International Panel on Exiting Violence

CHAPTER 7

THE USES AND ABUSES OF MEMORY

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Introduction

Memorializing large-scale violence can contribute to exiting violence; it can also sustain the destructive dynamics that initially sparked violence.

Large-scale violence scars the human, physical, and social landscape; these literal and figurative scars imbue the past with contemporary meaning and sometimes urgency. In many settings, states, civil society actors, and individuals respond through memorialization. These "memory projects" aim to provide a sense of healing, catharsis, and remembrance for survivors and their loved ones.

However, public memorialization of social and political violence is never that simple. Public memory projects do more than serve as monuments to the dead. Symbolically powerful constructions that narrate the past, they convey parables of good and bad, reflecting and extending into politics and power relations. Memory work is a contentious and fraught arena, not an innocent, pre-political monument to victims.

Memory work can, but does not necessarily, communicate to the victims that society and the state acknowledge their losses, and thereby can impart a promise of "never again". Memorialization can issue a stark socio-political warning about the potential for and dangers of abuse of power. Memory projects can craft a common narrative about a contentious past, by helping groups see experiences outside of their personal or communal narratives, and provide a key to a peaceful future. Furthermore, memory projects can present opportunities for dialogue about the past as a springboard for discussions about the present and future. Thus, while memorials will invariably be contentious, when they model peaceable forms of interaction and debate about painful past experiences, they can contribute to transforming the conditions that previously generated violence and division.

Yet memory projects can also produce friction, division, and polarization. By reifying certain narratives and casting social groups into fixed roles as victims and perpetrators, memory projects can aggravate social cleavages. When imbricated with the state, these projects can reinforce power, serving to marginalize and dispossess, rather than heal and bring together.

In other contexts, memory projects mirror the status quo, masking and substituting for other forms of politics. In this way, memory projects form a token gesture, displacing discussions of fundamental structural change to address the debilitating legacies of violence, such as deep socio-economic inequalities or other forms of deprivation. In these ways, memory projects can sow the seeds for future violence.

In short, memory is not an innocent terrain in which the sole imperative is to muster the will and funds; it works in myriad ways after violence, in particular after mass violence. Context matters tremendously: the social and political contributions of memory projects in one context can be

completely different in another, and change over time.

Cognizant of this diverse terrain and sensitive to contextual specificity, we asked: what are the characteristics of memory projects that contribute to creating a non-violent, democratic public space that allows for contestation and disagreement in peaceable ways? We arrived at six attributes of an "ethics of memory" that productively contribute to exiting violence that form our recommendations.

MEMORY'S CONTRADICTIONS

We begin with the Valley of the Fallen in Spain. This monumental memorial 60 kilometers outside Madrid encapsulates the tensions of an unresolved past, even in a country internationally celebrated for its "successful" transition in the 1970s from dictatorship to democracy. On 1 April 1940, just one year after winning the Civil War, Spain's new dictator, Francisco Franco, signed a decree to build the memorial, "to perpetuate the memory of those who fell in our Glorious Crusade". Conceived as a "grandiose temple," Franco envisioned that, "over the centuries, prayers will be said for those who fell on the path for God and their Fatherland". The building of the monument involved nineteen years, two architects, and the boring of a granite mountain to excavate a breath-taking basilica that is second in length and size only to St Peter's in Rome. The scale of the monument intentionally renders any future efforts to adjust its presence or even its shape extremely difficult: it fixes into a mountainside a stunningly dramatic honorific for the military dictatorship.

Before the inauguration, an estimated 34,000 corpses of the war dead, mostly, but not exclusively, those who fought for Franco, were exhumed and reburied in crypts behind the monument's walls. One of the first corpses to arrive was that of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Spanish fascist party, Falange, who was placed in front of the main altar. Franco's body was buried behind the altar on 22 November 1975. Although Franco's political heirs claim that the Valley is a monument to reconciliation, the juxtaposition of these bodies at the heart of the monument creates a politically charged funerary axis that forms Spain's main Francoist stronghold.

During the transition to democracy, the meaning of the site was challenged from multiple directions—but none constituted a satisfying outcome for critics of the dictatorship. There was a process of *touristification* of the site, transforming it from an active political imposition to simply another grand structure from Spanish history. It was incorporated in the Imperial Route, which also includes the nearby Monastery of El Escorial, site of the Royal Pantheon.

Starting in 2000, a counterhegemonic memory project known in Spain as the "recovery of historical memory" refocused attention on the civilian losses of the war, previously actively repressed by Franco's regime. This "recovery" of memory focused on the exhumation of mass graves of the 150,000 civilians executed by Franco's paramilitaries. These efforts increased tensions around the Valley, especially when it was discovered that bodies of executed Republican civilians had been transferred during Franco's time to the monument without their relatives' knowledge. The anti-fascist counterhegemonic movement understood these remains as actively victimized: first, victims of mass killing, then post-mortem kidnapping by their own killers, and, finally, held as hostages in the monument for the sake of a fake "reconciliation" that glorified the killers. All the attempts at unburying the bodies of Republicans from the monument have been systematically blocked by right-wing parties and the Benedictine religious order that maintains the monument.

In 2011, the socialist government appointed a commission of experts to provide ideas on how to democratize and make the monument more inclusive, to no avail. One crucial recommendation was the dismantling of the monument's Francoist funerary hierarchy, including Franco's unburial. Yet the harsh resistance by the political right to any minimal change in the Valley has transformed it into a highly divisive site that prevents Civil War tensions from dissipating.

