IDENTITY, RITUALS, AND NARRATIVES
LESSONS FROM REENTRY AND REINTEGRATION AFTER GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

HOLLIE NYSETH BREHM

VIOLENT EXTREMIST DISENGAGEMENT AND RECONCILIATION

"*Widespread reintegration following brutal, intimate violence was not easy, and reintegration remains an ongoing process that some people—especially survivors—continue to view with unease.*"

FAST FACTS

→ The process of reentering and reintegrating former participants in violence must incorporate more than physical return to a community. It should also involve meaningful inclusion in society.

→ Rituals not only enhance a sense of belonging—they also help returning Rwandans dissociate themselves from their former identities.

→ One critical reason many Rwandans are willing to consider re-engaging with people who committed genocide is the presence of a common narrative about why the genocide happened.

Context

During the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, hundreds of thousands of civilians picked up machetes or clubs, joined killing groups, and targeted their neighbors.[1] Such mass civilian participation resulted in upwards of one million deaths—along with widespread sexualized violence, torture, forced displacement, and property damage—in just over three months.[2] In the aftermath,

---

1   Scott Straus, "How Many Perpetrators Were There in the Rwandan Genocide? An Estimate," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 1 (2004): 85-98. https://doi.org/10.1080/1462352042000194728.

2   Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999); Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing of Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); André Guichaoua, *From War to Genocide: Criminal Politics in Rwanda, 1990–1994* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015); Helen M. Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 241-286. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X99003018; Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009);

a state-implemented court system—known as *gacaca*[3]—sentenced roughly 250,000 people to prisons and community service camps for their engagement in the genocide.[4] Over the past decade, many of these formerly incarcerated individuals have been returning to their villages, often to live side-by-side with those they harmed.

This widespread reintegration following brutal, intimate violence was not easy, and reintegration remains an ongoing process that some people—especially survivors—continue to view with unease. Nevertheless, Rwandans *are* once again living together; and in the vast majority of instances, family members and communities are not rejecting formerly incarcerated individuals when they return.

This policy note outlines core findings from a case study of the experiences of approximately 200 Rwandans as they left prison or community service camp and returned to their communities. Specifically, it relies upon interviews with each of these individuals before, 6 months after, and again 1 year after their release —as well as interviews with over 100 community members.[5] Although reentry and reintegration[6] are multifaceted processes, this policy note focuses on identity, rituals, and narratives with an emphasis on initial reentry, which sets the stage for broader reintegration. In doing so, the note highlights insights that are relevant to reentry and reintegration following not only genocide but also mass violence, war, insurgency, violent extremism, and other forms of political violence. It simultaneously recognizes, however, that the case of Rwanda has exceptional elements and addresses these elements throughout.

Relevance to Policy and Practice

Criminologists have been studying reentry and reintegration after incarceration for violent crime for decades.[7] Scholars have assessed reentry and reintegration following individuals' release

---

Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Filip Reyntjens, "Rwanda: Genocide and Beyond," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 9, no. 3 (1996): 240-251. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/9.3.240; Scott Straus, The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). The genocidal violence involved Hutu targeting Tutsi, though many Hutu were also killed. There was also a civil war that unfolded alongside the genocide.

3   Phil Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice Without Lawyers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

4   Author's unpublished figures (please contact for more details). Note that sentences ranged from several months to 30 years; about 5 percent of cases also resulted in life in prison.

5   The community member interviews included 2 focus groups with survivors as well as 75 one-on-one interviews. The one-on-one interviews involved discussions with survivors, people who were not survivors but did not commit genocide, and college-aged students who were not alive in 1994.

6   This study conceptualizes *reentry* as the initial weeks and months an individual is back in their community (or, for a small minority, in a new community). *Reintegration* refers to the longer process of integrating or reintegrating into the community over months and even years, which involves resuming or creating social, political, economic, and other ties. This note emphasizes social reintegration.

