

After Mass Crime

Rebuilding States
and Communities



Edited by
Béatrice Pouligny, Simon Chesterman and Albrecht Schnabel

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Albrecht Schnabel



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Introduction: Picking up the pieces

Béatrice Pouligny, Simon Chesterman and Albrecht Schnabel

Interventions in the aftermath of mass violence tend to focus on war-crimes trials today, elections and institution building tomorrow. The frame of reference is macro, at the level of the state, although the experience of mass crime by a population is also micro, at the level of the community. When selective interventions take place at this level, they are generally premised on Western health models, infrastructures and institutions. In application, these programs have ranged too often from the ineffective to the actively unhelpful. A key reason for this is that insufficient attention has been paid to the radical transformations in belief systems and codes of conduct of the individuals and communities who experience mass crime. Such transformations define a host of reconstruction issues: questions of communal and national identity; justice and reconciliation; the redistribution of property, land and wealth; the writing of history; the rebuilding of trust; and the capacity to build a new political system.

This volume aims to fill this gap in the literature by offering a trans-disciplinary analysis of the impact of mass crime on the project of rebuilding of social and political relations. This conceptual foundation is then used to formulate recommendations on the most appropriate practical interventions that can help re-establish functioning societies in such circumstances.

“Mass crime” is a term intended to embrace widespread killings and related atrocities such as mutilation, rapes, destruction of villages and deportations – frequently, but not always, perpetrated by a state actor.

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As a concept, it is intended to emphasize that analysis and intervention in these contexts must take into account the totality of such acts and their consequences, beyond the actual massacres. If one wishes to help “build peace” following acts that call into question the very existence of a society, it is first necessary to understand how a population allows – or actively encourages – such acts to take place. This approach rejects the notion of simplistic explanations, be they ideological or cultural, such as seeing a given population as inherently belligerent or violent. Mass crime points instead to a profound crisis of the various institutions that regulate social and political interaction. In addition to perceptions, it is these institutions – understood in their anthropological sense¹ – that hold the key to understanding why a society has turned on itself, and what might be done from within and without to save it.

Re-reading mass crime

In addition to an expanding literature on transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction, there is already a significant literature on selected historical cases of mass crime as such, notably the Holocaust and, to a lesser extent, the Armenian genocide. The studies presented here draw on more recent cases, including Peru, Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Russia and the former Soviet Union, the Baltic Republics, Ukraine, Chechnya, Indonesia and Cambodia. The practice of massacre throughout the twentieth century has characterized the strategies of a number of actors, particularly in the context of war. Indeed, the annihilation of civilian populations may in fact be central to their logic of action and have an important impact on post-war situations. Yet the specific challenges posed by these situations have been largely neglected in peace studies. The usual disconnection between fields of expertise partly explains this reality: Whereas everybody understands why mass crime is traumatic to the individuals involved, the collective consequences of such trauma remain largely unexamined. In addition, empirical and micro-level analyses have been missing, explaining why most discussions on mass-crime situations are general and speculative. The presentation here of the results of empirical research undertaken in very different contexts aims to remedy this and suggest a more rigorous methodology for future research.

Methodology and ethics

It is not possible to respond to the different needs of the victims and survivors of mass crime if one does not understand the local forms and logic

of social ties, their transformations and the manner in which local actors have tried to survive and understand mass violence: their cultural strategies of dealing with death, mourning and suffering. In other words, we need to understand “how people make and unmake lethal violence”, as one of the authors puts it.² The individuals who endure mass crime are often those who are the most invisible. This is not to suggest that such people are not seen; rather it is that they are seen first and foremost as passive victims. It is necessary, therefore, to find ways to recognize their transformation into survivors and begin, once again, to see them as *actors*. More than an abstract concern, this way of seeing is directly linked to the identification and utilization of local resources. An example is the success of certain traditional healers dealing with children traumatized by war and with those children who fought as soldiers.

Two methodological consequences derive from this. First, ethnographic micro-level research is necessary to help understand the capacity of victims and perpetrators to reconstruct new forms of social ties. The research presented in this volume illustrates the importance of this emphasis on the local both for the understanding of why and how mass crime occurs, as well as the identification and assessment of the capacity to build peace. Atrocities and violence characterizing recent conflicts and wars reveal an internal logic, a specific kind of “rationality”, as well as “techniques” that ask for specific investigation. However, only a proper analysis of contexts, actors and historical frameworks helps to avoid the risk of essentializing universal, hidden structures that could underlie all events and that fall under the labels of “atrocities”, “mass crime”, “mass violence”, “genocide” or “dirty war”. It is necessary to consider the variety of experiences, histories and dynamics of massacres and disaggregate global categories generally used to refer to such events.