CORE CONCEPTS: MASS VIOLENCE AND MEMORY

Our discussions as a working group focused on public, intentional projects designed to memorialize mass violence, and addressed how they might contribute to an exit from violence. Each component of this focus requires clarification.

Mass violence is defined as "large-scale," "systematic," and "widespread" violence targeted against civilians, inclusive of, but not limited to, legal categories of "crimes against humanity" or "genocide." While there is no numerical threshold, the ideas of large-scale, systematic, and widespread imply that the violence affects a significant percentage of a target group. We can think of mass violence then as an interconnected pattern of deliberate harm; such violence is "supra-local," or recurring across territory, as well as sustained over time (Straus 2015). It is deliberate and intentional: the product of organization, mobilization, and planning, often by states and their affiliates, but non-state actors are not ruled out. In practice, most of the cases that ground this chapter are forms of "group-selective" violence in which specific population categories are targeted for violence, but this is not an exclusive criterion.

We do not primarily address structural violence that reflects deep inequalities and deprivation baked into an economic or political system. However, in developing our collective understanding of how memory works, we draw on a larger literature that is not uniquely focused on mass violence per se. A key theory-generating case is South Africa, which was a pioneer around questions of memory and reconciliation after the country emerged from apartheid. As a system of structural violence and racial discrimination, apartheid was brutal and deeply destructive.

There is no singular definition of memory as related to public memory projects about past large-scale violence. Definitional clarity can be difficult because memory practices are notable for how they cross various categorical borders. Most scholars understand memory as not simply recalling the past, but interpreting it, often including a call to prevent past violence from recurring. Projects therefore concern the intersection of moral and political knowledge. They are public in two primary ways: they concern past violence that has social and political meaning, and they aim to engage a contemporary social body. In this manner, they provide a contrast to strictly personal memory.

Memorial practices also often cross national borders. While projects are conceived and constructed in local circumstances, they are often informed by and in conversation with global memory forms and debates.

Another border that is crossed is generational: memory projects engage issues of accountability and responsibility, particularly intergenerational responsibility. Often members of subsequent generations who have not experienced firsthand the events of the past are encouraged to develop an affective relationship with them, including a sense of responsibility or even guilt.

Our interest is not ultimately to propose a new definition of memory, but to examine how memory activists, artists, politicians, and people concerned about the past and the future try to make sense of their worlds through memory projects, and how this process might contribute to "exiting violence."

MEMORY AND POWER

Power constructs memory in multiple ways. Fiona Ross's (2003) research on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission demonstrates that men who testified before the commission mostly spoke about their own experiences of victimization, whereas women who testified predominantly spoke about the violence experienced by the men in their lives while remaining silent about their own victimization. The structure of the commission—a project to enable truth-telling and institutionalize memory of apartheid-era violence—enabled certain expressions of memory while disabling

others.

Further, memory politics can silence certain stories, while privileging others that form "master" or hegemonic narratives of the past (Stern 2004; Jelín 2003). Through silencing, privileging, and narrowing complex narratives, powerful actors attempt to monopolize public memory, allowing only a version of the past that bolsters their rationalizing narrative and actively silences other voices.

One member of our group, Baskara Wardaya, references a "political wall of taboo" in Indonesia to describe how forces aligned with the state actors who perpetrated anti-communist mass violence in 1965 conspire to limit discourse about the past to only those narratives that justify the violence. Any attempt to include other perspectives, including the victims' narratives, has been suppressed by military and civilian forces. In this case, memorializing victims' experiences is a risky endeavor that challenges powerful actors. The same is true for the experience of indigenous communities in Guatemala, or ethnic minorities in Somalia, whose claims to particularly egregious forms of violence are sometimes contested by other Somali groups. As Wardaya notes, counter-memory is perceived as "dangerous" and efforts to acknowledge it can be brutally repressed.

In contemporary Rwanda, the state has gone to great lengths to memorialize the "genocide of the Tutsis" of 1994, which was halted by the triumph of the current regime. Genocide memorialization in the form of a museum, massacre sites, and official periods of mourning, among other efforts, is limited by the state to only the narrative of suffering that bolsters its position. Thus, there is no formal acknowledgement of mass violence experienced by Hutus in the Democratic Republic of Congo or in Rwanda itself. Those who point to the existence of these victims of violence are often labeled genocide "deniers", and can be imprisoned or worse. In this instance, the impulse to remember is presented by authorities as an apolitical and ethical response to genocide. The discourse of memory is then deployed to disarm political challengers. Likewise in relation to Israel, Holocaust remembrance is sometimes brandished to ward off criticism of state policies.

Memory can also become embroiled in constructs of group identity, and embedded within nationalism. In the case of memory of the Ottoman genocide of the Armenians, Turkish official rejection of genocidal memory argues that it is at odds with national identity. Thus, the government has refused steadfastly to acknowledge "genocide" as a reference to the systematic expulsion and murder of Armenians and other minorities in 1915, in a deliberate attempt to preserve the founding myth of the Turkish Republic as emerging from World War I in a heroic war of liberation.