7   James P. Lynch and William J. Sabol, "Prisoner Reentry in Perspective," *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center* (2001). http://webarchive.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410213_reentry.PDF; Jeremy Travis and Joan Petersilia, "Reentry Reconsidered: A New Look at an Old Question," *Crime & Delinquency* 47, no. 3 (2001): 291-313. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128701047003001; Jeremy Travis, Amy L. Solomon, and Michelle Waul, "From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry," *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center* (2001). http://webarchive.urban.org/UploadedPDF/from_prison_to_home.pdf; Joan Petersilia, *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Shadd Maruna, Russ Immarigeon, and Thomas P. LeBel. *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration*

from prison, with success often defined as an absence of recidivism or, more broadly, as the (re-) establishment of positive relationships with oneself, one's family, and one's community.[8] Much of this work examines reentry and reintegration within the context of one's life course, emphasizing how those who return to their communities—or to society more broadly—adapt to their new lives over time.[9]

Although this research has identified numerous factors that aid or hinder reentry and reintegration, criminologists have paid particular attention to the role of labels. Essentially, people's identities and behaviors are impacted by the terms others use to describe and classify them. Once individuals have been labeled as deviant, they often face new problems that stem from their and others' reactions to these labels. For instance, when society's reaction is to stigmatize or demonize, people with deviant labels can be left with limited opportunity for achieving respect and affirmation in mainstream society.[10] This suggests that paying attention to labels, as well as community reactions, is paramount.

However, knowledge gleaned from this robust body of research on formerly incarcerated people is often not integrated into conversations about the reentry and reintegration of people who engage in violent extremism, join militias, commit genocide, or participate in other political violence.[11] This policy note consequently emphasizes four lessons learned regarding initial reentry in Rwanda, informed by criminological scholarship. The note focuses on the roles of identity, rituals, and narratives and their importance in the development of a prosocial identity and sense of belonging, both of which are fundamental human needs across contexts and cultures. Policymakers designing programs to reintegrate those who participate in political violence should thus consider the following aspects in programming and policy.

(Portland: Willan Publishing, 2004); Jeremy Travis, *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry* (Washington DC: The Urban Institute Press, 2005).

8   The latter, broader definition is the definition of "success" used in this policy note.

9   John H. Laub and Robert J. Sampson, "Turning Points in the Life Course: Why Change Matters to the Study of Crime," *Criminology* 31, no. 3 (1993): 301-325. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1993.tb01132.x; John H. Laub and Robert J. Sampson, "Desistance from Crime over the Life Course," in *Handbook of the Life Course,* eds. Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan (Boston: Springer, 2003), 295-309; Glen H. Elder Jr., Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Robert Crosnoe, "The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory," in *Handbook of the Life Course,* eds. Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan (Boston: Springer, 2003), 3-19.

10 See summaries of this work in Visher, Christy A., and Jeremy Travis, "Transitions from Prison to Community: Understanding Individual Pathways," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29, no. 1 (2003): 89-113. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.095931; Morenoff, Jeffrey D., and David J. Harding, "Incarceration, Prisoner Reentry, and Communities," *Annual Review of Sociology* 429-411 :(2014) 40. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc145511-071811-.

11 Alpaslan Özerdem, "A Re-Conceptualisation of Ex-Combatant Reintegration: 'Social Reintegration' Approach," *Conflict, Security & Development* 1 (2012): 51-73. https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2012.667661; Sharon Kniss, "Rebuilding Lives in Community: Linking Lessons from Ex-Offender and Ex-Combatant Reintegration," last modified March 2013, http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/ex-offender-ex-combatant-reintegration; Stina Torjeson, "Towards a Theory of Ex-Combatant Reintegration," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 2, no. 3 (2013). http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.cx.

Recommendations

Encourage rituals that mark the transition back to the community.

The process of reentering and reintegrating former participants in violence must incorporate more than physical return to a community. It should also involve meaningful inclusion in society—a significant indicator of reintegration success.[12] Such inclusion may be particularly vital when an individual's crimes were committed against and/or transgressed the norms of the community to which they are returning, as norm breaking often leads to exclusion.

Although inclusion is a process, a symbolic gesture signifying a community's openness to reacceptance is especially important to mark *initial* inclusion in a family and/or community upon return. This gesture is also a rite of passage. Rites of passage—or rituals that signify changes of place, social position, and age[13]—exist in every culture. While many rites of passage are associated with parties and celebrations—such as weddings or baby showers—they need not be extravagant and can take the form of small acts that recognize a change in the individual's status. In Rwanda, for example, simple rites of passage mark the change in status from a person who committed violence to someone who is a member of the community and simultaneously indicate that members of a family or a community are open to integrating or reintegrating the individual.