The second methodological implication is that, in addition to standard medical and psychological variables, work in post-mass-crime settings requires an examination of the meaning and significance that individuals and groups assign to these events. These cultural factors require attention to the symbolic and social worlds within which people in post-mass-crime settings operate. It is commonplace to hear that culture and context “matter”, and that any intervention – peace-building or otherwise – must be “culturally sensitive”. This has been truer of rhetoric than reality. The chapters by Roberto Beneduce, Maurice Eisenbruch, Kimberly Theidon and Scott Straus in particular show the importance of context, as well as of avoiding essentializing or romanticizing culture. As a “system of meanings commonly shared by the individual members of a single collectivity” – to follow Clifford Geertz³ – culture is characterized by a high level of heterogeneity. It consists of ensembles that, although allowing actors to conceive of themselves and of their actions, are not

necessarily entirely coherent. Moreover, in times of war, this system of meaning may undergo profound changes. That means that a caveat must be lodged against idealizing a more peaceful “traditional” past; or traditions that no longer exist or have been used, misused and transformed by entrepreneurs of violence. In other words, we must avoid both naive and normative approaches to such matters, as well as a tendency to see post-conflict societies as passive environments or as political and social vacuums. This is not only mistaken – war is transformative, as well as destructive – but it also ignores the very foundation of any lasting post-conflict solution. Identifying the norms and values but also the individuals who, within a social group, may play a critical role as intermediaries is to locate that which changes and continuously reinvents itself within a three-fold dialectic: the insider–outsider dialectic, that of emotion and rationality, and the dialectic of tradition and innovation. In other words, one must attempt to understand that which takes place within the group itself and in its exchange with outsiders, the emotional, the spiritual and the apparently rational, and that which relates to the past or looks to the future.

This requires a trans-disciplinary and holistic approach. Each perspective, on its own, is insufficient for capturing these multiple links, while, from the point of view of the trauma, the links between the fields of psychiatry, politics, sociology, anthropology and law (from a historical perspective) are made naturally. One of the main innovative aspects of this project is the effort to re-articulate the relationship between what happens at the level of individuals and communities, and what happens at the level of social and political processes (both at national and international levels). Most research focuses on one perspective or the other, in part because they are studied by different disciplines that do not conceptualize and focus their investigations in the same way. For example, neither genocide studies nor anthropology have developed significant ties with the emerging fields of peace-building and state-building. In the latter fields, the impact of mass crime in post-war situations has been considered primarily as questions of justice and “reconciliation”. But very little has been documented as to the relation between legal or paralegal processes (e.g., international tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions) and social or psychological processes.⁴ Indeed, peace studies is itself almost completely disconnected from mental health studies, which in turn bifurcates along individual and collective perspectives, as well as between the camps that endorse and reject post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) approaches.

The contributions presented in this volume offer concrete examples of re-establishing these different connections in our understanding of post-mass-crime situations. The authors sometimes use different methodologies; some are more empirical than others, some more interdisciplinary

in their own right. As such this diversity reflects the importance of this conversation between different disciplines and approaches.

The volume is organized in four parts. Part 1 (which comprises two chapters) examines the main ethical and methodological issues that both academics and practitioners face when dealing with mass crime and post-mass-crime situations. The first chapter is written by a political scientist (Béatrice Pouligny), a psychiatrist (Bernard Doray) and a historian (Jean-Clément Martin). The authors analyse the main difficulties they face in their respective disciplines, continually traversing the boundaries between them and interweaving their perspectives, underlining the interconnectedness of methodological and ethical issues. This dynamic is explored first in relation to how the commentator situates him- or herself in relation to “evil” (mass crime). The second section explains the method used by the authors to develop a comprehensive approach to violent situations. The third and final section of the chapter explores the responsibility of any outsider (particularly a researcher) in the process of writing history and constructing a narrative of massacres. This offers a first exploration of the interrelations between different memories of massacres, a topic also analysed in some case studies in the third part of the volume.

