledge. The exhibition builder program allows students to assume “the role of the historian and curator,” reaching a deeper understanding of these events through interacting with primary sources and formulating evidence-based interpretations about them (p. 48). Utilizing multiple sources as part of the exhibition, Lawrence argues, facilitates the representation of multiple perspectives and humanizes the victims of the Holocaust.

Another British teacher, Martyn Beer (2005), argues for the importance of teaching the Rwandan genocide and offers suggestions for doing so to other education professionals. The Rwandan genocide, Beer writes, contains a number of important themes for students to consider: “the moral obligation of the international community; the role of the United Nations; developments in US foreign policy since the end of the Cold War (especially the debacle in Somalia) – and many more besides” (p. 54). Based on the principle that “seeing is more important than hearing,” Beer organized a field trip for his Year 12 class to Rwanda in order to visit sites where genocide occurred, listen to genocide survivors, volunteer to help rebuild houses destroyed during the genocide, and investigate the effects of the genocide on Rwanda (p. 55). Beer divulges that in teaching about Rwanda in the classroom, he “intend[s] to use Rwanda to extend my students’ thinking about the Holocaust” and foster the development of critical thinking skills (p. 56).

Joseph Karb and Andrew Beiter (2009), both teachers at Springville (NY) Middle School, present a description of diverse methods of teaching the Holocaust based on their approach taken to teaching the subject to 8th grade students and their desire to “empower our students to prevent
genocide” (p. 57). Karb and Beiter (2009) further emphasize the importance of taking an ethical orientation to genocide education, writing that “in order to teach our students to be good, we have the obligation to help them develop their own understandings of where and why society has fallen off the tracks” (p. 57). Empowerment of students as a goal of teaching about the Holocaust is a common theme in the genocide education literature. Helen Bond, a former middle school teacher and current member of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Howard University, argues that student empowerment “comes through understanding the complex history of the Shoah and making application to their own lives” (2008, p. 18).

In order to not present the Holocaust as an isolated event, Karb and Beiter designed their lessons to teach about the Holocaust from a comparative perspective. In order to have students gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of Jews, “Gypsies [sic],”¹ and other victims of the Holocaust, the authors developed an activity in which students wrote down on a card what sole sentimental item they would bring with them if they only had a day’s notice to vacate their home. These cards are then arranged in the shape of a cattle car and students view railcar scenes from the film *Escape from Sobibor*. Students learned about why bystanders did not intervene in the Holocaust through activities prompting them to compare this situation to bystanders during bullying at their school.

During the next section of their unit on the Holocaust, the authors sought to educate their students about the causes of genocide by tasking students with creating a “recipe for genocide” based on their comparisons of the Holocaust and the genocides in Armenia, Rwanda, Cambodia, and Darfur (p. 61). Learning stations on each genocide with textual information, pictures, and video or radio stories were used to deliver content based on which students would outline the

¹ “Romani” is the appropriate designation for the ethnic group the (lamentably normalized in majority society) ethnic slur “gypsy” intends to describe (Hancock, 2002).
causes these genocides held in common. An independent project (essay, short story, poetry, research paper, poster, books, memorial, or student’s choice) on a facet of the Holocaust preceded the unit test, the conclusion of the unit. Multiple projects required students to “encourage tolerance in our world” (p. 73).

Tolerance is an ethical orientation a significant number of teachers aim for their students to draw from lessons about the Holocaust and other genocides. Bond (2008) warns against the dangers of intolerance, representing this as a major cause of genocide, and advocates for an anti-racist approach to teaching the Holocaust based on research indicating certain approaches help to reduce racist attitudes among students. Glanz (1999) writes that,

Holocaust study provides a forum to sensitize students to human suffering and oppression as well as to encourage an ‘ethic of caring’ for all people. The true lesson of the Holocaust and Nazism is to demonstrate what hatred and intolerance can cause. That “we must never forget” has become trite, but a truism nonetheless. Students should become empowered as a result of Holocausts study . . . I often explain to my students that we, as human beings, have free choice and a moral responsibility to embody the lofty, yet attainable ideals of justice, respect, caring, and tolerance for all people. (p. 563)

Henry Maitles and Paula Cowan (2012) state that alongside developing students’ understanding of their citizenship and general political literacy, Holocaust education is an effective tool in equipping students to combat intolerance and racism, and Geoffrey Short (2012) argues more narrowly that learning about the Holocaust would aid in deconstructing anti-Semitism in the multicultural classroom, specifically Muslim anti-Semitism. In each of these articles or chapters, encouraging tolerance is viewed as an effective measure in preventing genocide, allowing education to contribute to such a cause. Though critical of the idea of
tolerance as an effective check against future mass violence, Rich Gibson (2000) notes that the image of tolerance as a “vaccine” against genocide is common and figures heavily in Holocaust education curricula (n.p.).

In place of advocating for tolerance, Gibson (2000), seeing the Holocaust as “the logical unfolding of fascism,” advocates for a problem-posing form of critical education based in Marxism that aims to overcome fascism (n.d.). He argues that genocide education should endeavor to develop in students the skills necessary to combat fascism, which include opposition to capitalist exploitation. Alice Pettigrew (2010) presents another critical perspective on anti-racist approaches to Holocaust education in an article cautioning against drawing universal moral lessons from a specific historical event. Citing an on-line survey of over 600 secondary teachers conducted in England, Pettigrew states that the most common educational aims in Holocaust education were “to develop an understanding of the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping in any society” and “to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again” (p. 50). In her view, teachers’ understandings of the importance of Holocaust education often result in oversimplified and inaccurate characterizations of the Holocaust as a result of racism, with the Holocaust positioned as “a dramatic example of an always extant danger, intrinsic in human nature. Inadequate attention is drawn to the specific social, political and economic circumstances in which that danger has been historically realized” (p. 53). In contrast to Bond (2008), who positions genocide as the end-point on a continuum beginning with bullying, Pettigrew (2010) views such an explanation of genocidal violence as bereft of historical support and cites evidence that teachers’ lack of content knowledge about the Holocaust does adversely affect their teaching.
David Lindquist (2012) offers a number of suggestions for improving instruction about the Holocaust at the secondary level. Lindquist notes that there are severe deficiencies in the textbook-driven pedagogical approach used most frequently in American schools. In order to correct these and other problems, Lindquist recommends reorienting social studies instruction about genocide to focus on providing students “opportunities to confront complex historical situations on multiple levels” and engage in higher-order critical thinking (p. 407). To provide an example of what such instruction would look like, Linquist includes in his article an expanded lesson plan based on a USHMM-developed lesson plan addressing the question: “Why didn’t the Jews leave Germany?” The goals of the lesson plan Lindquist developed are to foster the historical and critical thinking abilities of students and to “provide students with factual knowledge” in an active learning environment (p. 411). Lindquist’s lesson plan describes a process in which students examine primary source materials about Jewish emigration from Germany and attempt to answer questions intended to engage higher-order reflection, culminating in an essay assignment and presentations.

Lindquist lists “utilizing an exemplary educational website as a reference source” as one of the principal merits of his lesson plan (p. 416). Glanz (1999) recommends the use of computer labs and websites in teaching about the Holocaust. Meghan Manfra and Jeremy Stoddard (2008) argue that a more extensive engagement by educators with digital media would improve social studies instruction about genocide. Teachers, these authors conclude, should incorporate digital media such as audio and visual first-person accounts of genocide from survivors, interactive mapping resources, and social activism websites when teaching about the Holocaust and other genocides. Eyewitness accounts introduce an authentic historical voice into the classroom, and digital media in general “allow for connections to real-world problems and provide the
Manfra and Stoddard offer as example the website of the anti-genocide organization STAND, which hosts materials and instructions intended to aid students in establishing local genocide prevention organizations (p. 263). More recent developments in digital media, such as an “interactive, multimedia-centric” iPad app of Anne Frank’s diary developed by Penguin in collaboration with the Anne Frank Fonds (Foundation), offer opportunities to engage students in learning about genocide with new and dynamic technologies (Sawers, 2013).

Digital media is not unproblematic. Despite the opportunities it offers for exposing students to authentic historical witnesses, inauthentic, insensitive, and offensive educational materials have been developed to educate students and the general public about genocide. In his discussion of an interactive computer-based simulation game titled “Darfur is Dying,” winner of mtvU’s Darfur Digital Activist contest, James Brown (2007) sharply criticizes its stereotyped portrayals of Africans and inauthentic approach (the player is cast as a resident of a refugee camp tasked with maintaining the camp in the face of Janjaweed militia), as well as its insensitive focus on reducing the genocide to little more than a vehicle of entertainment. Teachers without a strong grasp of content knowledge about Darfur might not grasp many of the problems inherent in the game and misinterpret the simulation as an appropriate educational supplement.