When Rwandans who were incarcerated for genocide reenter their communities, they are often greeted with family dinners that symbolically mark their reentry. Neighbors also typically bring gifts, such as soda, food, or a few coins to pay for a drink at a local bar. In return, the people who were incarcerated partake in the gifts and engage with their visitors. These minor yet meaningful acts signify the return of formerly incarcerated people to their communities and thus are rites of passage. The rituals concurrently signal the possibility of reacceptance by families and community members—something that was a surprise to many people in this study. One individual, for instance, said that the gestures "corrected my feeling that people hated me."

Though these rituals may be specific to Rwanda, the need to symbolically rejoin one's community is not. Much research on reentry and reintegration in other contexts has highlighted this necessity as well. For instance, a survey of former combatants in Liberia asked respondents about the conditions that would influence their return to violence, finding that a lack of acceptance from their families and/or communities was among the most commonly-stated reasons.[14] In much the same way, criminological research emphasizes the importance of prosocial relationships upon return from prison,[15] illustrating the universal need to belong. Thus, a culturally symbolic ritual may help signal possible reacceptance and mark the transition back to a community in any context.

Still, there are a number of issues that may impact the feasibility of reacceptance rituals. First, there

---

12   Shadd Maruna, "Reentry as a Rite of Passage," *Punishment & Society* 13, no. 1 (2011): 3-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474510385641.

13   Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 4.

14   Richard Hill, Gwendolyn Taylor, and Jonathan Temin, "Helping Ex-combatants Help Themselves: Understanding Ex-combatant Reintegration in Lofa County, Liberia," *Cooperative Housing Federation International* (2008). www.chfinternational.org/files/Special%20report%20No.%20211%20SEPT%2008.pdf.

15   Visher and Travis, "Transitions from Prison to Community"; Morenoff and Harding, "Incarceration, Prisoner Reentry, and Communities."

could be opposition and reluctance within a community to extend such gestures of reacceptance or to consider reacceptance in the first place. To be certain, some Rwandans—including but not limited to genocide survivors—expressed great reluctance about people returning from prison and hesitancy to welcome them. One individual told us, for instance, that he originally thought 20 years was a long sentence until he saw the people who killed his parents return to his village. In this sense, it is critical to highlight that the gestures do not absolve people from guilt but rather signal a willingness to try to engage with returning individuals and their new identities going forward. The feasibility of rituals also varies across communities,[16] which are not monolithic and differ in their degree of willingness to engage with reintegrating individuals.

More broadly, the case of Rwanda is unique to the country's history, and numerous factors—such as the relatively large amount of time that had passed between the violence and people's reentry or specific government programs tied to unity and reconciliation—impact community members' readiness to engage in rituals. It is also important to note that the authoritarian government encourages reconciliation, although it is equally important to highlight that while such encouragement impacts reentry, the processes we observed were not occurring out of fear.

Communities and countries with different experiences require further contextual considerations. As such, policymakers and practitioners should assess the following when seeking to implement similar initiatives:

→ The nature of the individual's violent engagement;

→ The individual's willingness to reintegrate;

→ The community's and/or country's socio-cultural rituals; and

→ The community history of violence.

Adopt person-first language.

Rituals not only enhance a sense of belonging—they also help returning Rwandans dissociate themselves from their former identities. Identities are shaped by how we view ourselves, how we believe others view us, and how others treat us. Identities are also dynamic and can be impacted by the experiences one has and the groups to which one belongs.[17] With respect to violence, armed and radicalized groups often enact rituals to strip away old identities and create new ones. The rites of passage discussed in the previous recommendation symbolize another shift in identity *away* from identities tied to stigmatized violence. Within research on desistance from crime, this process is often referred to as "knifing off" one's violent past and severing the associated identity.[18]

Labels can be particularly impactful for this process. For instance, the formerly incarcerated Rwandans interviewed for this project vehemently rejected the label of "*genocidaire,*" making a point to clarify that they were no longer *genocidaires*. They also developed narratives of redemption, suggesting they are "different" today, that they are "Rwandans once again," and

---

16   The concept of "community" varies culturally and should be considered in each context as well.

17   See Timothy J. Owens, Dawn T. Robinson, and Lynn Smith-Lovin, "Three Faces of Identity," *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010) 477-99. 10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134725.