Chapter 2 follows this line by offering a medico-anthropological approach of post-mass-crime situations. Roberto Beneduce, both an academic and a practitioner, has a dual background as psychiatrist and anthropologist. The basis for effective analysis or action lies in the ability to rethink concepts otherwise taken for granted. To avoid engaging with an idealized Western vision of mass crime, it is necessary to stress the continuum of local/social dynamics and global/economic dynamics in the processes of mass crime; at the same time it is necessary to recognize the interaction between individual and collective rehabilitation, and therefore the limits of psychiatric methods alone. On the first aspect, Beneduce questions the historiography of mass crime. He emphasizes the need for an accurate analysis of local forms of violence and its reproduction, of its historical roots, as well as of the ways in which it has been embodied in ritual strategies and the social imaginary. In these cases, violence can become an everyday way of life, without any “uncanny” or “extraordinary” character. In some African countries, mass crime is not an exception, an anomaly in the course of history. On the contrary, structural violence is inscribed in continuity with the colonial state. Other chapters in this volume, dealing with Peru and Rwanda in particular, refer to the way that a “state of war” may shape identities and contribute to the “militarization” of the mind. Beneduce argues, among other things, that humanitarian strategies may prove useless if deep roots of violence are ignored or underestimated. Specific examples demonstrate the rele-

vance of this issue within peace-building intervention and, more generally, in social and community rehabilitation in times of war and post-war.

Another aspect that receives specific attention is the degree of adequacy of Western psychiatric categories such as “trauma” or PTSD in non-Western countries. Although taken for granted in many peace-building operations, these terms are contested even within the Western canon. Research carried out by the author, as well as reflected by a vast medico-anthropological literature, suggests that these categories are unable to encompass all the cultural and psychological meanings of trauma-related experiences in such environments; in particular they may omit the moral dimensions of suffering. Beneduce defines “the question of memory and trauma” as a “moral rather than medical or psychiatric issue”. His research also indicates that local healing strategies and cultural conceptions of death or mourning represent both a useful (“therapeutic”) tool for individuals or communities affected by traumatic experiences, as well as a potential resource to mimic when dealing with fear, uncertainty and concerns about “pollution”, which characterize both war and post-war time in many non-Western countries. This reality is confirmed by later chapters discussing Cambodia, Peru and Rwanda. Unfortunately, international teams of experts have sometimes ignored or underestimated these kinds of local resources. They are usually put under the disputable label of “harmful traditional practices”: in this way they reproduce the dominance of Western psychiatry both as an academic discipline and a medical practice, but confront great difficulty in matching individual grieving/healing to social grieving/healing. Community-based rehabilitation should take into consideration these resources for the additional reason that the language and the ideology of local healers or other social actors, apart from controversial uses sometimes described in the literature, are largely shared by the population and therefore can participate to reconstitute a common perspective in post-war contexts. Indeed, in post-mass-crime situations, the community needs to be re-invented as well as rehabilitated.

These first two chapters map the conceptual terrain within which further research and intervention should be undertaken on the subject. Although they are not meant to establish fixed boundaries within which subsequent chapters are to confine themselves, they provide reflective and critical practitioners concrete avenues to re-conceive their approach to post-mass-crime situations.

Individuals and communities

In addition to analysis of the Holocaust, genocide studies has developed in recent years as a significant sub-discipline in its own right. At the inter-

section of political science and history, offering a mixture of case studies and broad comparative analysis, genocide studies has shown how the perpetration of large massacres may be located at the political level within the processes of state-building, the seizing of power, riches and territory, as well as collective mobilization. It is well known that the extent to which political manipulation, aimed at exacerbating the mutual fear between communities, can bear heavy consequences in the eruption of violence. From an analytical perspective, however, the choice between the perspective of “a war of all against all” and “the pure manipulation of peaceful populations” is a false analytical dichotomy. The two always co-exist: both capable of building up violence and deliberate political manipulation. The political level, albeit significant, is never the only important factor. It contributes, in particular, to the construction of new social identities. In this regard, the forms taken by ethnic divisions in society are generally no more than one element of a wider problem, as they belong to other conflicts such as those between the generations, between men and women, between social groups and between urban and rural dwellers. When the large-scale movements of people reconfigure the boundaries of ethnic identity, when social networks are torn and acts of terror remain unfathomable, uncertainty can go beyond ordinary limits and precipitate general violence.

