Stefan Kühl
Ordinary Organizations - The Sociology of the Holocaust

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About

Why were so many Germans willing to play an active role in the annihilation of the European Jews under the Nazis? This book takes a new explanatory approach with its theory of »ordinary organizations.« For the first time, sociological systems theory has been used to demonstrate how integration in an organization can induce people to do things that would be inconceivable to them outside of the organization.

Based on one of the best-researched aspects of the Holocaust – the mass killings of Jews by Hamburg Reserve Police Battalion 101 – this book shows how policemen who, just a short time before, had worked as tradesmen, salesmen, or dockhands were moved to take part in mass shootings. By viewing organizations within a framework informed by systems theory, Kühl argues that their integration in the organizations of the Nazi state was what prompted these people to participate in deportations and mass shootings.