For Armenians, historical suffering is foundational to their idea of who they are. Armenians, in Turkey, Armenia, and the diaspora, struggle for acknowledgement and recognition of the deportations and mass killing that eliminated most Armenians and Assyrians from Anatolia. Battling identities over history have further complicated contemporary politics in recent years, as the Armenian genocide has been seen as the precursor of and model for the current Turkish state violence against the Kurds. This layering of memories elides the history of Kurdish participation in the Armenian genocide as perpetrators, and allies them with Armenians as victims.

Not only national politics but also other institutional practices can determine the acceptable limits of memory narratives. For instance, researchers studying the international refugee resettlement process describe how the institutions that manage the interview process for determining who should be offered resettlement opportunities require that refugees conform their stories of violence and persecution to a particular narrative structure. The structure must demonstrate the applicant's history of individual persecution and must demonstrate an ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographic, and chronological consistency that conforms to the interviewer's (often limited or poor) understanding of the context of violence from which the applicant has fled (Blommaert 2009). The parameters for narrating memories of violence defined within the refugee resettlement process thus consolidate certain versions of memory as legitimate. For example, Somali applicants in Kenyan refugee camps seeking resettlement in the United States through the special resettlement program extended to

Somali Bantus had to demonstrate that their experience of violence in Somalia conformed to the definition of Somali Bantus as a persecuted minority group united by language, ethnicity, geographical area of origin, and kinship. Even though the ethnic category of Somali Bantu is a recent invention created in the wake of Somalia's state collapse to encompass minority Somalis from diverse backgrounds, the requirements for resettlement demanded that applicants remember their experiences of violence as Somali Bantus, consolidating an ethnically based memory (Besteman 2016). In this sense, the refugee resettlement process is one kind of memory project.

These examples are emblematic of how memory is embroiled with power and politics. Understanding that memory is political, however, does not mean that it cannot contribute to an exit from violence.

Violence and Ambiguous Endings

What constitutes an "exit" from violence? This is a complicated question from any perspective, and it is further complicated in relation to memory, which directs attention to how violence resonates long after it "ends".

We define an "exit" from mass violence in terms of building a durable peace that is a bulwark against a return to mass violence. Broadly, our group argues that an exit from violence does not necessarily imply a specific type of polity, such as a liberal, multi-party democracy. Yet we consider a public space that is democratic as key to an exit from violence. We refer to small-d "democratic"— that is, a space that allows for contestation and disagreement in peaceable ways.

In some cases, exiting violence has meant flight and the creation of a permanent diaspora. In other cases, an exit from mass violence might take the form of a transition to other forms of violence, such as structural oppression, criminal violence, or terrorist violence. For example, while the mass violence against ethnic minorities in southern Somalia precipitated by the collapse of the Somali government may have ended, contemporary control of the region by the terrorist group Al Shabaab has meant the imposition of a new regime of violence. Or, in the case of the 1965 mass violence in Indonesia, allowing only the perpetrators' narrative to be told while staunchly suppressing the voices of the survivors and witnesses of the violence allows for ongoing structural violence.

Our understanding of how memory might contribute to an exit from violence is informed by recognition that legacies of mass violence are conscious and unconscious. Such legacies can be insidious: manifesting as fear, silence, insularity, trauma, and new forms of abuse. Engaging with these effects are what memory and counter-memory projects seek to channel through deliberately constructed interventions.

In many cases, the past is present in unplanned ways. Survivors may face lifelong physical ailments as the result of wounds of war, torture, or rape, for instance. Large-scale violence is also frequently accompanied by large-scale theft of resources.

The past can also be present "as silences, compulsions, or repetitions" (Jelín 2003: 5), or as haunted memories, "irruptions of the past that return autonomously, like ghosts" (Brendese 2014: 6). "Trauma" and "embodiment" are forms of unintentional memories. "Trauma" was originally used to describe a blow to the tissues of the body, then to the structure of the mind, and now the word has become one of modern culture's master concepts to describe a wide range of negative experiences. The social saliency of trauma as a concept, as Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman note in their critical history of the term, was reinforced when the medical-scientific community adopted it in 1980. In that year, post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) was incorporated as a disorder into the American Psychiatric Association's signature publication: the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III) (Fassin & Rechtman 2009: 77). Of particular influence on this process was the treatment of American veterans of the war in Vietnam—people

who had participated in and witnessed terrible violence, but certainly not as civilian victims of asymmetric assaults.

In its simplest form, trauma describes the condition of individuals who experience a shocking event and have difficulty overcoming it. Survivors and even perpetrators or witnesses to violence can suffer the effects of "trauma" and specifically "post-traumatic stress disorder". These are clinical terms that include a wide array of emotional and psychological symptoms, including depression, anxiety, anger, paranoia, and guilt, as well as nightmares, panic attacks, lethargy, insomnia, and other manifestations of psychological pain.

One member of our group, Catherine Besteman, writes eloquently of the ways in which memories of violence haunt individuals, families, and communities in the Somali diaspora. For some, memories of assaults and dislocations experienced in the wake of the collapse of the Somali government manifest as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety. Possible links between memories of violence and the high incidence of autism in some Somali diaspora communities are being investigated.