The negation of humanity that holds the potential for mass crime within it, the negation of what binds human beings together, this “other-worldly” expulsion, as evoked by Hannah Arendt, deeply affects each individual as such and in their relationships with others.⁵ Indeed, it is the possibility of social life that is under attack. In contemporary wars, a large percentage of crime is committed in the immediate domestic or communal environment; perpetrators frequently come from the same areas as those they assassinate or mutilate. In the region of Ayacucho, in Peru, during the war, the enemy might be a son-in-law, a godfather, an old schoolmate or the community just across the valley. Kimberly Theidon’s chapter quotes survivors who recall that their neighbours wore masks during raids: “If they had taken off those masks, we would have recognized them.” Similar incidents have been reported in other cases, such as in the African Great Lakes area. Disguise is supposed to help both the perpetrators and their victims to deal with their identity and intimacy. Research presented in this volume recalls that there are specific ways of “constructing the enemy”, something that obliges us to revisit the cliché that a population typically “dehumanizes the enemy” during times of war. So-called “intimate” crime leaves particularly deep marks, both individually and collectively, weakening the regulatory foundations of society. The chapters in this volume analysing post-massacre situations in Peru, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Cambodia

and Indonesia offer strong illustrations of that pattern and its consequences in the aftermath of wars.

Violence also deeply affects the cultures and structures that shape this immediate environment. This is notably illustrated by drastic evolutions in the family sphere, in the relationships between men and women, fathers and mothers, parents and children – partially explaining the drastic increase in domestic violence in the aftermath of massacres, as exemplified by the chapter on Cambodia. These evolutions have much to do with the institutionalization of violence, but also with the questioning of the codes of conduct and values jeopardized by the killing process. The chapters dealing with the individual trajectories of former combatants and militia members in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda offer complementary elements of this key aspect.

The four chapters of part 2 present the main results of field studies in Cambodia, Peru, Rwanda and the Balkans. Each explores the way mass crime has been understood by both individuals and local communities, and how they are coping with the consequences, including when these are leading to new violence. They show that the behaviour of the majority of people enters into what the writer Primo Levi called the “grey zone” that generally envelops the majority of the members of a society in times of conflict.⁶ There can only be partial, ambiguous answers to the key question of “When, why and how does the acceptance of, and respect for the Other, become transformed into the demonization of the Other?”⁷ In this sense, the role played by communal solidarity is extremely revealing, as are the trajectories of individuals who, in such circumstances, may become perpetrators of mass violence. These case studies also show that mass crime comes to profoundly disturb and reshape all the moral categories and frames of reference that make social life possible. Therefore, understanding the conditions in which peace may be built in such a context is to attempt to render intelligible these numerous transformations. The studies presented in this volume illustrate the importance of constantly articulating their individual and collective dimensions. Analyses of the genealogy and the reproduction of violence call for a methodological approach that is able to combine systematically social and political analysis, local history and a global perspective. In the absence of this interweaving, interpretations remain fragmented, leaving key aspects in the shadows. The experiences of these past years have shown that, from Central America to the Balkans and the Horn of Africa, problems and contradictions in the processes of peace are much more conspicuous.

This is especially the case when it is presumed that these processes can be guided by a simple “desire for reconciliation”. Beliefs and belief systems after violence are not only cultural products but products of a

myriad of individual traumas interacting with one another, causing new traumatic incidents and leaving in place structures of thought that may themselves be a barrier to sustainable peace. Many of these structures of thought are neurologically supported: after violence, many survivors tend to suffer measurably increased rates of general nervous arousal, sleeplessness, anxiety, paranoia, depression and grief – all of which affect the ways in which they interact with cultural symbols, with each other, and with their remaining family members. Less discussed, but made evident in the research presented in this volume, survivors also report extremely expanded or extremely contracted perceptions during trauma, producing experiences – of miracles, transcendent horror or the disappearance of all normal perception – that may not fit in with more everyday views of the world. If “evil” has been felt as a concrete presence, for example, simply seeking to forget or recast it as injustice may not address issues that will emerge later in problems of distrust and retribution, affecting the way individuals depict themselves as human beings and citizens. Therefore, variables of what might be termed “soft power” need to be considered as crucial factors underlying conflicts and reconciliation, as well as holding the keys to the reconstruction of community and society.

