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LET GO AND REMEMBER

How Finnish Communities Experienced and Memorialized School Shootings

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the aftermath of mass violence in local communities. Two rampage school shootings that occurred in Finland are analyzed and compared to examine the ways in which communities experience, make sense of, and recover from sudden acts of mass violence. The studied cases took place at Jokela High School, in southern Finland, and at a polytechnic university in Kauhajoki, in western Finland, in 2007 and 2008 respectively. Including the perpetrators, 20 people lost their lives in these shootings. These incidents are part of the global school shooting phenomenon with increasing numbers of incidents occurring in the last two decades, mostly in North America and Europe.

The dynamic of solidarity and conflict is one of the main themes of this study. It builds upon previous research on mass violence and disasters which suggests that solidarity increases after a crisis, and that this increase is often followed by conflict in the affected communities. This dissertation also draws from theoretical discussions on remembering, narrating, and commemorating traumatic incidents, as well as the idea of a cultural trauma process in which the origins and consequences of traumas are negotiated alongside collective identities. Memorialization practices and narratives about what happened are vital parts of the social memory of crises and disasters, and their inclusive and exclusive characteristics are discussed in this study. The data include two types of qualitative interviews; focused interviews with 11 crisis workers, and focused, narrative interviews with 21 residents of Jokela and 22 residents of Kauhajoki. A quantitative mail survey of the Jokela population (N=330) provided data used in one of the research articles.

The results indicate that both communities experienced a process of simultaneous solidarity and conflict after the shootings. In Jokela, the community was constructed as a victim, and public expressions of solidarity and memorialization were promoted as part of the recovery process. In Kauhajoki, the community was portrayed as an incidental site of mass violence, and public expressions of solidarity by distant witnesses were labeled as unnecessary and often criticized. However, after the shooting, the community was somewhat united in its desire to avoid victimization and a prolonged liminal period. This can be understood as a more modest and invisible process of "silent solidarity". The processes of enforced solidarity were partly made possible by exclusion. In some accounts, the family of the perpetrator in Jokela was excluded from the community. In Kauhajoki, the whole incident was externalized. In both communities, this exclusion included associating the shooting events, certain places, and certain individuals with the concept of evil, which helped to understand and explain the inconceivable incidents. Differences concerning appropriate emotional orientations, memorialization practices and the pace of the recovery created conflict in both communities. In Jokela, attitudes towards the perpetrator and his family were also a source of friction. Traditional gender roles regarding the expression of emotions remained fairly stable after the school shootings, but in an exceptional situation, conflicting interpretations arose concerning how men and women should express emotion. The results from the Jokela community also suggest that while increased solidarity was seen as important part of the recovery process, some negative effects such as collective guilt, group divisions, and stigmatization also emerged.

Based on the results, two simultaneous strategies that took place after mass violence were identified; one was a process of fast-paced normalization, and the other was that of memorialization. Both strategies are ways to restore the feeling of security shattered by violent incidents. The Jokela community emphasized remembering while the Kauhajoki community turned more to the normalization strategy. Both strategies have positive and negative consequences. It is important to note that the tendency to memorialize is not the only way of expressing solidarity, as fast normalization includes its own kind of solidarity and helps prevent the negative consequences of intense solidarity.

Keywords: Violence, school shootings, local communities, solidarity, narrative research

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä tutkimus kartoittaa massaväkivallan seurauksia paikallisyhteisöissä. Tutkimuksessa analysoidaan ja vertaillaan kahta Suomessa tapahtunutta koulusurmaa ja tarkastellaan sitä miten yhteisöt kokevat äkillisen massaväkivallan, miten tapauksia käsitellään ja miten niistä toivutaan. Ensimmäinen tutkituista ampumistapauksista tapahtui Jokelan koulukeskuksessa vuonna 2007, toinen Kauhajoella ammattikorkeakoulussa vuonna 2008. Näissä kahdessa koulusurmassa menehtyi 20 ihmistä tekijät mukaan luettuna. Kyseiset tapaukset voidaan nähdä osana maailmanlaajuista kouluampumisilmiötä. Koulusurmien määrä on ollut kasvussa viimeisten 20 vuoden ajan, ja suurin osa tapauksista tapahtuu Pohjois-Amerikassa ja Euroopassa.