18   See John H. Laub and Robert J. Sampson, "Understanding Desistance from Crime," *Crime and Justice* 28 (2001) 1-69. https://doi.org/10.1086/652208.

that they are "citizens again." Though the terminological distinction between "*genocidaire*" and someone who committed genocide (or "terrorist" and someone who committed terrorism, or "insurgent" and someone who engaged in insurgency) may seem small, focusing on the person before the violent action helps to reinforce their identities as persons who no longer engage in violence.

Breaking the link between people and their violent acts is also key to a criminological concept called reintegrative shaming. Reintegrative shaming recognizes individuals' wrongful acts yet still accepts them as moral members of society—as opposed to stigmatizing them for their past actions and thus rejecting their inclusion in society.[19] As such, shaming is important to reinforce that their violent actions were wrong; yet, it can be done in a way that acknowledges people are redeemable and not defined by their past actions. Labeling people by their actions can have consequences for future violence. Research finds that when society labels people as deviant, they are more likely to engage in deviance.[20] A study of almost 100,000 Americans found that those whom courts formally labeled as "felons" were significantly more likely to recidivate as compared to those who were not.[21]

In the case of Rwanda, person-first labels are not currently a major aspect of government or nonprofit responses to the genocide. Many of the community members interviewed likewise use the term "*genocidaire.*" Still, policymakers in Rwanda and in other contexts should encourage person-first language in any narratives regarding the violence, ranging from news reports to textbooks to reentry and reintegration-related programs. Labels are especially important when they come from people in power[22]—thus families, communities, organizations, and states should employ person-first language that emphasizes the person over the action.

The government of Rwanda and policymakers and practitioners in other contexts following political violence should consider the following:

→ Encourage person-first language that centers the person before the violent act;

→ Avoid negative terms like "the enemy" or even common terms like "perpetrators" that conflate identities with past actions;

→ Ensure that people in power, such as government actors and policymakers, employ person-first language; and

---

19   John Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame and Reintegration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

20   Howard Becker, *Outsiders* (New York: The Free Press, 1963); Jón Gunnar Bernburg, Marvin D. Krohn, and Craig J. Rivera, "Official Labeling, Criminal Embeddedness, and Subsequent Delinquency: A Longitudinal Test of Labeling Theory," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 43, no. 1 (2006): 67-88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427805280068; Ted Chiricos, Kelle Barrick, William Bales, and Stephanie Bontrager, "The Labeling of Convicted Felons and Its Consequences for Recidivism," *Criminology* 45, no. 3 (2007): 547-581. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2007.00089.x; Emily Restivo and Mark M. Lanier, "Measuring the Contextual Effects and Mitigating Factors of Labeling Theory," *Justice Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2015): 116-141. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2012.756115; Kelle Barrick, "A Review of Prior Tests of Labeling Theory," in *Labeling Theory: Empirical Tests,* eds. David P. Farrington and Joseph Murray (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2014), 89-112; Anthony Petrosino, Carolyn Turpin-Petrosino, and Sarah Guckenburg. "Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency." *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 6, no. 1 (2010): 1-88. https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2010.1.

21   Chiricos et al., "The Labeling of Convicted Felons."

22   In April, 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice adopted a policy that changes the language used to describe individuals with criminal records by using person-first terms (e.g., "person with a felony") rather than "felon" or "offender."

→ Include person-first language in official narratives of the violence presented in museums, commemorative events, and similar spaces.

Adopt a structural narrative of violence.

Broader narratives are also significant for the reentry and reintegration process. One critical reason many Rwandans are willing to consider re-engaging with people who committed genocide is the presence of a common narrative about why the genocide happened. Throughout the country, sources like public school curricula and government-run memorials paint a complex picture of the violence as the result of colonialism and other historical processes. These sources also place blame on former government officials who discriminated against Tutsi and the local leaders who encouraged violence—a narrative that is notably possible due to the regime change that occurred in Rwanda. Accordingly, when asked why individuals committed genocide, the vast majority of Rwandans interviewed for this study discussed the *structural* factors (rather than only individual factors) that led to the violence.[23]

There are certainly issues with state narratives of violence, as they inevitably omit some people's perspectives and are framed to support the state and cement its power. Yet, one important benefit of a dominant narrative of the violence is that most Rwandans share a common understanding of the causes of the genocide—causes that are generally framed as *external* to the people who committed violence. By placing some blame on historical colonialism and governments, this narrative contextualizes the actions of the individuals who perpetrated the violence on the ground, in contrast to many settings where common knowledge attributes violence exclusively to individual qualities (e.g., greed or impulsiveness).