In chapter 3, Maurice Eisenbruch examines the impact of mass crime on the rebuilding of social, cultural and spiritual relations in post-conflict Cambodia. The focus is through participant observation with 1,164 healers carried out over 14 years, to reveal how traditional culture and healing provide a meaning for the consequences of mass crime. The healers were observed in the course of their day-to-day work with local communities in hundreds of villages all over the countryside, as well as in the towns where most of the international aid programs are based. The healers and their patients were tracked, sometimes for a decade or more, allowing an examination of changes that spanned the years during and following the conflict.

Three challenges for cultural competence in peace-building are identified. The first is the spiritual consequences of mass crime, noted since the early 1990s and summarized by the Western cipher PTSD, yet classified differently by the local population. The Pol Pot doctrine of purging foreign elements echoed the belief that the enemy is within, in the form of spirits in the community or ethnic minorities within the nation, and that these must be ritually ejected. The second challenge is to understand the upsurge of contagious diseases such as HIV/AIDS noted since the late 1990s, and seen by the population as reflecting their post-war vulnerability, as the enemy germ or as a Trojan horse brought by foreigners who came to bring the peace. Third, the return of conflict in the late 1990s is often stereotyped as “a social modelling and identification with the violence of the Khmer Rouge”. Yet, they reflect a loss of group identity

with the coming of age of youth born in the wake of the Khmer Rouge, further weakened by the avalanche of Western values and unprotected by cultural codes and religious codes of conduct. The time-proven ways by which ordinary people and their healers seek to resolve community disharmony, such as treating “ancestral spirit disorder”, for example, may be evolving into pernicious new incarnations of trauma as parents traffic daughters, children shoot parents, brothers gang rape sisters and lovers hurl acid. These are culturally malignant ways to resolve conflict for which the prescribed healing rituals on their own can no longer work.

In such a context, Cambodian monks and healers dispel a number of stereotypes. The first is that Cambodia’s peaceful past was set upon by Pol Pot’s mass crime – yet the Khmer Rouge designed their revolution upon their mastery and manipulation of that culture. The second is that Cambodia’s post-conflict woes (PTSD, AIDS and social violence) stem from the Khmer Rouge regime, although it is of no use to blame the Khmer Rouge alone. The healers draw upon Buddhist doctrine (such as reincarnation) expressed as local folk stories (such as the legend of Angulimala) to help people come to terms with why good as well as bad people may do bad things to good people.

The Cambodian experience illustrates how much capacity-building for peace needs to take into account the transformative effects of war. In that perspective, Eisenbruch’s chapter offers an important echo and complement to Beneduce’s. Humanitarian aid can feed a cargo cult, the people embracing culturally foreign aid that may further undermine local capacity for healing. Eisenbruch argues that Buddhist monks and traditional healers can assist Cambodian authorities and the international humanitarian organizations in the identification of resilience factors within the local society, support rather than be engulfed by international humanitarian efforts and point the compass toward cultural competence in post-conflict peace-building.

Such “cultural competence” is also strongly advocated by Kimberly Theidon, in chapter 4. She explores how *campesinos* in the highlands of Ayacucho constructed lethal violence in the context of Peru’s fratricidal war, and how the concepts and practices of communal justice have permitted them to develop a micro-politics of reconciliation at the communal and inter-communal levels. From 1980 to 2000, an internal war raged between the guerrilla group Sendero Luminoso, the *rondas campesinas* (armed peasant patrols) and the Peruvian armed forces. Three out of every four people killed during the war were rural, Quechua-speaking *campesinos*; the department of Ayacucho alone accounts for 40 per cent of all the dead and disappeared. Theidon shows how much war was interpreted but even more experienced concretely as an attack against cultural practices and the very meaning of what it means to live as a human

being in these villages. As communal life has been severely distorted, moral reasoning and concepts of justice have undergone drastic changes. Nevertheless, this has not prevented citizens from attempting to re-build the social and communal ties attacked by mass violence.