Trauma has gained traction as a theoretical paradigm for understanding the legacy of large-scale violence. It stands for an event that is overwhelming, defies representation and is structured as a rupture in time, whereby, uninvited, the past intrudes on the present. Over time, the category of the traumatized victim broadened in meaning and is at times applied to entire social groups. This expansion has prompted widespread criticism of its social deployment (Fassin & Rechtman 2009; Kansteiner 2004a and 2004b; Leys 2000; Sime 2013), including for how it can medicalize socio-political problems, and for the curative model often associated with it—that unpleasant memories are repressed and only truth will set you free (Baer & Sznaider 2015).

Another framework through which to imagine involuntary memories is the idea of "embodiment", how memories are carried in the body even when individuals are not consciously interpreting them. Bourdieu's concept of "habitus", meant to capture how social and cultural norms are embodied, can help us understand how people may carry memories in their physical behaviors, in distinction to psychic explanations like "trauma". This embodiment can occur through ritual commemorations, inculcated over time, but also in individuals or groups as a response to recent experiences of violence.

Depending on how violence ends and how the impacts of violence are addressed by a broader community, behaviors learned through the imposition of violence can linger long afterwards. Survivors of violence may be afraid, or simply unable, to acknowledge their past. They might dissimulate or avoid topics altogether. Not talking for some was a method of survival during violence; people survived through hiding and being clandestine. After violence ends, those patterns of silence might continue and manifest in multiple ways. In some cases, even being a witness to someone else's violence increases one's own vulnerability to violence. Afterwards, such patterns of obfuscation may live on in the form of coded language and the omission of details.

Another type of silencing after mass violence on citizens can be de-politicization. There is a body of literature that suggests apathy and lack of engagement can become mechanisms for coping after mass violence, although this is not always the case[1]. Survivors might fear public exposure (Jelín 2003: 81) and in general may be hostage to a culture of fear.

Lastly, after mass violence the dead cannot speak. What they witnessed and experienced leave a silence in the historical record. Memory projects sometimes emerge to give voice to the voiceless,

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1. This does not have to be the case. Indeed, during and after war, women may assume positions of agency in the household, economy, and politics that were previously unattainable for them (Berry 2018). Some studies note that child soldiers, once feared as a potential source of disruption in peaceful societies, on the whole are more likely to be civic activists than their non-soldier peers (Annan *et al.* 2011).

to commemorate what those who have perished cannot attest to. Among Armenian scholars there has been a discussion of the impossibility of "representing" the genocide in literature or historical writing.

Mass violence also has geographical implications: destroyed buildings, icons, and sacred spaces. Violence can also take the form of pollution or land mines or other forms of danger in the land. But invariably, one of the most wide-ranging consequences of mass violence is displacement of people across sometimes vast geographical distances. Violence scatters and disrupts communities.

Memory projects in the diaspora are forged through circumstances particular to the contexts of flight and the recreation of communities in exile. While Armenians have long been a transnational people, existing both in their original "homeland" and in diaspora, the genocide of 1915 led to the emptying of eastern Anatolia, historic Armenia, of Armenians and the emergence of large diasporic communities in the Middle East, France, the United States, and elsewhere.

A focus on memory instructs us not to confuse ending physical attacks or even systems of oppression with necessarily "exiting" violence. Through the spectrum of memory, we can better understand how violence has long-term, transformative effects.

Memory Projects

Memory projects take on potential meaning as a way to grapple with some of the above effects, and can—again we note that this is not necessarily the case—move from ending to exit. Intentional memory projects can be characterized, in Jelín's terms, as when "human beings are actively involved in the processes of symbolic transformation and elaboration of meanings of the past" (Jelín 2003: 5). This requires a level of intention to interpret and process events such that one can construct, transmit, or contest a memory.

In its deliberations, our group made a broad distinction between "non-official" and "official" memory projects. While there will be overlap between official and unofficial projects—ordinary citizens and civil society will often get involved in shaping state projects—we maintain a broad distinction between those that governments approve, fund, and otherwise endorse and those that do not entail state involvement.

Unofficial Memory Projects

The broad category of unofficial memory projects includes initiatives and interventions that are accessible to the public, that seek to memorialize past violence, and that are not primarily sponsored or financed by the state (whether they are condoned by or in opposition to state policies).

Perhaps the most flexible of these forms are efforts to capture and disseminate individual survivor stories. In many post-violence circumstances, survivors narrate their stories in print, in speeches, or in other forms of expression, such as dance or other types of performance. Beyond testimonies, there is an enormous range of artistic production that seeks to acknowledge, pay homage, and publicize past violence. This can include books, paintings and murals, sculpture, dramatic performances, radio shows, and film. Such interventions can allow people to hear silenced voices (Wardaya 2013).

Civil society organizations may also play a key role in advancing memory projects. Survivors and their families may form associations, and those associations often organize annual marches or events in which past violence is memorialized. Civil society organizations might establish structured dialogues, in public or private, between victim groups and survivor groups. Some organizations might also develop and maintain an online presence or memorial to the past—a virtual museum of

sorts. Lastly, survivor organizations might also organize public sites of conscience or other public spaces that formally acknowledge the past.

Case Study: Red Terror Martyrs Memorial Museum

One example of a memorial site created by survivors and families of survivors is the Red Terror Martyrs Memorial Museum (RTMMM), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Following the 1991 defeat of the military regime headed by Col. Hailemariam Mengistu, survivors of the Red Terror (1976-1978) and families members of those killed formed an association to create a memorial to those who died. Their work, which was neither supported nor hindered by the post-Mengistu state, took years of effort to define the common goal, gain permission from the state for use of land in Addis Ababa, raise funds to support the project, and then create the building, collections and exhibition. Like curators of exhibitions in all memorial museums, the founders of the RTMMM carefully considered each word of every caption and hundreds of images and artifacts in order to convey a narrative.