The importance of authenticity in narrating genocides is not restricted to digital media. Jeffrey Blutinger (2009), for example, argues that a bias towards a focus on historical actors in narrating the past leads to Holocaust education taking place from a largely German-centered, perpetrator-based perspective (p. 269). In order to provide students with a more accurate picture of the Holocaust, Blutinger points out that a victim-centered perspective must be represented as well. Though he sees “atypical experience[s]” and “distortions of memory” as possible problems
impacting survivor testimonies, Blutinger maintains that their eyewitness accounts (both non-Jewish and Jewish) are the cornerstone for constructing a victim-centered instructional approach. The author notes in closing that before these materials are introduced students should be prepared for the psychological, emotional, and spiritual challenges materials such as these often pose to students.

Suggested Curricula

One of the manners in which increasing access to the Internet has impacted education is the increasing availability of low-cost or free lesson plans, unit plans, and instructional materials. Created by institutions of higher education, professional organizations, schools districts, and advocacy groups abound, it is hoped that these materials will inform teaching practice. To conclude this first part of the literature review, I will review a number of such materials that have received a significant media attention (Bess, Kennedy, & Vaishali, 2007).

Confronting genocide: Never again? is a curriculum designed and distributed by The Choices Program (2010), an educational initiative based at Brown University. The curriculum includes texts for students and teachers, supplementary documents and resources, a five-day lesson plan, an additional optional lesson plan, tips for integrating the curriculum into the classroom, and a rubric for assessing student work. During the five days, students examine the idea of genocide, how genocide is represented in the media, engage in a simulation during which the U.S. policy on genocide is debated, and design and create their own genocide memorial. The curriculum uses the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, the Cambodian genocide, the Bosnian genocide, and the Rwandan genocide as case studies. The curriculum advertises itself as containing activities integrating “the evaluation of multiple perspectives, informed debate, and problem solving strategies” and states its aim is for students to “gain a deeper understanding of
the values underlying specific policy recommendations and the trade-offs that accompany each of the choices” (p. TRB-1).

The Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, a Brookline, Massachusetts-based international organization that seeks to combat prejudice through education, publishes a number of curricular materials available for free from their website. Their main resource book, *Facing history and ourselves: Holocaust and human behavior* (1994), describes the organization as “devoted to teaching about the dangers of indifference and the values of civility by helping schools confront the complexities of history in ways that promote critical and creative thinking about the challenges we face and the opportunities we have for positive change” (p. xx). Their resource books, which deal with the Armenian genocide (2004), the development of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (2007), and a study guide for a recent PBS documentary, *Worse Than War*, based on genocide studies scholar Daniel Goldhagen’s research (2011), consist in the main of various readings accompanied by questions intended to generate critical discussion. The corresponding unit plans task students with reading and analyzing films and documents from the resource books, then engaging in whole class discussion about the issues raised in the films and readings. Suggested methods of assessment and homework assignments are included. Facing History and Ourselves has also developed a series of lesson plans to accompany recent films and books on the Darfur genocide (2008). During these lessons, students design and present posters about anti-genocide activists, create a found poem, and communicate their ideas about the film to each other through silent writing, among other activities.

The USHMM offers a number of lesson plans, activities, and teacher guides to educators on their website (n.d.). In a unit plan on the early phases of the Holocaust, students examine
images for information about Nazi persecution and create a message to communicate the
warning signs of similar persecution. Another lesson on the legacies of the Holocaust focuses on
educating students as to what the Holocaust’s effects on the world today are and how to help
prevent dehumanization. During the lesson, students view and discuss the final ten minutes of the
film *Schindler’s List* and a speech from Elie Wiesel, as well as a reason. Students discuss a series
of questions based on the videos as a class and write reflective journal entries. One activity
utilizes a recording of a meeting in the online virtual world simulation *Second Life* with actress
Mia Farrow to introduce discussions of the Darfur genocide. Their resource book for educators
(2004) contains a list of guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust, including avoiding simple
answers to questions about a complex event, not portraying the Holocaust as inevitable, not
comparing the suffering of victims of the Holocaust to those of other atrocities, avoiding
stereotypes and romanticizing history, and reinforcing the humanity of the victims. It also offers
a list of possible rationales for integrating instruction about the Holocaust into a curriculum,
including its importance in educating students about tolerance, the idea that it is a watershed
event in all of history, and the necessity for citizens to be able to recognize warning signs leading
to events such as the Holocausts and to have the ability to resist them effectively.

The Zinn Education Project, an outreach of the non-profit Teaching for Change, contains
two lessons plans that position European treatment of America’s Indigenous peoples as
genocide. Bill Bigelow’s (2003) lesson plan engages students in readings about Columbus’s
treatment of the Taíno people and their genocidal decline in population resulting from
enslavement, murder, and other barbarities of colonialism. The main activity of his lesson plan is
a trial in which the students are assigned roles as Columbus, Columbus’ men, the Taíno, King
Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and the “System of Empire” (n.p.). During the trial, students act
as defendants and the teacher as the prosecutor, with each group of students needing to explain why their assigned character is innocent and who they would think guilty. Other students act as the jury, and a whole class discussion follows the activity. Gloria Olson-Raymer’s lesson (2011) is based on readings and consists of document-based questions and questions for whole class discussion that positions Jacksonian Indian removal as genocide.

Part II

Genocides

In this section of the literature review, I will briefly discuss and define the definition of genocide and the six cases of genocide that interview questions from this Master’s research project focused on. These descriptions provide context for the responses of participants to these interview questions and help establish a basis with which to evaluate them.

What is genocide?

According to Article II of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,

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genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
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(a) Killing members of the group;

(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (quoted in Jones, 2007, p. 13)
This legal framework was arrived at, in the main, through the efforts of the Polish-Jewish jurist Raphael Lemkin, whose attempts to enshrine a crime against genocide in international law began with his horror at the atrocities committed by the Turkish government against the Armenian people. Though this definition is the most influential in the literature, the definition of genocide is a controversial issue. Numerous scholars, for example, have argued that the groups able to be subjected to genocide should include political groups, and others have argued it should include any social group. Some scholars have seen mass murder as essential to the definition of genocide, while others (including Lemkin himself) have allowed for economic, cultural, or other destructions of a people to be categorized as genocide. What is common to all definitions is a criterion of targeted eliminationism: perpetrators must have been seeking to eliminate the victimized group as a group (Jones, 2007). The contested definition of genocide should be kept in mind during the analysis of participant responses to questions concerning genocide.

American Indian Genocide

According to historian David Stannard “[t]he destruction of the Indians of the Americas was, far and away, the most massive act of genocide in the history of the world” (1992, p. x). Though demographic estimates of the pre-Columbian Indigenous population living within the continental United States, not to speak of that in the western hemisphere, are a matter of contention, the standard view is that an approximate 95 percent of the pre-Columbian population was eliminated through degenerate warfare, the spreading of disease, forced internment, enforced starvation, genocidal massacres, and death marches such as the Cherokee Trail of Tears, among other factors. Settler-colonizer policies toward Indigenous peoples varied, as did the extent of their effects on different Indigenous groups (Totten & Bartrop, 2008). The residential schools system, aimed at annihilating American Indians as a social group through the destruction of the
Native identities of children, was enacted after the American Indian population was reduced from an estimated pre-European invasion population of 7 to 18 million to a low of 237,000 in the late nineteenth century (Jones, 2007, p. 118). A position of silence – or tacit denial – remains the position of the United States government.

The Armenian Genocide

During the period between 1915 and 1923, the Young Turk regime sought to achieve, as part of its attempt to establish a Turkish nation-state, the destruction of the Armenian people (Kevorkian, 2011). Scholars, such as Hannibal Travis, have located the Young Turks’ destruction of over one million Armenians within the context of a wider anti-Christian genocide that also targeted the Assyrians and the Anatolian and Pontian Greeks (Jones, 2007). Government policies organized both the lethal deportation and murder of the Armenian population, which took place under the shadow of the Ottoman Empire’s war efforts (Kevorkian, 20011). By way of example, during one forced march, a convoy numbering 18,000 was reduced to 150 survivors by the time it reached its destination (Jones, 2007). The Turkish government’s official stance toward the genocide continues to be denial, and Turkish lobbies have attempted to pose legal challenges to the teaching of the nascent Turkish state’s extermination of the Armenians as a genocide in American public schools (Cohan & Sleeper, 2010).