This argument resonates with chapters 5 and 6, which present the results of micro-level research dealing with the trajectories of individuals who took part in the atrocities in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. In both situations, there was also significant regional and local variation in the perpetration of the horror. In chapter 5, Scott Straus emphasizes that detailed micro-level research on the causes of mass crime has implications not just for understanding the origins of those crimes, but also policy decisions after atrocities have been committed. The accepted historical narrative of the Rwandan genocide masks a more complex empirical picture of how the violence started and the manner in which it spread. National elites promoted genocidal violence from the centre, for example, but that call was met with varied responses, ranging from support to resistance. Straus argues that a disaggregation of the event and a closer inspection of why the dynamics of violence take hold and, thus, why individuals kill can yield insights into the crime's origins that in turn affect how the future is imagined. Such research is difficult to conduct and does not yield conclusions easily, but it may be the most effective way of designing post-mass-crime reconstruction projects that are both responsive to local concerns and build upon societal strengths; surprisingly, perhaps, Straus' chapter concludes that this research suggests some reasons for optimism about Rwanda's future.

One of the clear and important lessons drawn from the Rwanda case study is the importance of disaggregating the category of "perpetrators". Similarly, in chapter 6, Natalija Bašić shows that war experiences of "victims, perpetrators and bystanders" in the former Yugoslavia and its successor states were very heterogeneous. Her research focuses on the experiences of former combat soldiers in the wars in the former Yugoslavia, between 1991 and 1995. Its aim is to analyse from a trans-disciplinary perspective the formation of violence – the readiness to fight and kill – in anthropological, political and cultural terms. Bašić collected biographical stories of former combatants, all of them relatively young, and then analysed the way the interviewees depicted their war experiences in connection with the creation of new identifications and the change of older collective ones. She highlights the importance of defending or protecting one's own, be it one's house, family, country, nation or a better world. She also shows how fighting and dying in the group – in a group of men that could convey a substitute feeling for family – may appear as more normal than suffering post-traumatic effects in a civil environment. Even if the interviews conducted by Bašić did not allow her to assess the extent

to which interviewees were actually involved in acts of violence and the reasons for their involvement, they gave crucial elements about the interpretations perpetrators of violence attributed to their actions in retrospect.

Interestingly, Bašić concludes that, on the basis of her research, it appears that former combat soldiers, despite ethnic or national differences, may have more in common with each other than with their fellow citizens. Such a diagnosis might indicate a brighter future for the country than its recent history suggests. This diagnosis directly echoes Straus's on Rwanda. In this case also, micro-level research indicates that the prospects for post-genocide confidence and trust among social groups might be greater than many Rwandan and outside observers believe. In both cases, the challenge ahead is to deal with the different memories and representations built around mass violence and imagine different modalities to re-build positive ties between the different components of the community.

Memories and representations of mass crime

Particularly crucial in such a process are the public and private rituals and narratives that sustain collective and individual memories of the history, causes and course of mass crime, and allow the re-interpretation and re-assertion of the belief systems. This is a complex and ambiguous process in which the symbolic world and the imaginary play a decisive role in the transformation of the meanings of history and of belonging. Therefore, research has to be concerned with the entangling of individual and collective memories, in the way in which they come to rewrite more distant memory. This should ultimately lead to the question: who writes history and for whom? The chapters in part 3 dealing with history and the politics of "reconciliation" address the use and abuse of memories of mass violence in the construction of a national history.

As such, they offer different views of the connections and disconnections between the local dimensions of rebuilding processes – more specifically dealt with in previous chapters – and national ones. The examination here focuses on "non-narratives", impossible or confiscated narratives (what Paul Ricoeur has called "hindered memory", "manipulated memory" and "obliged memory")⁸ and in the authorized public narratives of the past that either give sense to individual memories or mutilate them. Such a process of constructing a narrative is all the more complicated by the historical courses of events in which mass crime and the paradoxical workings of memory are most often situated.⁹ In many instances, this aspect has to take into account the memories of massacres

committed in history. The roles of state and political actors are key in these processes.

Chapter 7, by René Lemarchand and Maurice Niwese returns to the case of Rwanda, viewing it through a different lens. Where Straus approached it through micro-level research, Lemarchand and Niwese situate it in the larger historical context of a cycle of interethnic violence that has periodically engulfed Rwanda and its neighbour Burundi. Their account is primarily a challenge to the view that the 1994 genocide can be viewed in isolation – epitomized by the temporal jurisdiction of the international criminal tribunal established to deal with the genocide, but with a mandate only to examine acts committed between 1 January and 31 December 1994. They argue that the dominant discourse of Hutu killers and Tutsi victims is itself a barrier to reconciliation, a discourse that should be complicated by historians to reflect the complexity of relations between Hutu and Tutsi – and their joint colonial past – if new, post-genocide identities are to be constructed.