The museum commemorates violence from 1976 to 1978 committed by the military dictatorship against the urban-based political opposition. Thus, the museum documents a history that does not belong to the current government, which tolerates, but does not support, the museum.

The RTMMM reflects challenges common to many memorial sites, especially in a context where the project is created by survivors and families of victims. In this case, the narrative simplifies historical events, opting to engage in ways that provoke empathy with victims but that do not support critical evaluation of history. In focusing on the perspective of the primary victims of the Red Terror, the exhibition glosses over violence between and within the various opposition political parties, but it nonetheless provides a compelling historical presentation on how the military came to dominate the country's government following the 1974 revolution and turned its overwhelming lethal force against the population.

At the RTMMM, as in many other cases, the challenge of finding an appropriate final resting place for human remains, and the inability to identify or locate all of the people presumed dead, prompted creation of a memorial site. One outcome of large-scale violence is that frequently bodies are undiscovered, unidentified or, in the eyes of loved ones and survivors, improperly tended to. The remains in the RTMMM are of people who suffered together, bonded through secular revolution, not identity. Hence, there is no properly consecrated ground that might contain the remnants of young protesters who could have been Ethiopian Orthodox, or of another Christian faith, Muslim, or non-religious. For the museum's founders, the lack of a single, religious ground that could unify the dead was a crucial factor in their decision to create a secularized sacred ground in the form of a museum. A constructed memorial site can provide a response to these challenges, by creating a place to mourn when no gravesite exists, or a sacred secular site when an appropriate place cannot otherwise be found. This was the case with the RTMMM. A controversial decision in any context, many memorial museums struggle with how to incorporate human remains into their structures while being respectful of traditional burial rites.

The RTMMM made another choice common to many memorial museums: its docents are all family members of victims or survivors of torture and prison. Their eyewitness accounts provide an indelible introduction to the human losses of a period otherwise presented within a strongly political and collectivized narrative. The goal of the museum, the staff argues, is to teach the current generation to solve problems by looking for non-violent solutions. Museum staff are cautious not to instruct on the contemporary implications of the museum's position against the use of violence for political ends—this, they leave up to the visitors.

Other examples abound. In Indonesia academics, human rights activists and survivors of the 1965 mass violence have collaborated to produce the so-called *museum bergerak* or mobile

museum. In it, they exhibit artifacts, written and audio-visual testimonies of the former victims, along with alternative narratives of what happened in 1965 in different locations in the country. The exhibition was intended to provide space for the former victims to tell their stories as well as to educate the public about different factors that led to the 1965 mass violence and its impact.

Work by artists can also draw on memory as a way to confront the past in a provocative way. For instance, Bosnian photographer Tarik Samarah posted his images from exhumations of mass graves near Srebrenica across Bosnia's Serb Republic, where many people actively denied the genocide, with the simple exhortation "To Remember".

Another provocative installation was undertaken by German artist Gunther Demnig. His *Stolpersteine* (literally, stumbling blocks) consisted of plaques engraved with names and birthdays of Holocaust victims installed into sidewalks in front of the last-known residence of the victims, such that passersby might notice the mini-memorials. While few "trip" over the implanted stones, the term "stumbling blocks" implies a catching off-guard, or an "unsettling", as people walk by. This was not an "official" memory project, in that Demnig did not ask permission of government officials, nor did many government officials offer support to the project in its early years. Instead, this project demonstrates the way in which memory can evolve and spread akin to a process of a social movement (Blatt 2012: 64). Demnig's idea caught on, and eventually the artist allowed the public to participate by paying to sponsor a plaque for €120. Many people have not only engaged in this way but have researched the history of the victim for whom they sponsored the plaque. In selecting what information to include on the plaque—such as calling an individual a "resistance fighter"—people also craft a narrative about (patterns) of individual victims of the Holocaust. People engage in this for a variety of reasons: to separate themselves from the perpetrators and for a sense of catharsis or relief from *Betroffenheit* ("a sense of dismay paired with compassion"), for example (Apel 2014: 185). And yet critics note that the "stumbling blocks" may also have a perverse impact—providing catharsis and freeing participants in the projects from the weight of their history and therefore their responsibility both for the past and for preventing such atrocities in the future (Apel 2014).

Official Projects

State-sponsored projects introduce yet another layer of complexity to how we can understand the contributions of memory. The forms of state memory projects are multiple: mandates to teach a historical topic; naming of streets or public places; and formal memorials, such as an eternal flame, plaques, or public statues in squares as an acknowledgment of the past. In Argentina, there is a "memory park" in which there are plaques, road signs, and statues that memorialize key events and people in that country's Dirty War. In Argentina, Cambodia, Rwanda, Poland, and elsewhere, former torture centers or killing sites have been converted into memorials. Visitors can enter the physical space where torture or murder took place and, often through written materials and guided tours, learn about what had transpired in that location.