The Holocaust

The Holocaust refers to the systematic extermination of Jews, Romanies, ethnic Poles, people with disabilities, and (more controversially) other victims, such as homosexuals, of the National Socialist regime in Germany. The attempted annihilation of the Jews has become the most well-known case of genocide in history, and it is has also attracted more popular and scholarly attention than any other case. Extensive policies of racial persecution were put in place
and extended between the years of 1933-1939. Between 1941 and 1945, five to six million Jews were killed by the Nazis and their allies in Europe. Hundreds of thousands were killed in ghettos, and close to two million were executed by the Einsatzgruppen during the invasion of the Soviet Union. The concentration camp system, which included the infamous industrialized death camps and lethal labor camps, accounted for upwards of three million deaths (Jones, 2007). Ian Hancock (2004) estimates of the number of Romanies killed during the Holocaust as being between 500,000 and 1,500,000, while also noting the propensity in the Holocaust studies literature to deny or diminish what Romanies call the Porrajmos. As Peter Longerich (2012) has observed, the killings of Romani people and other groups considered racially inferior within Aryan ideology were expressions of the same racist and annihilationist attitudes held toward the Jews.

The Rwandan Genocide

Within the space of four months in 1994, over one million Tutsi and Hutu “collaborators” opposed to the Rwandan government were murdered by agents of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development, a radical Hutu Power faction, in order to consolidate Hutu control of the nation (Des Forges, 1999; Totten & Bartrop, 2008). These concentrated, highly organized, and premeditated killings – Hutu Power groups had been stockpiling machetes – resulted in the deaths of up to three-quarters of the Tutsi population (Des Forges, 1999). Factors leading to the genocide were complex, including the division and hierarchical privileging of the Tutsi and Hutu as distinct castes under Belgian and German colonialism (Tatum, 2010), a state of financial crisis due to IMF-endorsed structural adjustment programs, and international French support for Hutu extremist groups (Jones, 2007). The disastrous failure to mount an effective humanitarian response on the part of the international community despite widespread knowledge of the
severity of the crisis is now notorious. In post-genocide Rwanda, perpetrators of the genocide were – and still are – being tried at local village courts, the national court, and the UN’s International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Totten and Bartrop, 2008).

The Bosnian Genocide

In 1992, during the dissolution of Yugoslavia and open warfare, Bosnian Serbs seceded and formed the Republika Srpska, with their ultimate aim being integration with Serbia. In order to achieve these post-war aims, Bosnian Serbs began a genocidal campaign against the Bosnian Muslim population. The strategy of this campaign, which came to be called “ethnic cleansing” in Western media reports, was one in which the Bosnian Muslims were concentrated, their leaders, academics, and skilled professionals killed, the separation and expulsion of all but men of “fighting age” (16 to 60 years of age), and the execution of all remaining men (Jones, 2007). In 1995, Srebrenica saw “the greatest massacre on European soil since the Holocaust,” with the death toll reaching 8,000 (Totten & Bartop, 2008). Among other legal judgments in the wake of the genocide, the UN’s International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice have ruled the Srebrenica massacre to be a case of genocide.

The Darfur Genocide

Samuel Totten, among other genocide studies scholars, has viewed the murders of 300,000 to 400,000 Africans – in particular the Fur, Massaleit, and Zaghawa – during the counterinsurgency war in Darfur, Sudan, as “the first acknowledged genocide of the twenty-first century” (2011, p. 1). The principal agents of this genocide included government troops and the Janjaweed, an Arab militia. In September of 2004, then Secretary of State Colin Powell stated it was the position of the United States government that the government of Sudan was committing genocide. This designation has been challenged by scholars such as Mahmood Mamdani, who
contest the idea that there are distinct African and Arab groups. The intentional nature of the killings, their systematic nature, the perception on the part of the perpetrators and victims of distinct ethnic groups and the fact that these perceptions motivated the killings, however, have led to the widespread view that the actions of the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed constitute genocide (Jones, 2007).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Participants

During the research process, I conducted oral interviews with eight current secondary education Social Studies teachers located in southeastern Ohio. The contact details of potential participants were obtained through an Internet search of district and secondary school websites, and the potential participants were contacted via email. The emails I sent explained the topic of this research project, outlined the kinds of questions that would be asked during the interview, the projected time commitment the interview would require, and noted that I would accommodate the schedules of the participants. I initially contacted thirty teachers, and out of this number only four agreed to participate. Teachers cited commitments to coaching summer sports, commitments to family, or busy schedules as reasons for not participating, but the majority of those contacted who did not participate did not respond to the email I sent. Due to this, I sent the same email to ten of the teachers initially contacted who did not respond at a later date (approximately one month) and ten additional teachers. Out of these teachers contacted four agreed to participate, two of whom were teachers who did not respond to my previous email.

All participants interviewed were current public high school Social Studies teachers at the time of the interview. The teachers interviewed represent seven different school districts and seven different schools located in Athens, Lawrence and Scioto counties. Three participants taught in Athens county, two in Lawrence county, and four in Scioto county; two of the teachers in Scioto county taught at the same school. According to the 2011-12 Ohio Department of Education School Report Card for each district, the schools that participants taught at are all rural schools,
with low student and staff diversity: five of the schools were 95-100% white, with the three remaining being 91.9% and 82.4% white. Five of the seven schools had a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students than the state average of 36%, with percentages ranging from 48.3% to 66.8%. Six of the schools are classified as medium-high poverty schools. Six schools had a higher percentage of students with disability than the state average of 14%, with percentages ranging from 15.9% to 26.1%. Information that could be used to identify the participants such as the names of the participants, the name of the secondary school that employs them, and the name of their school districts are withheld. All have been assigned pseudonyms.

The eight participants are as follows:

- Ms. Avakian, a 9th grade World Studies and 9th grade English teacher. Ms. Avakian taught at a medium-high poverty school (54.2% economically disadvantaged students) rated Effective on its 2011-2012 SchoolReport Card.

- Mr. Gunnels, a 9th grade World History teacher. Mr. Gunnels also taught an elective course on the Holocaust. His school was rated Effective and medium-high poverty (48.3%).

- Mr. Holmes, a 10th grade American History and 11th and 12th grade combined Domestic Government/American Foreign Policy teacher. Mr. Holmes’ school was rated Excellent and is a medium-high poverty (55.5%) school.

- Mr. Johnson, a 9th grade Global Studies teacher. Mr. Johnson was employed at a low-poverty school (28.4%) rated as Excellent. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Withers taught at the same school.
• Mr. Meadows, a 9th grade American History (Reconstruction to the Present), 10th grade Economics and Geography, 12th grade American Government, and 9th – 12th grade combined Current Events teacher. Mr. Meadows teaches at a medium-high poverty school (56.9%) rated Effective school.

• Mr. Riddle, a 9th grade World Studies teacher. Mr. Riddle's school was ranked as a medium-high poverty (31.4%) and Excellent.

• Mr. Sanders, a 9th grade World History and Ancient World History teacher. Mr. Sanders’ school was under Continuous Improvement and had the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students (66.8%) out of all of the participants' schools.

• Ms. Withers, a 9th grade World History and 11th grade Advanced Placement Government/Politics teacher. Ms. Withers was employed at a low-poverty school (28.4%) rated as Excellent. She taught at the same school as Mr. Johnson.

Data Collection

Interviews with the participants were recorded using an audio recorder. The questions asked during the interview were designed to determine what historical events are taught as genocides in southeastern Ohio in these participants' classrooms, what methods, strategies, materials and definition(s) of genocide they used, and what moral or citizenship lessons they intended to be learned as a part of genocide education, if any. The basic interview questions, formulated in collaboration with my advisor, Dr. Doppen, are included at the end of this Master’s Research Project. (see Appendix A) Impromptu questions were asked during the interviews in order to clarify participant responses or gain additional data based on the unique responses or experiences of each. For example, additional questions were asked such as whether there was
collaboration between teachers in developing lessons or whether teachers used specific movies in the classroom to teach about genocide.

Data Analysis

Following each interview, I wrote a short summary of and reflection about the interview based on the handwritten notes taken during the interview. After the first interview, I subsequently compared the notes from the most recent interview with the notes previous interviews, during which I attempted to identify common themes as well as dissimilarities in the responses of the participants, and evaluate the effectiveness of the interview questions. Previous interviews were thus used to inform future interviews, with some questions eliminated due to them receiving redundant answers or teachers repeating the same answers for each one. Additional questions or modifications to questions intended to produce richer or more specific data were also formulated on this basis. For example, if a participant utilized films as a material in the classroom, I would not just ask which film, but also what specific educational benefits he or she identified in the film. Due to multiple teachers providing redundant answers to both questions while noting how similar the questions were, questions 8 and 9 (see Appendix A) were collapsed into a new question, “Are there moral, social, or citizenship lessons that you think students should learn from genocide education?”