Useissa massaväkivaltaa ja katastrofeja käsittelevissä tutkimuksissa on havaittu yhteisöllisyyden lisääntyvän nopeasti kriisien jälkeen, ja konfliktien puolestaan seuraavan yhteisöllistä vaihetta. Yhteisöllisyyden ja konfliktien välinen dynamiikka onkin yksi tämän väitöskirjan pääteemoista. Tutkimus hyödyntää traumaattisten tapahtumien muistamiseen, kertomiseen ja muisteluun liittyviä teoreettisia keskusteluja, sekä kulttuurisen trauman käsitettä, jonka mukaan traumaattisten tapahtumien syyt ja seuraukset määritellään kollektiivisiin identiteetteihin liittyvissä neuvottelu-prosesseissa. Kollektiiviset muistelu- ja suremiskäytännöt sekä kertomukset tapahtuneesta ovat tärkeä osa kriisejä ja katastrofeja koskevaa sosiaalista muistia. Näiden käytäntöjen inklusiivisista ja ulossulkevista ulottuvuuksista keskustellaan tutkimuksen teoreettisessa osiossa. Tutkimuksen pääasiallisena aineistona käytetään 11 kriisityöntekijän haastatteluja sekä 21 jokelalaisen ja 22 kauhajokisen narratiivisia haastatteluja. Yhdessä tutkimuksen artikkeleista käytetään myös Jokelassa kerättyä postikyselyaineistoa (N=330).

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että molemmissa yhteisöissä esiintyi koulusurmien jälkeen samanaikaisesti sekä yhteisöllisyyttä että konflikteja. Jokelassa yhteisö miellettiin uhrina ja yhteisön toipumisen kannalta julkisia surun ilmauksia pidettiin tärkeinä. Kauhajoella yhteisö taas kuvattiin koulusurman sattumanvaraisena tapahtumapaikkana ja sivullisten julkisia surun tai solidaarisuuden ilmauksia pidettiin turhina ja niitä jopa kritisoitiin. Kauhajoellakin paikallisyhteisö kuitenkin tiivistyi torjuessaan uhrin leiman ja pyrkiessään välttämään pitkäkestoista poikkeustilaa koulusurman jälkeen. Tämä voidaan ymmärtää vaatimattomampana ja näkymättömämpänä, ”hiljaisen yhteisöllisyyden” prosessina. Vahvistuneen yhteisöllisyyden mahdollistivat osaltaan ulossulkemisen käytännöt; Jokelassa osa osallistujista sulki tekijän perheen yhteisön ulkopuolelle, Kauhajoella taas koko koulusurmatapaus seurauksineen ulkoistettiin. Tiettyjen paikkojen ja yksilöiden yhdistäminen pahuuden käsitteeseen liittyi ampumistapausten ulossulkemiseen ja auttoi selittämään ja ymmärtämään käsittämättömiltä tuntuvia väkivallantekoja. Ristiriidat liittyivät sopivaan tunteiden ilmaisemiseen, suru- ja muistelukäytäntöihin, toipumisen tahtiin sekä Jokelassa tekijän perheeseen suhtautumiseen. Perinteiset sukupuoliroolit pysyivät tunteiden ilmaisun ja tunnereaktioiden osalta kriisitilanteissa melko vakaina, mutta poikkeuksellisissa tilanteissa heräsi myös ristiriitaisia mielipiteitä siitä, miten naisten ja miesten tulisi ilmaista koulusurmiin liittyviä tunteita. Jokelan paikallisyhteisöstä saadut tiedot viittaavat myös siihen, että vaikka lisääntyneen yhteisöllisyyden katsottiin edistävän järkytyksestä toipumista, sillä oli myös kielteisiä seurauksia, kuten kollektiivinen syyllisyydentunne, yhteisön jakautuminen sekä sosiaalinen stigma.

Tulosten perusteella voidaan tunnistaa kaksi kummassakin yhteisössä käytettyä strategiaa, joiden avulla yhteisöt pyrkivät palauttamaan koulusurmien heikentämää turvallisuuden tunnetta; nopea arkeen palaamisen strategia ja muistelun strategia. Jokelassa paikallisyhteisö painotti muistelemista ja suurituaaleja, kun taas Kauhajoella tilanne pyrittiin normalisoimaan mahdollisimman pian. Molemmilla strategioilla oli sekä myönteisiä että kielteisiä seurauksia. On tärkeää huomata, ettei muistelun strategia ole ainoa tie yhteisöllisyyteen, sillä myös nopea arkeen palaaminen edistää tietynlaista yhteisöllisyyttä ja ehkäisee samalla voimakkaan yhteisöllisyyden negatiivisia seurauksia.