Memorial museums are another key way that states often intervene. The genre is distinguished among museums by its aim to "commemorate victims of State, socially determined and ideologically motivated crimes" (International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes). Connecting historical sites and survivor or victim communities, memorial museums often explore history through discrete places and people, query how states justify and enact violence, and provoke connections to political engagement today. Memorial museums are often created by states, frequently in partnership with non-state actors, and many such sites provide extensive documentation and information about past violence; some museums also dedicate themselves to the preservation and archiving of evidence of the past. As museums, these

sites are intended to be permanent, open to the public, with both a memorial and pedagogical—and sometimes political—mission. Major museums such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem (Israel), the Gisozi Memorial (Rwanda), the Tuol Sleng Genocide Memorial Museum in Cambodia, Villa Grimaldi (Chile), Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum (Poland), ESMA Site Museum (Argentina), and others dedicate themselves in this way.

Even state-funded or -supported memorial sites have multiple stakeholders, whose interests may conflict and change over time. *El Ojo que Llora* ("The Eye That Cries") in Peru serves as a key example of the struggles over memory and the relationship of those struggles to present-day violence. Following the decades-long internal armed conflict between the armed organizations—*Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) and the *Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* (MRTA)—and the military government in Peru, which left around 70,000 dead, several memory initiatives emerged. The *Ojo que Llora*, designed by the artist Lika Mutal, was built in 2005, two years after the Peruvian Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (CVR) handed in its report. The project is government funded but also is the product of input and change from survivors, families, artists, civil society organizations, and the regional court of human rights in Latin America.

The memorial aims to commemorate the "victims" of this pre-2003 period of violence, a word that sparked broad contestation about who qualified as such. A large stone—that Mutal had brought to Lima from the pre-Inca archeological site Cerro de Lacco—sits in the center of tens of thousands of smaller stones, many carved with the name of a "victim" of the period of violence. This center stone also contains a fountain, symbolizing the "eye" from which the monument takes its name; the smaller surrounding stones form a labyrinth.

The labyrinth evokes a spiritual process of reflection and invites visitors to contemplate as they pace toward the center. The combination of the center crying eye and the tens of thousands of inscribed stones embraces a plurality of narratives and experiences about the conflict—through re-membering in the sense of giving body again to those who have been dismembered or disappeared—and conveys an overarching story of mass violence and mourning (Drinot 2009: 17). The structure of the monument attempts to balance individual experiences with a national story through including stone tributes to individuals that mark the path to a central symbol of unified mourning. Yet while the structure provides a framework, it does not dictate how individuals and communities necessarily engage with that framework. Some can visit to trace the names of their loved ones and remember their lives; others are triggered and re-traumatized through the exposure to such memories; still others have attempted to destroy the monument through smashing the stones of those they perceive not to be victims.

In 2007, many Peruvians reported not even knowing about this national monument, and a court ruling over memory catapulted the monument into the national news. *El Ojo que Llora* in turn served as a continued catalyst for and site of contestation. When the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that the Peruvian government was responsible for a 1992 raid on the Miguel Castro Castro penitentiary in Lima—in which security forces killed 41 people and bombed and gassed visiting family members—it required that the government add 41 stones to the *Ojo que Llora* monument, each stone painted with the name of one of those who died in the government attack. Yet many Peruvians in and beyond government offices considered those 41 dead to be *Sendero* terrorists who had destroyed lives, families, and entire communities with their brutal tactics. While members of *Sendero Luminoso* had already been included as victims in the monument, the court ruling converted *El Ojo que Llora* monument into a battlefield of memory; the monument anchored a debate about who qualified as a victim, and therefore about not only what events occurred but also how to interpret those events.

The memory project has continued as a focal point for on-going political battles. It has been vandalized several times in relation to evolving political events. While the monument had always

mourned the violence of the country, the new form of engagement with the monument—through vandalism— shifted the associations with the site from one of primarily grief and sadness to one of contestation and battle. While vandals attempted to harm the memorial, the acts and responses to them transformed the meanings of the monument from one of grief to one symbolizing both sadness and continued violence.

In 2013, ten years after the CVR handed in its final report, the Ministry of Culture declared the monument part of the country's "cultural heritage". The Peruvian anti-corruption attorney, and the ex-president of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were both present, among others, at the ceremony. Even as contestation about the memory project continued and even grew (and perhaps because the contestation continued and grew), the site began to take on meaning as a national symbol.

Finally, *El Ojo que Llora* helps illustrate the relationship between memory and forgetting in memory projects. Over time, the sun erased most of the victims' names inscribed on the rocks, an unintended symbol of the force of forgetting over time and the way in which (re)cultivating memory requires an active agent (Hite 2012). Those who wanted to hold onto the names repainted them, requiring an active reproduction of memory. Yet even as these individual names fade, what is left is not an erasure: rather, the stones become part of the Peruvian landscape. The narrative may become less about individual suffering—and relatedly the need for individual prosecutions—but the monument continues to evoke the past and to be relevant to ongoing issues. Memorials, in short, should not be considered static emblems of the past that help tie up loose ends, but rather as physical interventions onto a socio-political horizon that can produce both intended and unintended outcomes.

How Memory Projects Can Contribute to an Exit from Violence

Memory of large-scale violence itself is not a choice. The legacy of violence intrudes on people, families, places, and societies in multiple ways. The question that we prioritize here is: what to do with this memory—or, more accurately, with the diverse memories of periods of violence? How is memory constructed in public, social, and political ways? How do memory projects come about, and what do they come to mean? As our examples show, this is a complex process. In this section, we underscore the main purposes or possible advantages of such projects. What are they supposed to accomplish? What are their possibilities, in particular as they pertain to an exit from violence? What follows is a broad outline in answer to these questions.