Participant responses to interview questions were coded through the identification of recurring keywords, common themes, similarities and differences across multiple interviews. Some questions tended to yield responses that could be coded in a straightforward and objective manner, such as the fourth question listed in Appendix A, “Do you use the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide or the Rome Statute of the International Criminal
Court as a basis for the definition(s) you use?” Answers to this question could be easily categorized into a yes/no format without losing any elements of the participants’ responses. For other questions this was not the case, such as in the case of question 8, “Are there moral lessons you think students should learn from genocide education?” Responses to this question did share similar themes, but differences in them merit a fuller discussion of individual responses. The results of this analysis will be discussed in the Chapter Four.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the findings from eight public high school Social Studies teachers from oral interviews outlining their perspectives on genocide education. The findings have been grouped into categories: how participants define genocide, how genocides are taught, what teaching materials and strategies are used, whether issues of genocide denial and/or prevention are incorporated into the classroom, whether participants intend to deliver moral and/or citizenship lessons when teaching about genocides, and what difficulties participants have encountered when teaching the subject.

How is genocide defined?

The definitions of genocide participants utilize in their classrooms merit description and discussion. The definitions of genocide participants offered are as follows:

- “The killing off of an ethnic group or the attempted killing off of an ethnic group, religious group” (Ms. Avakian).
- “Trying to get rid of an entire group of people” (Mr. Gunnels).
- “The systematic destruction or attempted elimination of an ethnic group or a race of people” (Mr. Holmes).
- "An attempt to eliminate a certain race or ethnic group within a country or within a geographic area . . . most of the time it seems like it happens within a country where a dominant group is trying to get rid of more of a minority group . . . usually [the] mass killing of a people” (Mr. Johnson).
• “In my own words, I would define it as the murder of a large number of people all sharing the same ethnic or racial or maybe religious background, and being murdered for that purpose” (Mr. Meadows).

• “The systematic killing of an ethnic or any one certain group. It can be any given group that a ruler or tyrannical leader is trying to take out” (Mr. Riddle).

• “A large-scale elimination of a certain group of people, whether it's a religious group, an ethnic group, a minority group, something like that, where it's basically homicide on a massive, large-scale level” (Mr. Sanders).

• “Targeting specific groups of people and trying to get rid of them” (Ms. Withers).

There are notable similarities in these definitions. First, the participants highlight the eliminative nature of genocide, where one group is attempting to annihilate the other group. Only one participant, Mr. Meadows, did not include this as part of his definition of genocide. In highlighting this feature of genocide, participants drew a distinction (or the basis of a distinction) between mass killing and genocide, framing genocide as mass killing with an eliminative purpose. Another feature these definitions share is their emphasis on physical violence against groups targeted for elimination, in particular mass killing. This element of the participants’ definitions was used as an explicit basis of discrimination in deciding whether or not events qualified as genocides. One participant, Ms. Avakian, when describing why she did not think the treatment of American Indians by the United States government was a genocide, stated that she believed this situation was better described as “assimilation” and that she “think[s] genocide is more the killing off of a group,” which she does not believe occurred.

This emphasis on mass killing does not reflect the definition of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which lists killing as one of five
methods of genocidal violence against groups. This emphasis also does not reflect the longstanding discussion in the Genocide Studies literature regarding the idea of cultural genocide, in which the cultural institutions and practices of a group are targeted in order to eliminate them as a group. This could be due to the lack of reference participants made to the UN Convention. In response to the question, “Do you use the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide or the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a basis for the definition(s) you use?,” only one teacher answered in the affirmative, and this response was qualified, with Ms. Avakian answering, “Not really. We do talk about the UN Convention briefly.” Ms. Withers stated that she “used to do more” with the UN Convention, but that she no longer uses its activities with students due to the pressure to teach the standards. One participant, Mr. Johnson, clarified that he was unaware there was such a convention.

What genocides are taught?

The Holocaust was the sole genocide taught by all eight participants as a genocide. This result is unsurprising, considering the prominence that the Holocaust has achieved in American life and media (Novick, 1999). During the research process, it became apparent that the participants might operate with differing definitions of the Holocaust. In addition, the definition of the Holocaust is a point of contention in Holocaust studies (Rosenbaum, 2008). After four interviews, I formulated the following question to ask participants: “Who were the victims of the Holocaust?” This additional question was posed to four participants. Out of this number, three participants identified the Roma as victims of the Holocaust. One participant identified, along with the Roma, people with disabilities, people of African descent, and dissenters from the Nazi regime. Only one participant identified Jews as the sole victims of the Holocaust, Mr. Meadows, who stated that the Holocaust was “aimed at one group of people. The victims were obviously
the Jewish people, and I know that there were others besides Jewish people [who were killed], but based on what my understanding of a genocide is, I would say Jewish people were the victims of it.”

The following table presents the data on what historical events were taught as genocides in the participants’ classrooms, with the entries arranged in order from the most often taught to the least often taught.

Table 1. Genocide taught

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genocide</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Holocaust</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwandan Genocide</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genocide in Darfur</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Genocide</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnian Genocide</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian Genocide</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For comparative purposes, the following table lists the responses of teachers to the question of what events they personally consider to be genocides, with those most often thought to be genocides listed first:
Table 2. Teacher perspectives on whether historical event constitutes genocide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Event</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Holocaust</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Genocide</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genocide in Darfur</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwandan Genocide</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnian Genocide</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian Genocide</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this data one can see that there is no case of genocide other than that of American Indians which was the subject of genocide denial. The high rate of denial is also striking. This phenomena merits extended discussion. Participants offered various reasons for their decision not to view this event as a genocide. Mr. Sanders stated such a classification was an “interpretation” which he could understand, but disagreed with, as in the case of Spain’s actions, “I think of the Spanish more as an early form of colonialism. They're looking for gold, convert them [Indigenous peoples] to Christianity. Do they think the Natives are inferior? Sure. But I think it's more of an economic relationship where they're going to turn them into slave labor, rob them. I don't think it was just because they were Native Americans, so to speak.” In the North American case, he noted that “we all know they were exploited and forced off their land. I don't teach that and I don't think I would use that term.” Mr. Johnson identified stated that the violence was “back-and-forth,” that “more were killed by diseases,” that most deaths were “unintentional,” and that what violence did occur was “what they [European colonizers] thought was survival, concluding that “I don't think that's in the same scope of what we've been talking
about [referring to genocide].” Mr. Meadows and Mr. Gunnels admitted that it was possible there were small-scale massacres that were genocidal but, in Mr. Meadow’s words, “I feel that the importance to the settlers, their goal was not to kill all the Indians, they were looking at land possession, how to maneuver to get more land and get more areas to settle and more safety with the settlers, and not having the goal of killing them because they were Indians.” It should be noted that although Mr. Gunnels does not believe policies of the United States toward American Indians were genocide, he does list it as a possible genocide that students can conduct an independent research project on in his Holocaust elective course.

This process of denial is analogous to the nationalistic denial of the Armenian and Kurdish genocides in Turkey and other genocides of Indigenous peoples during the founding of settler nation-states. That this genocide is denied is in line with academic literature suggesting that genocide denial is often a nationalistic process, which manifests in the American case as denial of the genocide that America is built upon, a prospect which radically calls into question the legitimacy of the United States and the residency of its non-Indigenous inhabitants (Stannard, 1992; Veracini, 2010; Waziyatawin, 2008).

In addition to the six genocides this research project focuses on, some participants mentioned other genocides that are taught about in their classrooms. Two participants teach about the Cambodian genocide, two teach about the genocide of the Kurds in Iraq (Anfal), and one teaches about the Belgian enslavement and slaughter of the Indigenous Congolese under King Leopold II as a genocide.

One of the most common reasons teachers gave for not teaching a certain genocide was a lack of available instructional time. Mr. Riddle, Mr. Sanders, and Ms. Withers cited the need to devote time to meeting state standards as the reason why they excluded certain genocides. The
lack of requisite content knowledge to teach about a certain genocide was another prominent reason. Mr. Gunnels cited this as the reason he did not teach about the Bosnian genocide, while Mr. Meadows did the same with respect to the Rwandan genocide and the genocide in Darfur. Mr Holmes does not teach about the Armenian genocide for the same reason. Ms. Avakian stated that the reason she does not teach about genocides other than the Holocaust and Rwanda might be that “this is my second year teaching this particular course [9th grade World Studies], and maybe that's why I don't teach those.”

How are genocides taught?