Asiasanat: Väkivalta, koulusurmat, paikallisyhteisöt, yhteisöllisyys, narratiivinen tutkimus

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Johanna Nurmi

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LIST OF THE ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

1. Nurmi, Johanna (2012): ‘Making Sense of School Shootings. Comparing Local Narratives of Solidarity and Conflict in Finland.’ *Traumatology* 18(3): 16–28.

2. Nurmi, Johanna (2014): ’Affected or Detached? Gendered Emotional Reactions to School Shootings’. *Affilia. Journal of Women and Social Work.* Published online 24 February 2014. DOI: 10.1177/0886109914522625

3. Nurmi, Johanna & Räsänen, Pekka & Oksanen, Atte (2012): ‘The Norm of Solidarity. Experiencing Negative Aspects of Community Life After a School Shooting.’ *Journal of Social Work* 12(3): 300–319.

4. Nurmi, Johanna & Oksanen, Atte (2013): ‘Representations and Projections of Evil: Coping after a Violent Tragedy’. *Deviant Behavior* 34(11): 859–874.

1. INTRODUCTION

We are regrettably accustomed to reading and hearing news about mass murders by guns that occur, primarily in North America, but also in many European countries. These incidents are referred to as shooting sprees, rampage shootings, or active shooter attacks. What characterizes them all is that the perpetrators open fire in a public place, shooting and killing people at random. Since the 1990s, many of these mass murders have occurred in schools,[1] or university and college campuses, and their perpetrators as well as victims have been young people. While these incidents remain infrequent, rampage shootings in educational establishments can be identified as a global phenomenon that has increased in the last two decades, with most cases occurring in the USA and other developed industrial countries (Böckler et al. 2013, 9–11).

Often times, rampage shootings end with the offender committing suicide or "suicide by cop," meaning that they seek to get shot by the police officers at the scene. The majority of the perpetrators of mass shootings are male (96 % in the US) and are members of the communities they target (78 % in the US). (Kelly 2010, 4–9; Lankford 2013; Vossekuil et al. 2004.) This kind of mass violence was thought to be extremely unlikely to happen in Finland, until, in 2007, a shooting was committed by a high school student at his school in Jokela. Less than a year later, a similar incident occurred at a unit of the Seinäjoki University of applied sciences in Kauhajoki. A total of 20 people – including the perpetrators – lost their lives in these two shootings. This dissertation examines the community experience and reactions related to these two shootings.

Defining school shootings is not a simple task; differing definitions are used by researchers, and the various definitions have different consequences for research findings and make carrying out meta-studies challenging (Harding et al. 2002, 177–178; Böckler et al. 2013, 3–6; Larkin 2009; Lankford 2013; Kelly 2010). School shootings can be divided into targeted and rampage shootings. In this dissertation, I concentrate on rampage school shootings, and define them by emphasizing the random selection of victims and the political or ideological motives that mix with the social marginalization of the perpetrators.[2] This rules out shootings motivated by revenge that target only predetermined victims. In many academic accounts, rampage school shootings are understood as planned acts of mass violence, committed by current or former students of the targeted educational establishments. They include multiple,

[1] Between 1966 and 2010, 29 % of active shooter attacks in the US have occurred in a school, which makes schools the most common sites for rampage shootings (Kelly 2010, 7). Mass shootings also happen in other public places such as shopping malls, movie theaters, and places of worship.

[2] However, to avoid repetition, I use the terms school shooting and rampage school shooting interchangeably in this dissertation.

random victims, and often end with the suicide of the perpetrator(s). (Harding et al. 2002; Newman et al. 2004; Muschert 2007a; Larkin 2009.)

Not all shootings that occur in schools are rampage shootings, even though they receive more media coverage than other types of shootings. Targeted shootings, where the perpetrators select their victims, and terrorist attacks have also been committed in schools and university campuses (Muschert 2007a). More than half of rampage school shootings in the U.S. have occurred in small, rural towns (Newman et al. 2004, 112). In small communities, the targeted school represents the local community, which means that the whole community is the target of the shooting (Muschert 2007a; Newman et al. 2004, 14).

Since the 1990s, school shootings have been the focus of numerous studies in sociology, psychology, cultural and media studies. Most of this work has been done in the United States, concentrating on the American school shootings. The academic work on rampage and school shootings can be divided in two categories: studies considering the reasons behind the shootings, and studies considering the consequences of the shootings. In both categories we can find studies concentrating on psychological, social, political, and cultural aspects.