In chapter 8, Leslie Dwyer and Degung Santikarma reflect on the way survivors of violence themselves try to deal with their memories and manage them in relation to the official discourses. Their analysis is based on a collaborative ethnographic fieldwork project they have been engaged in with survivors of Indonesia's 1965/66 state-sponsored anti-communist violence. Their work has focused on the island of Bali, which experienced some of the most intense violence, with some 80,000 to 100,000 suspected leftists (approximately 5 to 8 per cent of the island's population) killed by military and paramilitary forces. For the past four decades, Balinese have struggled with a legacy of oppression and violence – reinforced by ambivalence about articulating memories of terror. Although supported by a social, political and economic context that suppresses or denies these memories, the contradiction between this veneer and the lived experiences of the population is occasionally revealed. The authors show how ambiguous and ambivalent remembering and forgetting may be in their collective and symbolic effects, stressing the importance of not presuming that these processes are linear.

Historical discourses may promote both conflict *and* peace-building, just as memories do. This core ambivalence is examined by Thomas Sherlock in chapter 9, assessing the reinterpretations of Baltic, Ukrainian and Chechen history in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. The chapter first addresses the Baltic case and then turns to Ukraine and Chechnya. The essential precondition for historical reinterpretation in the post-Soviet space was the desacralization by counter-elites of the central myths that legitimized the Soviet empire and its rule over the Baltic, Ukrainian and Chechen nationalities. This process of public delegitimation of Soviet myths emerged during *perestroika* in the late 1980s and shocked Soviet

society with a flood of negative revelations about the past, including severe criticism of the actions of Stalin and even Lenin. The entire official Soviet narrative was called into question, forcing political and academic authorities on the defensive. Emblematic of the crumbling ideological edifice of the Soviet system was the official decision in 1988 to cancel secondary school exams and discard existing history textbooks as virtually useless. This struggle over how to interpret the Soviet past seriously weakened the normative support of the Soviet state, contributing to its collapse in 1991. For each case, the chapter charts post-Soviet change and continuity in Russian interpretations of Baltic, Ukrainian and Chechen history, using new history textbooks and other materials as guideposts. Although some of the new Russian textbooks are little better than their Soviet predecessors in terms of substance and style, other Russian textbooks represent significant advances over the Soviet period, and often compare favourably to American textbooks on Soviet history. For example, a respected, widely used American university textbook argues – erroneously – that the Western democracies in 1939 “ardently” sought an alliance with the Soviet Union to stop Nazi aggression.¹⁰ By contrast, some of the Russian textbooks under review offer a more balanced and accurate account of this controversial historical period.

Peace-building strategies and the insider–outsider dynamic

In chapter 10, Louis Kriesberg focuses more specifically on the role of international actors who seek to intervene after atrocity and discusses the main challenges these situations pose to them. He first refers to the nature of destructive conflicts and how they are transformed, before turning to the examination of the ways international governmental organizations and international nongovernmental organizations affect the durability of peace following the commission of mass crime. Kriesberg offers a series of recommendations to render outsiders’ contributions more useful.

Reflection on what the role of an outsider should be in such contexts remains very complex. Further on-the-ground research is needed in order to understand the processes sketched out in this volume – as well as their limits. The possibility of building peace depends on an understanding of the rules of social and political life in a given society, and how disparate actors may be encouraged to participate without recourse to violent confrontation. Such understanding also helps to identify appropriate roles for outsiders. An obvious but important aspect of this is assessing the manner in which external assistance programs are considered and evaluated by a target population.

Perhaps an easier starting point is simply calling for greater under-

standing. Field personnel must be conscious of what happens in periods following mass crime – beyond surface appearances of disorder and chaos, or physical and mental survival. Our volume offers some important keys in that perspective. Importantly, outsiders should never forget that, whoever they are, they represent an outside world that may be seen as having abandoned or neglected local populations while they were under attack.