There is an important qualification that must be made to the data described above. The amount of instructional time devoted to genocides other than the Holocaust, if taught, is far less than the amount of instructional time spent on the Holocaust. Mr. Meadows ascribed his own comparative emphasis on the Holocaust as being due to that “as far as teaching what the state wants me to teach, some are more prominent. That [the Holocaust] is taught more than any of the other genocides.” No participant spent significant instructional time on the Bosnian genocide, the genocide in Darfur, or the genocide(s) of Indigenous peoples in the Americas. Only one teacher, Mr. Gunnels, spent an entire class period on the Armenian genocide. When used, with one notable exception to be discussed later, these genocides are used by the teachers interviewed to either stimulate student interest or as additional examples of genocide to present to the students during direct instruction about the Holocaust. For example, Mr. Gunnels stated that besides their unit on the Holocaust, “with my freshmen, it's a real basic talk about Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur, just in basic terms since we don't have time to go into everything.” Mr. Kasler stated that he mentions other genocides in a brief manner during direct instruction in
order to impress upon students that genocides occurred after the Holocaust and continue to occur in the present.

Ms. Withers noted that Darfur was “talked about a little bit” in her class, and that the genocide of American Indians is talked about as well, but not as an explicit genocide: “I don't tell them one way or another. But I ask them, it approaches that, doesn't it?” This year she had students read an article about Abraham Lincoln’s role in the Mankato hangings of Dakota warriors, which led to her asking them, “Was that genocide? I didn't say ‘yes’ it was or ‘no’ it wasn't, but I opened up their eyes to it.”

The Rwandan genocide has more instructional devoted to it than other genocides, but still less time than the Holocaust. Ms. Avakian uses direct instruction with a PowerPoint about the Rwandan genocide, noting that some slides had pictures of Hutus and Tutsis that the students analyzed in order to help them understand that within the colonial regime, “one looked more European, and that's why they were more dominant.” During the same lecture, she shows clips from the film Hotel Rwanda (2004) that “sums-up everything we've covered” and “opens it up to deeper discussion.”

A significant amount of instructional time is devoted to other genocides in Mr. Gunnels’ Holocaust elective classroom. Instruction in the class is project-based, and one of the projects is meant to introduce students to a broad array of genocides. In beginning the project, students select an event that can be viewed as genocide from a list Mr. Gunnels has prepared, including the Armenian genocide, the treatment of American Indians by European colonizers, the Rwandan genocide, the Bosnian genocide, the Cambodian genocide, the genocide in Darfur, the genocide of the Kurds in Iraq, and Stalin’s purges. Students then independently research their topic, analyzing and classifying their selected genocide with a framework developed by the
organization Genocide Watch, which claims genocide has eight distinct and recognizable stages. Students attempt to situate their genocide on this spectrum.

In introducing the idea of genocide, two participants described similar approaches. Mr. Sanders, noting that around two-thirds of his students are normally unfamiliar with the term, said that he would “start with something [students are] familiar with. When I introduce the word to the freshman, I talk about how they know what the word suicide means, what the word homicide means.” Mr. Gunnels also noted that students are usually unfamiliar with the word, and that he tries to “talk to them about other words that end in -cide, like homicide, suicide, pesticide. And they start understanding, like, pesticide we use to get rid of insects, I know what suicide means, I know what homicide means. But with genocide, I try to attach, even if it's not the exact definition, think of generation-cide. They're trying to get rid of an entire group of people. With the freshmen that seems like a good way to do it. Then you go into looking at that they're doing it based a person's culture, their religion, their ethnicity, their race, trying to exterminate an entire group of people.” Associating the word genocide with words such as homicide or suicide can lead to an understanding of genocide as a process characterized by killings (as opposed to elimination through more a more diverse set of means on the part of students and the participants, as evidenced in their definitions of genocide described above.

What materials and strategies are used?

The use of films to teach about genocide was a common practice among the participants in this research project. Six participants show feature films or television programs, in whole or in part, while teaching about genocide. The following chart displays what participants use which films as instructional materials, listed in order from the most used to the least used:
One of the main justifications or strengths teachers offered for using films to teach about genocide was that films enhanced student understanding. Mr. Johnson’s response was typical: “It helps a lot when you can put a face, and the music, and the whole presentation that they can do with videos. It is a lot more effective than just reading a number in a textbook that half-a-million Armenians were killed by the Turks. Half-a-million doesn't mean anything to [students] until you see lines of people in graves and stuff like that.” According to Mr. Riddle, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* “gives [students] a video to look at and see what it looks like in the camps . . . it allows students to see how really horrible the conditions were.” About *Memories of the Camps*, Ms. Withers said that “pictures are worth a thousand words. We've read about, we've thought about it, but to see pictures of the aftermath clinches in their heads the reality.” She made similar comments about *Sometimes in April*, a docudrama about the Rwandan genocide.
Mr. Holmes highlighted the effectiveness of using *Hotel Rwanda*, saying that “it's pretty amazing to [students] when they watch that story . . . It’s a good depiction of the human cost of genocide.” These responses indicate that these participants are concerned that students cannot understand or have difficulty understanding the horrific nature and extent of genocide without a visual representation, and that films (whether documentaries, like *Memories of the Camps*, or fictional features, like *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*) are able to provide images conducive to student learning.

Participants gave additional reasons for using movies in the classroom. Ms. Avakian said she used clips from *Hotel Rwanda* during a PowerPoint presentation on the Rwandan genocide to “sum-up everything we’ve covered,” and that the film “opens [the topic] up to deeper discussion” among the students. Mr. Holmes, in showing the film *Night and Fog*, is attempting to have students “emotionally connect” with the topic, and thinks that the film “shows a lot of things that just blows [students] away, like the fabric made from Jewish hair, and it shows lots of dead bodies, the bulldozers cleaning up the camps at the end.” He noted that this approach has lost some of its effectiveness in recent years due to the ever-increasing popularity of violent media: “Kids are so desensitized to violence that they don't even bat an eye at that stuff [that happened during the Holocaust]. It doesn't have the profound effect it had even ten years ago.”

Mr. Gunnels shows entire films as warm-ups for projects or to tie up loose ends on specific topics; for example, Mr. Gunnels shows *The Pianist* following a project during which students research linkages between music and the Holocaust. Comprehension is checked through the assignment of a generic note-sheet on the plot of the film being shown, how the Holocaust figured in the film, and with basic quizzes on the movie “to make sure they’re paying attention.” Participants did not describe difficulties in selecting or showing films except for Mr. Johnson,
who noted that one had to exercise caution and prepare students due to the fact that the violent nature of visual depictions of genocide might disturb some students.

Three teachers integrate Elie Wiesel’s *Night* (2006) into their classroom instruction on the Holocaust. Ms. Avakian teaches both 9th grade English and 9th grade Social Studies; students read *Night* in her English class, and instruction in her Social Studies class refers back to the book. In her accelerated section of the class, students read the books independently, then read parts together in class and discuss them. With her general education section, students read the book together in class and are assigned re-reading sections at home. Students answer guided questions and look for themes while reading. Mr. Holmes, as part of a combined English and History block, reads *Night* with his students.

Mr. Holmes also utilizes the *Confronting Genocide: Never Again?* materials from the Choices Program. He described these resources as “excellent,” and utilizes both the teacher resource book and student workbook. In addition to this, Mr. Holmes uses a self-created study guide based on the classroom textbook.

Mr. Riddle uses hand-outs of concentration camp layouts that he received as part of a course on the Holocaust he took during his teacher preparation program which he feels provide students with a “hands-on” experience that aids them in understanding the experiences of internees. Mr. Riddle also integrates stories of family members as “primary sources” – his brother-in-law was part of the United Nations intervention forces in Bosnia, and his nephews were participants in the Gulf War. He describes their experiences while lecturing about, respectively, the Bosnian genocide and the genocide of Kurds in Iraq.

As an example of her classroom instruction methods and materials, Ms. Withers described how, on the last Holocaust Remembrance Day, the website *This I Believe*
(www.thisibelieve.org), published an essay with the theme “I believe in standing up for the small things,” which according to Ms. Withers “goes back to that whole idea that you have to pick when you stand up and do something.” The students read the essay, discussed it in class, and then used it as a basis for the following essay prompt: “When have you seen an example of someone doing something courageous or heroic? Or when have you seen the opposite, where someone should have stood up but didn't stand up?”

Surprisingly, only one participant, Ms. Avakian, explicitly described creating PowerPoint presentations to supplement lectures. She created a PowerPoint presentation with both factual information, videos (excerpts from Hotel Rwanda), and pictures. Some of the pictures on the PowerPoint document are of Hutus and Tutsis, and during the presentation students are asked to “analyze” the facial features to see how one group appeared more European, which was “why they were more dominant” during and following colonization.