There is far more research on the causes than the consequences of school and rampage shootings. Soon after the peak of school shootings (Böckler et al. 2011, 263–264), Katherine Newman led an extensive study that sought to explain the psychological, social, and cultural reasons and mechanisms behind school shootings in the United States. Why did more than half of the school shootings occur in rural areas, in small, close-knit communities? Because in small towns, the school becomes the center of social interaction, which can be devastating for those who are excluded and bullied, concluded Newman. In these schools, status competition between boys centers on a very narrow notion of masculinity, and shootings provide a cultural script for the boys who are labeled in terms of minority masculinities (nerd, gay etc.) to publicly prove their manliness. Although small communities generally have a high level of social capital, it can in fact result to information loss through a culture of secrecy as a way to avoid gossip and deny unpleasant information in order to avoid conflict. This would explain why schools and communities do not react to the "leakage" of the perpetrators' plans even though other students often hear about their plans beforehand. (Newman et al. 2004, 112–143; Harding et al. 2002; Newman & Fox 2009.)

Newman et al. identified five necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for school shootings; gun availability, a cultural script for school shootings based on earlier shooting cases, perceived marginalization of the shooter in relevant social groups, personal problems that reduce the capacity to cope with social marginalization, and failure of the social support systems to intervene before the shootings happen (Harding et al. 2002). Many other studies have focused on the reasons behind rampage shootings in schools, and the prevention of shootings (e.g. Borum et al. 2010; Levin & Madfis

2009; Pittaro 2007; Mongan et al. 2009; Moore et al. 2003). Social exclusion of the perpetrators and failure in preventive strategies despite the offender's behavior that caused concern have been identified as important causes for school shootings by various studies (Leary et al. 2003; Bondü & Scheithauer 2011; Verlinden et al. 2000; Vossekuil et al. 2004). However, as concluded by Böckler et al. (2013), instead of focusing on single causes, school shootings must be understood in their entire "violence-affirming setting" that includes social, cultural, familial, institutional, and individual factors and circumstances.

Regarding psychological aspects, studies examining the motives and mental health of school shooters have confirmed the centrality of social rejection and psychological problems (Leary et al. 2003; Verlinden et al. 2000; Vossekuil et al. 2004, Fast 2010). The characteristics of the perpetrators of mass violence seem to affect the type of crimes they commit, as suicidal mass shooters carried more guns and killed more victims than the mass shooters who did not commit suicide or "suicide by cop." Interestingly, perpetrators who died as a result of their attacks were also more likely to commit the shootings at open commercial sites as opposed to perpetrators that lived, who often chose a more closed setting such as a school or a workplace. (Lankford 2013.)

Concentrating on the cultural aspect in explaining school shootings, the information about school shootings and the perpetrators disseminated online has been recognized as encouraging future perpetrators to copy-cat and model their shootings on previous shootings (Oksanen et al. 2013; Kiilakoski & Oksanen 2011). As 97 % of school shootings worldwide are committed by male offenders (N=120) (Böckler et al. 2013, 13), the cultural link between masculinity, homophobia, and violence has also been analyzed in order to examine rampage school shootings (Watson 2007; Kimmel & Mahler 2003; Larkin 2009)[3] and shootings in traditionally masculine social environments such as factories or warehouses (Lankford 2013). Douglas Kellner (2012) even goes as far as to characterize rampage shootings and acts of domestic terrorism (such as the bombing and rampage shooting in Norway in July 2011) as embodying the rage of alienated men and as being the result of these men trying to resolve their crises of masculinity through spectacles of violence.

School shootings have also been interpreted as political acts. The shooting at Columbine High School in 1999 gave a new, political meaning to school shootings. Since then, many perpetrators have stated political motives such as revenge in the name of all outcast students or a desire to "make a statement" against the mainstream school culture and bullying. (Larkin 2009; Lankford 2013.) Interestingly, a study

[3] In Finland, fighting and violence have been identified as central aspects of masculinity in school cultures, and physical toughness and the ability to fight as important in defining individual boys' situation in the hierarchies of masculinity (Tolonen 1998).

comparing suicide terrorists and other mass violence perpetrators (i.e. rampage, workplace, and school shooters) in the United States from 1990 to 2010 found similarities such as social marginalization, family problems, work or school problems, and personal, "precipitating" crises in their backgrounds. They were also all likely to leave behind an explanation or suicide note. Workplace shooters had fewer problems than other type of perpetrators of mass violence, and were more likely to commit targeted shootings than other shooters and terrorists. (Lankford 2012.)