“Peace must be re-imagined, even re-invented after mass crime.” To a large extent, this is an important lesson emphasized by the different contributions in this book. In the final chapter, Roberta Culbertson and Béatrice Pouligny offer an integrative analysis, reflecting both on the main theoretical principles and on the practical lessons that can be drawn from the volume. They focus on three main components. First, they stress the need for understanding the nature of the transformations effected by war and mass violence. This means, among other things, understanding that there cannot be a mere return to the past and that the prospects of such a return should not be romanticized. Second, they insist on the importance of moving between different levels of organization on the ground, and understanding the multiple connections and disconnections between micro- and macro-dimensions of violence and post-violence. Third, they focus on some key elements regarding the work of re-insertion in survivor communities. One main lesson from their analysis is that the matter of insider and outsider knowledge must become a dialogical exchange in the hands of the local communities.

Conclusion: Mapping mass crime

Peace-building is not a linear process. The roads to peace are less like highways than bumpy and potholed roads – sometimes barely marked; sometimes not marked at all. It is these roads that outsiders who wish to contribute to peace-building must take, both physically and symbolically.¹¹ The analyses offered in this book may provide some useful directions but they are not a road map.

Any external scholar or practitioner comes from a particular culture, a fact that need not be disempowering but must be acknowledged when interacting with other cultures. Such issues should be included in specific training before deployment in the field. Whatever the political pressures on international organizations to send people quickly, pre-briefings should never be neglected. It is crucial that field staff understand the local context in which they will have to work, and receive specific preparation in order to face and manage what may be a traumatic experience for them also.

More than in any other post-conflict situation, post-mass-crime peace-building requires a fundamental transformation of the way in which both analysts and practitioners envisage their role. Their efforts must permit the understanding of what was at stake during the mass crime for society (the groups and individuals of which it is composed), and what is fundamentally changed in the political, social and communal fabric of the population in question. Through such an analysis it may be possible to identify that which – even involuntarily, even in the apparent “chaos” – can be salvaged by a community and used as the basis upon which it and it alone can build peace.

Notes

1. The institution is understood as a mode of organisation of the mechanisms of exchange between the individual and the social group, which may relate to so-called “primary” institutions such as the family or community.
2. See the chapter in this volume by Kimberly Theidon.
3. This system allows the actors to situate themselves in the social game and give a particular meaning to the action and the social institutions in the collectivity concerned. The culture so defined does not create permanent identities but organizes the behaviour of the different actors (including those who take power). See Clifford Geertz, “The politics of meanings”, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 89.
4. An exception is the United States Institute of Peace Special Report *Trauma and Transitional Justice in Divided Societies*, following a conference organized in March 2004, Washington, DC: USIP, Special Report 135, April 2005.
5. On the subject of the experience of totalitarian violence, Hannah Arendt referred to “the experience of not belonging to the world at all, which is among the most radical and desperate experiences of man”. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 6th ed., New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979, p. 475.
6. Primo Levi evoked this “grey zone” to explore the spectrum of behaviour of the victims of the concentration camps. He also suggested that this zone included the killers, without nonetheless considering there to be a symmetrical relationship between perpetrators and victims. Primo Levi, *Naufragés et rescapés*, Paris: Gallimard, 1989.
7. Denis-Constant Martin, “Identity, culture, pride and conflict”, in Simon Bekker and Rachel Prinsloo, eds, *Identity? Theory, Politics, History*, Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1999, p. 197.
8. Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Paris: Seuil, 2000. See also his previous work more specifically dealing with the link between memory and history, Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, vol. 3, Paris: Seuil, 1983–1985.
9. Tzvetan Todorov, *Les Abus de la Mémoire*. Paris: Arléa, 1993.
10. Donald Treadgold, *Twentieth Century Russia*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1977, p. 336.
11. Béatrice Pouligny, *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People*, London: Hurst/Bloomfield, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 2006, p. 269.

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After Mass Crime: Rebuilding States and Communities

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International interventions in the aftermath of mass violence tend to focus on justice and reconciliation processes, elections and institution-building. The frame of reference is at the level of the state, although the experience of mass crime by a population is also at the level of the community and individuals. Insufficient attention has been paid to the radical transformations in their belief systems and codes of conduct after the experience of mass crime. This book seeks to bridge this divide by offering a trans-disciplinary analysis of the impact of mass crime on the rebuilding of social and political relations. Drawing on historical and more recent cases—including examples from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Indonesia, Peru, and Rwanda—the authors examine the impact of mass crimes on individuals, society at large, and the organizations involved in providing assistance in the post-conflict phase. While outside actors have a role to play in this difficult process, the hardest work must be done by those picking up the pieces of a community that has turned on itself.

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