As discussed above, Mr. Gunnels makes extensive use of films in his Holocaust elective course. In the same class, students read Anne Frank’s diary for a book project. Mr. Gunnels cited his visits to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as an important factor in shaping how he views and teaches the Holocaust; one resource he uses a great deal is one of their publications, a book titled The World Must Know (Berenbaum, 2005), which he described as “basically their museum in book form. That's where I've gotten a lot of my ideas from.”

Two participants, Mr. Meadows and Mr. Sanders, utilize no genocide-specific teaching materials, with Mr. Meadows noting he does not use materials outside of the classroom textbook. Both described their teaching strategies as direct instruction methods, in particular lecture.
What about genocide denial?

During the interviews, the topic of genocide denial was a significant theme. Before conducting interviews I hypothesized genocide denial would have been exclusively or predominately in the context of Holocaust denial, which was affirmed in my findings. Seven of the eight participating teachers instructed their students about genocide denial, and six of them addressed genocide denial through the lens of Holocaust denial. Mr. Meadows was the only teacher who did not teach about genocide denial.

Ms. Withers incorporates education about Holocaust denial into her classroom through a one-to-two day web literacy lesson. In this lesson, students evaluate the Northwestern University website of Arthur Butz, a notorious Holocaust denier. The goal of this lesson, Ms. Withers stated, was to help students understand that “if you're not informed and understand your history, then you could fall into this [Holocaust denial].” Mr. Riddle teaches about Holocaust denial for similar reasons, saying that instruction about denial is part of teaching them that “you have to be an educated citizen to make informed decisions.” He also remarked that “most of the students, after seeing the films, maps, and everything like that, they think how could anyone deny that? We have proof.”

Mr. Sanders stated that he “bring[s] up on multiple occasions during the year the fact that Iran's president . . . has been quoted as saying the Holocaust is a hoax.” The linking of Holocaust denial with Iran, and more specifically previous (but current at the time of the interviews) President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was mentioned multiple times as a classroom practice during interviews. Mr. Gunnels also uses Ahmadinejad as an example of Holocaust denial with his students. In his freshman class, Mr. Gunnels takes a proactive approach to teaching about Holocaust denial, one intended to protect students from materials they might encounter outside
of the classroom that deny the Holocaust: “I bring that up. I tell them there are people out there who will tell you everything I just told you was a myth . . . I bring it up in order to try to warn them. I know there will be some who are moved or it sparks an interest and they do their own research on the Internet. I don't want them to get confused if they find stuff that contradicts what I tell them.” In his Holocaust elective course, Mr. Gunnels has shown videos from YouTube intended to convince viewers that the Holocaust was a myth. These videos are used as the basis of an activity in which students deconstruct and critically analyze the videos. Mr. Holmes was more forceful in his denunciation of Iran, extending his criticism to all Iranians (despite that many Iranians, including elected officials, denounce Ahmadinejad’s Holocaust denial): “I don't mince a whole lot of words with my feelings toward Iran. I just think they're absolutely idiots. And to talk about how they deny the Holocaust and bring in ‘academics’ to try to prove it's a Western scheme to try to give the Zionists a reason to take Palestinian land, it's ridiculous. The kids kind of realize how stupid it is after they've seen all the film and read.”

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Holmes take another approach to teaching about Holocaust denial, stating that the Allied forces made those living near the extermination camps and those who worked in them observe the horrors of the camps and dispose of the bodies. The teachers claim (and frame it in this manner for their students) that this was done in order to “made them see it first-hand so they couldn't deny it” (Mr. Johnson), because “we didn't want anyone to be able to deny that it happened” (Mr. Holmes).

Ms. Avakian is the sole teacher who does not teach about genocide denial in connection to the Holocaust. She teaches about genocide denial when she teaches about the Rwandan genocide positioning genocide denial and the lack of foreign intervention to end the Rwandan genocide alongside each other: “A lot of people denied it was going on. You see that even with
how the United States intervened—or didn't intervene.” Alongside teaching about Holocaust denial, Mr. Johnson describes to his students how the Turkish government denies the Armenian genocide.

What about genocide prevention?

Genocide prevention education, understood as education that equips students to detect and work against the commission of the crime of genocide in the world, was not a topic the participants addressed in their classrooms to a significant extent. Only three participants responded in the positive to the question of whether genocide prevention was taught in their classroom. Ms. Avakian teaches about genocide prevention when she reads Elie Wiesel’s autobiographical Night (2006) with her students, letting them know that ending genocide was “why Elie Wiesel wrote the book.” Noting America’s historical lack of response to genocides in the classroom was, according to Mr. Holmes, the extent to which he addressed the topic. These approaches diverge from the definition of genocide prevention education given above.

Mr. Gunnels was the sole teacher to spend significant time on the question, but the exact amount of time that is spent on it is determined by the interests of the students in his Holocaust elective course. One class of students in particular was “really bothered by the idea of genocide and really wanted to do something [about it],” so he decided that was “ultimately what I wanted that class to be about.” Upon learning about ongoing genocides and their extent, students began to ask questions such as “Why don't we do anything about this? Why didn't we do anything about the Holocaust? Why don't we do anything about Darfur? You don't see it on CNN or FOX News. It's a hidden topic.” Students thus wanted to raise awareness to “make something else happen down the road,” saying that “what happens somewhere else affects us.” Students held a genocide awareness day, made t-shirts, and made a video interviewing students and teachers about their
understanding of genocide and the need to work to end it. In the classroom, a station was created where kids could watch the video, and other stations were set up for learning about different genocides that had occurred or were occurring at the time. Mr. Gunnels expressed how proud he was of these students and how he hoped for all of his students that “down the road a student will join the Peace Corp or the government and do something on a larger scale. . . . Hopefully down the road they will try to behave differently and make a difference in the world in general and their community.”

Are there moral or citizenship lessons?

All participants linked their genocide education efforts to moral or citizenship lessons in some form. The three most common moral or citizenship lessons participating teachers identified as goals of theirs were what I will call the “never again” or “be vigilant” approach and the anti-bullying approach. In most cases, participants did not describe taking one single approach, but multiple approaches. Only one teacher did not identify communicating moral or citizenship lessons to students as an important part of genocide education. Ms. Avakian said that as far as moral questions coming up in the classroom, there was “nothing specific, but, you know, everybody has the right to life, and we focus on that. But I don't generally make that a general scheme as we study [genocide].” No participant thought addressing moral or citizenship questions in the classroom was inappropriate.

“Never again” or “be vigilant” approaches characterize learning about genocide as important in preventing future genocides. By learning about the evils of genocide, students will be equipped to work against future genocides or other forms of violence and discrimination. This approach was by far the most common, with five participants making statements that could be characterized with these labels. Mr. Riddle, for example, strongly represented a “never again”
mentality when he said that “the more [students] learn about genocide, the more informed they are, the more their eyes are opened, I think, that they can try to stop and make sure things don't happen that happened before in history.” Mr. Riddle also instructs students to be vigilant even regarding the government:

I try to stress to the students that they need to keep their eyes open and be involved in government so the government is not taking rights away from any group . . . and make sure things are right, and if not, do something about it.

Mr. Gunnels responded that learning about genocide is important for students because it teaches them about “the good side of humanity and the dark side, because history does repeat itself, and if we can learn from events like the Holocaust, the Armenian massacre, and Cambodia, maybe fifty years from now there won't be events like this.”

Mr. Holmes said that when teaching about genocides other than the Holocaust,

I mention those and explain the situation in those primarily to drive home the point that humanity has not learned from the horribleness of the Second World War. There's still evil in the world, we still have to be vigilant as a human race to try to stamp out genocide whenever it crops up.”

Mr. Holmes stated that teaching about the [Holocaust/genocide] “served as an alarming experience for the world that we should never allow that sort of vicious rhetoric to ever happen again and what it could lead to.” Ms. Withers’ focus is on a “never again” approach, but it is more broad, stressing the importance of the student as a citizen in a democratic state, a point she emphasizes throughout the year:

I think the whole year is centered around the idea that we live in a fragile democracy, and if people are ignorant then they're corruptible. Your first duty is to make sure you're
informed, and your second duty is to make sure you're able to act on the information
given. Democracy is about active participation and when you choose not to act, then you
may become complicit in something that's not good.

Mr. Meadows follows the same approach, emphasizing how “an understanding of past mistakes
and an understanding of the way evil has manifested itself in people through time” is the most
important moral lesson genocide can offer students.