It is only over the last few years that academic research has started to focus on the consequences of rampage shootings and school shootings, be it in Finland or elsewhere (see Muschert 2007b). A significant amount of the research on the consequences of school shootings has examined how the incidents have been perceived and represented in the media. Particularly after the shootings at Columbine, the media coverage of school shootings was studied extensively (Muschert 2007a; Muschert & Carr 2006; Klein 2005; Altheide 2009; Strauss 2007), including the media representations and discussions of masculinity in the coverage of school shootings (Consalvo 2003). Many studies have also stated that the incidents induce fear and panic (Burns & Crawford 1999; Birkland & Lawrence 2009; Hawdon et al. 2012c).

Some studies have considered the consequences of school shootings on social and political levels. As for institutional consequences, studies have examined the effects of the shootings on youth work (Kiilakoski et al. forthcoming), on the work of school leaders (Fein & Isaacson 2009), or on the criminal justice system (DeLisi 2002). Political consequences of rampage school shootings, such as changes in firearms policies and policy responses regarding school safety, have also been identified on the national level (Muschert et al. 2013; Addington 2009; Birkland & Lawrence 2009; Lawrence & Birkland 2004; Lindström et al. 2011).

Studies have measured the psychological responses, post-disaster symptoms and coping strategies of shooting spree survivors (Schwarz et al. 1993; North et al. 2001, 2002), as well as post-traumatic stress levels of the students of the targeted and nearby educational establishments (Hughes et al. 2011; Suomalainen et al. 2010; Haravuori et al. 2011; Curry 2003). However, as psychological research shows that the effects of mass violence are not restricted to immediate victims, survivors, and eye-witnesses (e.g. Schuster et al. 2001; Silver et al. 2002; Schlenger et al. 2002), it is likely that the consequences of school shootings extend beyond those directly affected. The Columbine shooting, for example, was found to have a nationwide effect on high school students, increasing at least slightly their fear of school violence and causing non-attendance (Brener et al. 2002; Addington 2003).

Until recently, the community-level consequences of school shootings were given only little consideration in case studies focusing mostly on the reasons for the shootings. Some negative consequences, such as unresolved tension and stigmatization of the communities, were identified in these studies (Moore et al. 2003, 3–4; Sullivan &

Guerette 2003; DeJong et al. 2003; Newman et al. 2004). Lately, however, some studies have systematically concentrated on the community-level social consequences of rampage shootings. The findings of these studies point to an increase in social solidarity after the shootings, and the positive consequences that this solidarity has for individual recovery (Hawdon et al. 2012a; Ryan & Hawdon 2008; Hawdon & Ryan 2011; Hawdon, Ryan, & Agnich 2010; Oksanen et al. 2010). However, the social processes and practices that bring about these consequences and the local residents' collective experience of the shootings and their aftermath have not yet been examined in detail.

In Finland, the first case of fatal gun violence in a school happened in 1989 in Raumanmeri, where a 14-year-old boy killed two of his classmates. This was a case of targeted shooting, motivated by revenge due to bullying. Besides not being a rampage shooting, the Raumanmeri incident differs from the shootings in Jokela and Kauhajoki in that the perpetrator did not seek publicity and fame, and did not have a political or ideological motive (Kiilakoski 2009, 14). It was not a large scale school shooting, or a part of the global rampage shooting phenomenon, which is why it is not analyzed in this study.

In addition to the shootings examined in this dissertation, two mass violence incidents have taken place in Finland in the last decade. This is a new development in the history of violent crimes in Finland. A bomb set off by a young man killed seven people in a shopping mall in Vantaa, in 2002, and five people were killed in a shooting in a shopping mall in Espoo, in 2009. There were also two attempted mass murders by young perpetrators in 2012; a young man killed two and wounded seven people on the street in Hyvinkää, and another young man wounded one and targeted several others in Orivesi. (Lehti 2013.) Of these incidents, only the school shootings are analyzed in this study, because they are remarkably similar to each other and are clearly connected with the recent global phenomenon of school rampage shootings. Because the bomb detonation in 2002 has not been proven intentional, and the shooting in Espoo in 2009 was a targeted revenge shooting by an adult male with a history of violence and gun crime, these cases do not fit the profile of unexpected, un-targeted shootings by young perpetrators with no previous criminal history.