1. Creating a space for mourning. While we problematize the idea that public memorialization can be limited to the goal of mourning, we note that it can play an important role in creating a space for this purpose. Mass violence touches large segments of society and often includes destruction of cultural or communal sites. Dedicating space to honor these losses can be an important component of "exiting" violence. By naming the dead, it enables them to be recognized and mourned. Memorial sites can provide a "house" for the grief of survivors and family members of those killed, especially in contexts where bodies are missing or unidentifiable.

2. Restoring agency and pride, breaking silences. Beyond mourning, memorial projects can also represent an attempt to repair social relations with those who were intentionally harmed. Violence demeans and disempowers victims; it imposes a loss of agency through torture, death, and humiliation. Memory projects can counter this disempowerment and silencing by giving voice to the experience of victimization, acknowledging the past, and allowing for a counter-narrative and the recapturing of the experience. Historicizing violence can also help individuals transfer their private

pain to the public sphere and to understand that their pain is part of a pattern.

3. Conveying norms, with the goal of preventing future violence. Memory projects can help to narrate what happened, and who is responsible for what happened. Implicitly and explicitly, memory projects signal what behaviors are illegitimate and can no longer be tolerated. In so doing, such projects imply that such violence should not be repeated. The concept of "never again"—however vaguely it is proposed in many instances—encapsulates this purpose. Memory projects are fundamentally designed to promote ideals, often ones rooted in human rights (Levy & Sznaider 2010). As public officials explained in reference to one exhibit on the Holocaust, such projects are ramparts against forgetting that educate and that counter intolerance and hatred of the other (Gensburger 2017).

4. Sites of political engagement and participation, memory projects provide arenas for a social dialogue about history and a shared future. This was the case in Spain and in Peru, where projects encouraged citizens to engage with their past, ask questions about what happened, and reflect on what the future might hold. This is no guarantee that the outcome will satisfy all or even most; but the point is to provide an opportunity. Memory projects can also be sites of nonviolent contestation and inclusion, allowing for multiple perspectives around a shared social experience of violence. In so doing, they can cultivate empathy and recognition for the other—or at least investment in the process of engagement.

5. Promoting accountability for the past, with the goal of ending impunity. Memory projects can signal accountability for past crimes. Here memory has a clear affiliation with forms of justice after mass violence. Our chapter thus has much in common with that of the working group on justice. If impunity requires a certain level of amnesia and forgetting, then the flip side is that a public memory project can help promote accountability. Legal proceedings are also designed to do this, but with the specialized vocabulary, circumscribed professional procedures, and a limited time horizon associated with such proceedings, the public is often marginalized. Memorials are intended for a public audience and endure over time, inviting new participants to engage with their narratives.

How Memory Projects Can Undermine an Exit from Violence

While memory projects can serve as sources of healing, accountability, mutual understanding, and democratic dialogue, they can also militate *against* an exit from violence.

1. Memory projects can reinforce and reify divisions and cleavages. Violence fractures society: memory projects can mirror this process, contributing to separate histories and polarization. Memory projects invariably produce historical narratives that ascribe ethical meaning to history, often dividing the people involved in violence into normative categories that are extended to whole groups of people in society. They can participate in a form of collective guilt or posit a collective righteousness through victimization. Thus, the work of creating memorial projects can itself be a continuation of conflict, where each side tries to assert its position through construction of markers of its own suffering. Thus, in the Balkans, following the conflicts than ran from 1991 to 1999 in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, there have been new battles over memorial sites, including disputes over which older memorials should remained honored (e.g., those from World Wars I and II), the antagonistic positioning of memorials to the recent wars, and the proliferation of markers of one's own suffering and heroes to the exclusion of others. In such circumstances, memory projects reflect and present in physical form the very

divisions that stoked the conflicts. In this way, they can contribute to hatred under the sign of innocence and victimization. They can justify a return of violence and repression if previous victims become perpetrators.

2. Memory projects can alienate survivors. Those in power are often interested in a particular version of history that justifies their practices and privileges. These political interests often are in tension with the actual experience of survivors and victims. Even when they are not in tension, the very act of constructing public memory requires a move from the individual/personal to the state and public. This means that individuals can lose power over defining the story and come into tension with those who want to instrumentalize memory. In some instances, concern about this issue has led survivor groups to argue against memorialization efforts, as did the *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina (Hamber and Wilson 2002: 45).

Sometimes survivors do want to speak, but silence is important for others, and indeed there can be agency and power in forgetting (Rieff 2016).

3. Memory can be a powerful tool for political actors. Throughout our discussions and in this chapter, we have drawn attention to cases whereby powerful actors have monopolized memorial discourses and bent them to their own interests. Memory has long been a reservoir for nationalist claims, as we noted several times, particularly in relation to the Valley of the Fallen in Spain. Selective memorialization can distort history. For example, in Turkey, there is a monument to the events of 1915, as well as an official state monument and museums in Igdir. But rather than acknowledging genocide or the large-scale victimization of Armenians, these memory projects commemorate the Muslims killed by Armenians. In the major military museum in Istanbul the same official narrative is displayed in a room that includes the bloodied shirt of Talat PaSa, the principal organizer of the Armenian genocide, who was assassinated by an Armenian after World War I.