In turn, this contextualization facilitates reentry and reintegration by impacting community members' understandings of violence.[24] Though a structural narrative does not eliminate individual blame and should simultaneously recognize individual factors, a structural narrative can make individuals' violent actions more comprehensible and can lessen associated stigma. Thus, in addition to breaking the link between the person and the violent act by using person-first language, it is important for narratives of the violence to include explanations that are external to the individual. Again, these explanations do not exonerate individual guilt but rather should be viewed as complementary to the individual-level factors that influenced participation in violence. Furthermore, as noted above, individuals who engaged in violence can and should still be shamed for their actions in ways that productively reintegrate them rather than stigmatize them. Shaming recognizes individual agency with the simultaneous acknowledgement that this agency was impacted by social structure.

It is important to note that community members' willingness to accept structural narratives alongside individual ones may be impacted by whether people were held accountable for their actions. In the case of Rwanda, many community members indicated the importance of justice as they discussed the return of formerly incarcerated people. Those found guilty of crimes of genocide were charged individually at *gacaca*, and even bystanders were often charged for their

---

23   This aligns with the psychological concept of integrative complexity, the ability to move beyond binary thinking to achieve complex thinking that recognizes multiple viewpoints and complex structural processes.

24   This conceptualization likely impacts people's identities as well, as does treatment by community members.

role. Although there were varying views of these punishments and the broader court process,[25] many community members suggested that punishments aided their willingness to consider reintegration. It is inappropriate to suggest that punishment should always be implemented, or even that *gacaca*'s punishments were the best course of action. Yet, in this case, punishment likely impacted Rwandans' willingness to accept structural explanations.

Generalizable lessons from this specific case include the following:

→ Identify the structural factors that caused violence, such as broader political reasons driving violent extremism rather than purely individualistic ones;

→ Incorporate structural explanations of violence into history textbooks, museums, memorials, and other narrative-facilitating spaces;

→ Integrate individual and structural explanations into narratives such that a more complete understanding of violence is achieved; and

→ Pay attention to pitfalls in the narratives, such as how they may privilege certain versions of history over others.[26]

Recognize diversity among those reentering and reintegrating, including gendered differences.

Finally, individuals reentering and reintegrating into their communities are not a monolithic group. Many social factors—like age, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity—shape reentry and reintegration experiences. Among those social factors, one is particularly salient in the case of Rwanda: gender. Put simply, women's paths to reentry and reintegration have been paved with more obstacles than those of men. For instance, most formerly incarcerated men in this study remarried and reside in dual wage-earner households, while the majority of women in the study do not have partners. Women in this study are also living in comparatively worse economic conditions.

Although many factors may explain such differences, community members' perceptions are telling. When asked about women who participated in the genocide, many Rwandans express concern that these women are "not normal" or even "evil." This finding suggests that there is much stigma surrounding women who engaged in genocidal violence, as they transgressed gendered norms.[27] While men's violent actions are sometimes considered understandable in light of the complex structural factors that shaped actions, many community members see women's actions as aberrant. This phenomenon is not unique to Rwanda, and other research has addressed how women who commit extreme violence are often stigmatized by their communities.[28] Furthermore, many of the husbands of the women who were formerly incarcerated remarried, while many

---

25   To be certain, the process had numerous issues. For instance, the process relied on eye-witness testimony; people rarely had lawyers; community members sometimes falsely accused people as a way to retaliate for petty squabbles; and only violence tied to the genocide (and not the concurrent civil war) was tried in the courts.

26   As noted above, the strong state narrative of the violence in Rwanda has limitations, as it often propagates a narrative of the genocide that excludes certain suffering and, like any government narrative, purposefully supports the state.