Mr. Sanders and Mr. Johnson took an anti-bullying approach. Though her thesis has not
found strong support in the field of Genocide Studies, the popular lecturer Barbara Coloroso
(2007) has advanced and popularized the argument that genocide is a form (albeit the most
severe one in a continuum) of bullying. Mr. Sanders sees the comparison of bullying to genocide
as a positive and helpful method to help eliminate bullying:

Genocide, no matter how you cut it, is basically just picking on a minority or singling out
someone because they're a little bit different, whether that's religion, ethnicity, skin color,
whatever. I think that's an excellent connection to make, as we all know bullying is a big
problem in schools.

Mr. Johnson saw the main difference between genocide and bullying being mass murder:
“Bullying these days is a big topic, and how it's [genocide] really not that much different, I
mean, other than the mass murdering part, but as far as discriminating against people and acting
against them in some way.”

Individual teachers expressed support for other approaches when connecting ideas about
morality to genocide. Mr. Holmes characterized his own views on teaching the Holocaust as part
of his view that “the Second World War was a struggle [between] good and evil. I know that's an
ethnocentric way of looking at it, but the Germans and Japanese were pretty evil people in terms
of what they did to other people.” Mr. Meadows emphasized the importance of communicating the wrongness of murder and prejudice to students, as well as how important it is to stand up in situations where others are being harmed. Mr. Gunnels teaches a lesson in which students learn about the voyage of St. Louis, prompting students to think about what they would do in the same situation: “We are world citizens, we have groups being persecuted. What could we do about these things? A lot of the kids think about that, and think we should help each other out. We're all in this together at the end of the day.”

What difficulties are encountered?

Two participants (Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gunnels) stated that they had encountered no difficulties when teaching about genocide. It is notable that Mr. Gunnels has had no difficulties due to his Holocaust elective class; when asked why he thought he did not encounter difficulties, he said he believed his lack of problems was due to his comfort with the content knowledge and his prepping of students during the first class sessions about appropriate behavior and attitudes when learning about such a challenging and serious topic.

The most common problem, one that three participants noted, was answering questions from students about the causes of genocide, specifically how or why a group of people would be so brutal or violent toward another group. Mr. Meadows stated that his students had difficulty “trying to comprehend why one group would hate another group so much that they would be willing to kill them all,” and that it was difficult to explain these ideas to freshmen. When asked what strategies he used to help students understand why this would occur, Mr. Meadows said that he tried

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2 Of course, “the Germans” or “the Japanese” were and are not monoliths (as this language constructs them), nor did all citizens of these countries support the commission of genocide and other war crimes. It is worth noting as well that the Allied forces were responsible for their own war crimes, including the use of nuclear weapons and “strategic” bombing, which some scholars have argued are tantamount to genocide (Markusen and Kopf, 1995).
put it [the Holocaust] in the context of history. With that specific example, talking about
Hitler's blaming the Jewish people, in his mind, for the failures of Germany during and
after the first World War . . . trying to explain a little bit about, a lot of times in history
Jewish people have been the scapegoat that hatred was channeled to.

Ms. Avakian encounters the same problem, attributing it to the lack of ethnic diversity in the
school community and thus a lack of understanding on the part of the students with ethnic
conflict. She described the explanation she gives students in these words: “They [the Nazis]
thought they were superior, but that doesn't mean that's okay to do. That's pretty much it, I
haven't really found a clear-cut answer on how to handle that [question].” In another part of the
interview, however, Ms. Avakian described another approach she takes which she views as more
effective:

[Students] need to know what's happened, that this is possible. They think, well, I'm from
this little town, how could this happen? Well, look at how people from Athens [Ohio]
treat you. Oh, okay. You're not an ethnic group, but you're a community from a certain
area and you're looked down upon. Picture that you guys are one ethnic group and this
other group is another ethnic group, and one wants to take over the other or annihilate the
other. That really puts it in perspective for them, and it helps you not to ill-treat those
people.

Ms. Withers placed this problem in another context, noting that one of her main goals was
confronting a prevalent attitude among her students that “there's nothing in me that would allow
that to happen” resulting as a consequence of not understanding the paths that lead groups to
genocidal violence against others.
Anti-Semitism was a problem encountered by two participants in the classroom. Mr. Sanders, for example, described how freshmen students were often “immature” and “they think [calling someone a Jew] is funny if they see it on South Park.” Mr. Sanders uses these instances as “teaching moments” to educate students about racism. Mr. Holmes described the same problem, stating it occurred once or twice every five years, and that he “question[s] them on it and lecture[s] them on it, usually in front of other kids . . . We don't tolerate hate speech or emblems at our school.” Mr. Holmes links anti-Semitic speech to the Holocaust, noting that one of the questions he directs toward the offending student in these instances is, “Do you understand the ramifications of that and what happened to those people?”

Genocide denial, related to anti-Semitism, was a problem Mr. Riddle had encountered: “I had one student into conspiracy theories, and he had heard about how some people denied [the Holocaust]. So he wanted to question whether this one really happened or that one really happened.” In responding to the student, Mr. Riddle took a facts-based approach prove that the Holocaust occurred: “But all I did was lay out the facts. Here's proof.” Mr. Riddle also noted how it was fortuitous that the year he had this student in the classroom, the Holocaust survivor Irene Weisberg Zisblatt visited and spoke to the school.

Mr. Sanders identified an additional problem: “You want to make it real to the kids without making it too graphic or inappropriate. You want to walk that line and make sure you're not bothering kids with what you choose to show in class.” Mr. Sanders was the only teacher to note this as a problem in response to the question about difficulties encountered in the classroom when teaching about genocide, but Mr. Johnson also spoke about how it was important to “caution the kids of what they may be seeing in the video, some things may be disturbing and not all kids handle that well” in connection to film he used. Mr. Johnson cited a specific incident in
which a simulation of how the hands of Congolese child laborers were cut off during the period of Belgian colonialism was disturbing to some students.

Conclusion

This chapter presented and assessed the responses of eight participant teachers to questions intended to provide insight into their perspectives on genocide education and, to a limited extent, their practice. These findings will provide the basis for the discussion of this study’s implications for future research and recommendations for teacher preparation programs in the fifth and concluding chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter, I will draw out the implications of this research project for future studies and outline recommendations for teacher preparation and professional development programs, as well as classroom practice, based on the reviewed literature and findings. During the course of these discussions, readers should keep in mind the limitations of this project outlined in Chapter One, perhaps chief among which is the lack of direct observation of the participants’ classroom practices.

The literature and project findings suggest a number of difficulties that confront genocide education. First, in line with the findings of Russell (2006) in a British context, there was no coherent approach to teaching about genocides among the teachers I interviewed, in part due to the varied strength of content knowledge about genocides between participants. These findings were also similar to Russell’s in that most participants expressed approaches that imbue genocides with moral or civil significance, including the fostering of tolerance as a positive value, a goal described multiple times in the literature. The encouragement of moral reflection among students was a common pedagogical approach, one that Glanz (1999) recommends.

Films were often used in the participants’ classrooms as instructional materials. However, the justifications participants gave for using films were often more pragmatic than those offered in the literature, such as favoring fictional films thought to better engage student attention. The use of digital media outside of films and PowerPoint
materials was limited, with one teacher designing a web literacy lesson centering around Holocaust denial.

Pettigrew’s (2010) observation that a lack of content knowledge about genocides has a negative impact on teaching these topics bears on these findings, especially her observation that this lack of knowledge leads to teachers presenting narratives of the Holocaust that claim racism was the principal cause of the Holocaust, positioning genocidal violence motivated by racial animus as “a dramatic example of an always extant danger, intrinsic in human nature. Inadequate attention is drawn to the specific social, political and economic circumstances in which that danger has been historically realized” (p. 53).

Confronting genocide: Never again?, published by The Choices Project (2010), was the sole curriculum product utilized among this research project’s participants, and it was used by only one participant. This was surprising considering the number of accessible online resources offered, including and beyond those reviewed in Chapter Two. Approaches to instruction varied, with some participants making use of traditional, textbook- and/or lecture-based direct instruction and others making more extensive use of creative projects, document analysis, and other non-traditional approaches.

To this researcher's knowledge, the academic literature does not include discussions about the prevalence of genocide denial among teachers. It was notable that the participants in this research project denied no instance of genocide except the one(s) European settlers and the United States government have committed against American Indian nations. This is even more concerning due to the fact that American Indian genocide denial was expressed by six of the eight participants. This is at odds with the
broad consensus in the field of Genocide Studies, which acknowledges that genocidal massacres and processes occurred during or were integral to European invasion, settlement, and state formation, and with the historical and lived experiences of American Indian peoples (for example, see Cave, 2011; Jones, 2010; Kiernan, 2007; Lindsay, 2012; Mann, 2005; Smith, 2005; Stannard, 1992; Waziyatawin, 2008).