Even when the past grievances are based on the experience of a primary "victim" group, as in Rwanda, memorialization can serve the interests of new powers. When past grievances are called into the present as a way to shield powerful political actors from scrutiny, memory does not serve to exit violence, but helps reinforce asymmetries that often prompt violence.

4. Memory projects can depoliticize. Memory projects can, but should not, substitute for politics, and can in fact inhibit politics. In many ways, exiting violence in the long run is about mutual understanding, compromise, and moderation. By contrast, memory projects can encourage absolutist claims through promoting a normative sense of victimhood, thereby thwarting efforts at compromise.

5. Memory projects do not represent real power or change. You can have a memorial but also the persistence of intense inequality and bad social, economic, and health outcomes, as in South Africa. In those circumstances, memory projects must be accompanied by material changes in power relations. Without social restructuring, memory projects memorialize but fail to enact a new set of social relationships that actually combat violence or remaining inequalities in control over resources, political representation, and status hierarchies. The South Africa case shows that even a project as ambitious and inclusive as that country's TRC and efforts at memorialization fail to end violence if the structural conditions that enabled violence in the first place (here, white supremacy and a capitalist system dependent upon extremely cheap and exploitable black labor) are not fundamentally altered. Memory projects must be accompanied by projects of socio-economic (and not just sociopolitical) transformation. In Australia, the living conditions of most aboriginal populations is quite poor yet their claim to the land is routinely recognized.

Lessons Learned

Violence never concludes neatly; it is a productive force that alters the scenes where it is enacted and is inscribed in individuals, space, architecture, society, economics, and politics in multiple and complex ways. Memory in this context is, broadly, how individuals and collectives intentionally recall and interpret or unintentionally embody past violence. On the one hand, memory is inescapable after mass violence; violence haunts people and groups.

But it may not always follow that speaking about or publicly memorializing such violence, especially in state-sponsored forms, is the best response. Natan Sznaider made this point again and again in our discussions. Does taking responsibility for committed crimes in the past really stabilize democracy in the future? How can we know that memory causes more humaneness? Could forgetting and silence possibly be a better strategy for exiting violence? Forgetting and amnesties constitute the implied and often explicit background for issues of restitution, the politics of memory, and other reactions to the public outing of historical injustices. It confronts us with difficult questions. Should we privilege memory over forgetting, punishment over amnesty, resentment over forgiveness? Should amnesties privilege former victims or absolve the perpetrators?

Forgetting, memory, and justice, then, stand in an uncertain and perplexing relationship. Clearly, to do justice is to remember, to preserve and guard in memory, the injury, the victim, and the perpetrator. This can and should not be denied. Yet peace and a life in common also may call for the forgetting of past evils, if exiting from violence is the goal.

Memory is a terrain of struggle and contestation. People who see themselves as victims, survivors, and their kin—or their rescuers—often mobilize to render public stories of violence. These categories are themselves often disputed. In many cases, there are forces to keep their experiences out of public awareness, to actively silence them, or to control how the story is told. Memory is also often presented as an ethical political parable, a tool to tell a story of good and bad, to consolidate nationalism and to justify policies. As such, memory can be divisive and tendentious, a way into conflict rather than an escape from it.

Recognizing the problems and risks, as well as potential contributions, of memory projects, our group sought to clarify what alters the balance between these possibilities. We developed what we broadly called an "ethics of memory": six attributes of memory projects that contribute to exiting violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Self-reflective of the politics of memory.** Memory and power are intertwined. In many cases, official memories reify one set of experiences and polarize the society—often asserting that memorialization is an ethical act rather than recognizing its political character. Those who are responsible for memory projects should reflect on how their work is imbricated with power. At the same time, memory projects should be cognizant of their limits. Memory leaves much undone and untouched—structural violence, deep inequality, material deprivation, and ongoing political exclusion require other tools. Advocates for memory projects should be aware of their power and their limits.

2. **Provide a respectful space in which to acknowledge and support mourning for those who suffered from past violence.** Memory projects can create space for mourning and acknowledging individual losses, and thereby honor experiences and violence that were previously invisible and facilitate personal and social resolution.

3. **Break silences.** Memory projects make important interventions in cases where large-scale violence was previously unacknowledged or its memory actively suppressed. In these contexts, memory contributes to exiting violence by allowing diverse narratives of past violence to emerge.

4. **Encourage democratic discussion.** *I*n many cases, after conflicts end, memory projects reconstitute fault lines and lead to mutual misunderstanding. Memory projects need not form a dialogue of the deaf but can aspire to creating spaces for learning and dialogue, while recognizing past victimization. This is a choice: memory projects can be democratic and reflexive in their intellectual orientation rather than dogmatic.

5. **Aim for mutual recognition.** Memory projects can honor multiple experiences. As Viet Thanh Nguyen writes, it is possible to seek an ethics of memory, that "strives both to remember one's own and others, while at the same time drawing attention to the life cycle of memories and their industrial production, how they are fashioned and forgotten, how they evolve and change" (2016: 12).

6. **Recognize changes over time.** The meaning and value of a memory project changes over time. Victims become survivors and citizens. Even if the wounds never heal, memory work should not impose fixed categories on people or groups. Over time, memory work can help transform the dialectic of victim and perpetrator, diffusing rather than consolidating former animosities.

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