27   Sara E. Brown, *Gender and the Genocide in Rwanda: Women as Rescuers and Perpetrators* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

28   Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 2007).

of the wives did not. Community members and formerly incarcerated people alike exhibited a general cultural belief that women could survive without their husbands but that men could not be expected to live without their wives.[29]

More broadly, this finding underscores the gendered dynamics of reentry and reintegration and illustrates that the experiences of returning individuals are shaped by other aspects of identity. Programs and policies must accordingly consider intersectionality—or how various identities intersect and overlap to produce social experiences. For instance, policymakers and other influencers should explicitly address gender or other aspects of identity in narratives of past violence. Programming should also be tailored to serve the special needs of certain segments of the reentering and reintegrating population. For example, in Rwanda, half-way houses—places where women could go after completing their sentences but prior to returning to their communities—could help prepare women for community members' responses.[30] Community programs could simultaneously help teach Rwandans about gender bias.

Thus, those attending to reentry and reintegration across contexts should:

→ Analyze how different social factors—such as gender, age, religion, or ethnicity—impact the reentry and reintegration process;

→ Recognize that the factors that will be most salient vary across cultural contexts and may even vary across communities; and

→ Design programs that are sensitive to intersectionality, which again involves the recognition of how multiple identities intersect to impact people's lived realities.

Conclusion

Reentering and reintegrating individuals who committed extreme violence is far from easy. The case of Rwanda represents a unique case given the widespread public participation in violence and the subsequent large-scale reentry and reintegration effort. Though the factors associated with long-term reintegration in Rwanda have yet to be understood, this note has focused on factors associated with initial reentry which has, largely, been better than expected for this case. As such, some lessons gleaned from this exceptional case can inform other contexts. This policy note has accordingly emphasized lessons tied to encouraging rituals, using person-first language, propagating a structural narrative of the violence, and recognizing diversity among reentering and reintegrating populations with an emphasis on initial reentry. These lessons speak to the universal human need to belong, which in turn is important for more secure, stable, and peaceful societies.

---

29   Furthermore, it is rare for middle-aged women and older women to remarry, though Rwandan men can culturally remarry at most any time.

30   To be clear, half-way houses have yet to be implemented but are being considered in the Rwandan case.

Suggested Further Reading

On Labeling

Bernburg, Jon Gunnar. "Labeling Theory." In *Handbook on Crime and Deviance*, pp. 179-196. Springer, Cham, 2019. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jon_Bernburg/publication/336312509_LABEL-ING_THEORY/links/5d9b46e4458515c1d39d015c/LABELING-THEORY.pdf

Chiricos, Ted, Kelle Barrick, William Bales, and Stephanie Bontrager. "The Labeling of Convicted Felons and Its Consequences for Recidivism." *Criminology* 45, no. 3 (2007): 547-581. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2007.00089.x.

On Narratives and Rituals

Cobb, Sara B. *Speaking of Violence: The Politics and Poetics of Narrative in Conflict Resolution*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Maruna, Shadd. "Reentry as a Rite of Passage." *Punishment & Society* 13, no. 1 (2011): 3-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474510385641.

On Reintegrative Shaming

Braithwaite, John. "Reintegrative Shaming." *Crime: Critical Concepts in Sociology. London: Routledge* (2003): 345-361. http://johnbraithwaite.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2000_Reintegrative-Shaming.pdf

Murphy, Kristina, and Nathan Harris. "Shaming, Shame and Recidivism: A Test of Reintegrative Shaming Theory in the White-Collar Crime Context." *The British Journal of Criminology* 47, no. 6 (2007): 900-917. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azm037

On the Case of Rwanda

Fujii, Lee Ann. *Killing of Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.

Hintjens, Helen M. "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 241-286. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X99003018.

Sources

Barrick, Kelle. "A Review of Prior Tests of Labeling Theory." In *Labeling Theory: Empirical Tests,* edited by David P. Farrington and Joseph Murray, 89-112. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2014.

Becker, Howard. *Outsiders.* New York: The Free Press, 1963.

Bernburg, Jón Gunnar, Marvin D. Krohn, and Craig J. Rivera. "Official Labeling, Criminal Embeddedness, and Subsequent Delinquency: A Longitudinal Test of Labeling Theory." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 43, no. 1 (2006): 67-88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427805280068.

Braithwaite, John. *Crime, Shame and Reintegration.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Brown, Sara E. *Gender and the Genocide in Rwanda: Women as Rescuers and Perpetrators*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Chiricos, Ted, Kelle Barrick, William Bales, and Stephanie Bontrager. "The Labeling of Convicted Felons and Its Consequences for Recidivism." *Criminology* 45, no. 3 (2007): 547-581. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2007.00089.x.

Clark, Phil. *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice Without Lawyers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Des Forges, Alison. *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999.