Implications for future research

The limitations and findings of this research project present new avenues (or holes to fill!) for future research:

- There is a need for more in-depth interviews with teachers about their perspectives on genocide education. The average interview length of 30 minutes for each participant in this study proved insufficient to treat the complex of issues this study attempted to address. For example, important information about normal classroom practice of the participants, details about their educational and social background, and questions intended to allow researchers an understanding of the content knowledge strength of participants about genocides were unasked due to interview time constraints. Russell’s (2006) more extended interview process would be a strong model to follow.

- There is a need for research that answers the question of how teachers approach genocide education in the classroom. An interview-based approach such as the one this research project pursued does not necessarily provide knowledge about teachers’ actual classroom practice. In light of this, there is a need for either direct observations of teachers or thick ‘debriefings’ of teachers at times closely following their teaching.
• There is a need for research that provides a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the focus on Holocaust education in genocide education. All study participants, except for the Indigenous peoples in the Americas, affirmed that the historical cases I utilized were genocides. Multiple teachers indicated that they believed other historical events were genocides. Participants also often indicated that no genocide was worse or more morally significant than any other. Due to these factors, it must be asked why (among these participants and in general) the Holocaust is the genocide most often taught about and often the only genocide taught about in significant depth.

• The role teacher attitudes and biases play in the production of knowledge about genocide merits examination. During interviews, some participants made statements that indicated stereotypical and racialized constructions of social processes or mass violence, especially in regards to Africa and the Middle East. Biases also prima facie appear to have a role in teachers’ denial that American Indians suffer(ed) a genocide at the hands of European settlers. Research that uncovers how cultural biases, nationalism, political outlook, attitudinal factors, or structural factors (i.e., settler colonialism) impacts genocide instruction would be useful in understanding these dynamics. Additional research that establishes whether there are trends in teachers' genocide denial and the reasons motivating their denial could provide a basis for programs to combat genocide denial.

Recommendations

• Teacher preparation programs should provide a stronger content knowledge base about genocides to Social Studies teacher candidates. As Pettigrew (2010) has
demonstrated, many problems with teacher instruction are able to be attributed to a lack of content knowledge about genocides. A number of participants made statements that were either not factual (such as placing Sudan in southern Africa) or, as Pettigrew discusses, oversimplified to the point of being distorted. Stronger content knowledge would also address difficulties participants described in the classroom, such as answering student questions about the causes of genocide. Being able to explore social, economic, political and other dynamics leading to genocide would provide more accurate and satisfactory answers to students than attributing genocide to racism or analogies to bullying. Teacher preparation programs and—for inservice teachers—professional development programs should provide more opportunities to gain more nuanced and detailed understandings of these important events.

- Genocide education should, in teacher preparation and professional development programs as well as the classroom, shift from Holocaust education toward more inclusive approaches. As detailed in Chapter Four, teachers spent far less instructional time on genocides other than the Holocaust, and the Holocaust was the most common genocide to teach. This focus on the Holocaust does not stem from the Ohio Learning Standards for Social Studies alone. These standards also call for the teaching of the Armenian Genocide, but only four participants teach about this genocide. This practice is out of step with the attitudes of the teachers surveyed toward the importance of other genocides and the field of Genocide Studies, which has moved away from approaches that exceptionalize the Holocaust (for example, see Jones, 2010). In addition, multiple participants noted that student curiosity was
piqued when more recent (and unfamiliar) genocides were brought up in the classroom.

Adopting a more inclusive approach to genocide education would also help discourage genocide denial among teachers. For example, if denial of American Indian genocide(s) is as common a form of denial among regional (or American) teachers as it proved to be among this project's participants, programs ought to address this problem.

- Programs (and teachers) should integrate genocide prevention into their curricula. Though variants of the “never again” moral impulse were common among teachers, few included explicit material about genocide prevention in their teaching, and none included it in a regular or focused manner. In order to work against or prevent genocides, teachers and students require (a) accurate understandings of the processes that result in genocide, (b) concrete and evidence-based strategies to recognize and combat genocide, and (c) a recognition of the limitations of activism from one’s own standpoint. Helping students understand that genocide is an unjust state of affairs and that it should not occur must not be the standard for genocide prevention education; moral convictions divorced from action do not impact conflicts.

- Teachers should be familiarized with the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and other relevant international law, such as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Though the definition of genocide is a site of contention, this would enable teachers to have more precise and accurate definitions of genocide than the ones participants gave. Students would also benefit from being made aware of the relevant international law. For example, genocide trials
are now more common, and convictions appear to be increasingly successful. Background knowledge would better enable students to understand current events.

- **Teachers should exercise care in choosing materials and teaching strategies when teaching about genocide.** As discussed in Chapter Two, ethical questions about the appropriateness, authenticity, or offensiveness of materials is an issue of special relevance when dealing with such a potentially inflammatory topic as genocide. Teachers have gained media attention for “creative” instructional approaches including tying up and racially humiliating black students during a lesson on slavery (Block, 2008) and assigning essays asking students to argue that Jews are evil from the point-of-view of a Nazi (Bankoff, 2013). Teachers should be careful in pursuing approaches that do not discriminate or reproduce prejudices – for instance, the activity described by one teacher-participant in which students are asked to find “European” characteristics in African faces is highly problematic, both on ethical and factual grounds (these features were an invention of German-Belgian colonial knowledge production).

In addition, more care must be given to film choices in the classroom. One of the two most often used films, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, is infamous for its historical distortions and inaccuracies, as well as—in the view of some Jewish critics—problematic ethical missteps (Blech, 2008; Dargis, 2008; Schickel, 2008; Zacharek, 2008). *Hotel Rwanda* was better received by American critics, but is still to a large degree problematic. Numerous survivors have harshly criticized its portrayal of the genocide (Asiimwe, 2006; Mwenenganucye, 2011), and the film's 'tribal conflict' narrative obscures the roles of colonialism, neo-colonialism, post-colonial
domestic politics, imperialism, and economic crisis, due in large part to 'structural adjustment' policies played in fomenting the eruption of genocidal violence in Rwanda (Jones, 2010; Kamola, 2007), while presenting problematic images of 'savage' Hutus (Ashuntantang, 2012). Although teachers perceive fictional, fictionalized, and/or simplified Hollywood films to be more entertaining and thus engaging (and thus hopefully more educational), films burdened with such skewed depictions of the past are unable to aid students in understanding the experiences of victims of the Nazi regime or Rwandan genocide or the historical context of these events. One alternative that, while not avoiding all problems, would bypass these difficulties to a significant extent would be the use survivor testimonies.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Do you teach about genocide(s) in your classroom?

2. What genocides do you teach about? What other events do you consider genocides?

3. How would you define genocide? How do you define it for students?

4. Do you use the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide or the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a basis for the definition(s) you use?

5. What materials do you use to teach about genocide? (Ask in general and for each of the genocides covered in the project.)

6. What strategies do you use to teach about genocide? (Ask in general and for each of the genocides covered in the project.)

7. Do you think it is important to teach about genocide? Why do you think teaching about genocide is important now for students?

8. Are there moral lessons you think students should learn from genocide education?

9. Are there social or citizenship lessons you think students should learn from genocide education?

10. Do you teach about genocide denial or genocide prevention? What cases, how?
11. Do you consider the treatment of American Indians by European settlers to be a genocide? Do you consider some policies or actions of the United States government or its citizens toward American Indians to be genocide? Do you teach about this, and do you teach this as a genocide to students? Why or why not?

12. Do you consider the treatment of Armenians by the Ottoman Turks to be a genocide? Do you teach about this, and do you teach this as a genocide to students? Why or why not?

13. Do you consider the Holocaust to be a genocide? Do you teach about this as a genocide to students? Who do you teach were the victims of genocide in the Holocaust? Why or why not?

14. Do you consider the conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s to have been a genocide? Do you teach about this, and do you teach about this as a genocide to students? Why or why not?

15. Do you consider the killings of Tutsis by Hutus in Rwanda in 1994 to be a genocide? Do you teach about this, and do you teach about this as a genocide? Why or why not?

16. Do you consider the war in Sudan/Darfur to be a genocide? Do you teach about this, and do you teach about this as a genocide? Why or why not?

17. What difficulties have you encountered in teaching about genocide and how did you resolve these difficulties?

18. Is there a genocide you think is the most important to teach students about?

19. Are there other events you consider genocides that you do not teach about? If so, why do you not teach about them?
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