Elder Jr., Glen H., Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Robert Crosnoe. "The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory." In *Handbook of the Life Course,* edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan, 3-19. Boston: Springer, 2003.

Fujii, Lee Ann. *Killing of Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.

Guichaoua, André. *From War to Genocide: Criminal Politics in Rwanda, 1990–1994*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015.

Hill, Richard, Gwendolyn Taylor, and Jonathan Temin. "Helping Ex-combatants Help Themselves: Understanding Ex-combatant Reintegration in Lofa County, Liberia." *Cooperative Housing Federation International* (2008). www.chfinternational.org/files/Special%20report%20No.%20211%20SEPT%2008.pdf.

Hintjens, Helen M. "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 241-286. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X99003018.

Kniss, Sharon. "Rebuilding Lives in Community: Linking Lessons from Ex-Offender and Ex-Combatant Reintegration." Last modified March 2013. http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/ex-offender-ex-combatant-reintegration.

Laub, John H. and Robert J. Sampson. "Desistance from Crime over the Life Course." In *Handbook of the Life Course,* edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan, 295-309. Boston: Springer, 2003.

Laub, John H. and Robert J. Sampson. "Turning Points in the Life Course: Why Change Matters to the Study of Crime." *Criminology* 31, no. 3 (1993): 301-325. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1993.tb01132.x.

Laub, John H. and Robert J. Sampson. "Understanding Desistance from Crime." *Crime and Justice* 28 (2001): 1-69. https://doi.org/10.1086/652208.

Longman, Timothy. *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Lynch, James P. and William J. Sabol. "Prisoner Reentry in Perspective." *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center* (2001). http://webarchive.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410213_reentry.PDF.

Mamdani, Mahmood. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Maruna, Shadd. "Reentry as a Rite of Passage." *Punishment & Society* 13, no. 1 (2011): 3-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474510385641.

Maruna, Shadd, Russ Immarigeon, and Thomas P. LeBel. *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration*. Portland: Willan Publishing, 2004.

Morenoff, Jeffrey D., and David J. Harding. "Incarceration, Prisoner Reentry, and Communities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 429-411 :(2014) 40.

Petersilia, Joan. *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Petrosino, Anthony, Carolyn Turpin-Petrosino, and Sarah Guckenburg. "Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency." *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 6, no. 1 (2010): 1-88. https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2010.1.

Restivo, Emily and Mark M. Lanier. "Measuring the Contextual Effects and Mitigating Factors of Labeling Theory." *Justice Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2015): 116-141. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2012.756115.

Reyntjens, Filip. "Rwanda: Genocide and Beyond." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 9, no. 3 (1996): 240-251. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/9.3.240.

Sjoberg, Laura and Caron E. Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics.* London: Zed Books Ltd., 2007.

Straus, Scott. "How Many Perpetrators Were There in the Rwandan Genocide? An Estimate." *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 1 (2004): 85-98. https://doi.org/10.1080/1462352042000194728.

Straus, Scott. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.

Torjeson, Stina. "Towards a Theory of Ex-Combatant Reintegration." *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 2, no. 3 (2013). http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.cx.

Travis, Jeremy. *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry.* Washington DC: The Urban Institute Press, 2005.

Travis, Jeremy and Joan Petersilia. "Reentry Reconsidered: A New Look at an Old Question." *Crime & Delinquency* 47, no. 3 (2001): 291-313. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128701047003001.

Travis, Jeremy, Amy L. Solomon, and Michelle Waul. "From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry." *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center* (2001). http://webarchive.urban.org/UploadedPDF/from_prison_to_home.pdf.

Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Visher, Christy A., and Jeremy Travis. "Transitions from Prison to Community: Understanding Individual Pathways." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29, no. 1 (2003): 89-113.

About the Note

Author: Hollie Nyseth Brehm, Ph.D., The Ohio State University

Hollie Nyseth Brehm *is an associate professor of sociology at The Ohio State University. Her research agenda is motivated by the fundamental questions of why and how atrocities occur and who commits them. She is equally interested in the process of transitional justice after atrocities, including how societies rebuild, how international actors respond to the violence, and the lasting effects of mass violence. In other words, Nyseth Brehm studies multiple processes of mass violence, human rights violations, and mass crime — why they occur, how they occur, their effects, and responses to them.*