Concentrating on the two Finnish rampage shootings, this study maps the experience of distant witnesses[4] to mass violence, and the community level consequences of these incidents. I apply the theoretical perspectives of sociological study on disasters and communities, as well as the literature on sharing emotions and recounting, remembering and memorializing past events. The empirical material used in this study

[4] I use the terms distant witness and bystander to describe individuals who lived in the towns where the studied mass shootings occurred, but were not eyewitnesses nor personally harmed in the shootings.

includes focused, narrative interviews with residents in Jokela and Kauhajoki, focused interviews with crisis workers in Jokela and Kauhajoki, and a mail survey of Jokela residents. Almost all of the participants lived in the targeted communities and were disrupted by the incidents, but did not suffer personal losses.

This dissertation consists of four research articles and an introductory section. I begin by taking a closer look at homicide and gun violence in Finland and by presenting the studied communities and rampage shooting cases in chapter 2. After the social context of the shootings, I lay out the theoretical background of this study by discussing solidarity following crime, violence, and disasters (chapter 3.1.), emotions and shared grieving after crises (3.2.), social memory and collective experiences (3.3.), and practices of community formation and exclusion in post-crises situations (3.4.). Chapter 4 presents the research problem and questions in detail, as well as the process of conducting interviews that make up the main data of this study. In chapter 4 I also discuss the analytic methods that were used – concentrating on narrative analysis. In chapter 5, I introduce and discuss the main results of the study, as well as its limitations. This is followed by the empirical section that is composed of four research articles.

2. SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN JOKELA AND KAUHAJOKI

2.1. Violent crimes in Finland

Following the global trend, the number of homicides has decreased in Finland since the mid-1990s. Altough the homicide rate in Finland is low in global comparison, it is still at least twice as high as in other Northern European countries. The average number of Finns killed by interpersonal violence in the last five years was 2.03 per 100.000, while in all other Nordic countries it was under one person per 100.000[5]. (Lehti 2013.) Homicide in Finland primarily occurs in the margins of the society – among unemployed, middle-aged, intoxicated men (Lehti 2013; Savolainen et al. 2008). Globally, this is not exceptional, as in most countries more than 80 per cent of homicide victims and offenders are men (UNODC 2011).

While the fact that they were committed by men is consistent with the overall characteristics of Finnish homicides, school shootings differ from other homicides in Finland in multiple ways. The perpetrators, as well as most victims of school shootings, are young, which makes them strikingly different from other homicides in Finland. While before the 2nd World War, homicides in Finland were mostly committed by young men, over the last 50 years, most homicide offenders have been middle-aged and the number of offenders under 30 has decreased considerably (Lehti 2013). The number of homicides by young offenders is no higher in Finland than it is in other Nordic or Western European countries (Savolainen et al., 2008; Lehti 2013). However, school shootings do not represent typical homicide by young perpetrators either. The majority of young perpetrators of homicide have a history of alcohol and drug use, and previous violent or aggressive behaviour, and many of them have family members that have been perpetrators or victims of violent crimes. School shooters, on the other hand, come from relatively "good families", and usually do not have a history of violent behaviour or substance use (Newman et al. 2004; Jokela Investigation Commission 2009; Kauhajoki Investigation Commission 2010).

Another thing that sets school shootings apart from other homicides is the use of guns. The most common murder weapon in Finland is a knife; knives were used in 41 % of homicides, while guns were used in 17 % of homicides in 2003-2011 (Lehti 2013). School shootings also happen in public spaces, which is not typical; only 17 % of Finnish homicides are committed in public spaces (Lehti 2013). In 87 % of homicides, the perpetrator, the victim, or both are intoxicated (Lehti 2013), which was not the case

[5] The number of people killed per 100.000 was 0.98 in Norway, 0.89 in Sweden, 0.87 in Denmark, and 0.52 in Iceland (Lehti 2013).

in the two school shootings committed in Finland (Jokela Investigation Commission 2009; Kauhajoki Investigation Commission 2010).

Finland's civilian firearm ownership rate is one of the highest in Europe (Mauser 2007). In 2008, there were more than 1,6 million guns in the country, and 650 000 Finns had a firearm permit. The school shootings of 2007 and 2008 led to a heated public debate about gun politics and gun control in Finland. (Lindström et al. 2011.) Only a few weeks before both school shootings, both perpetrators had acquired a gun license from the local police based on their presumed shooting hobby. As gun club membership was required by the gun regulation to acquire a handgun, the Jokela perpetrator visited a gun club shooting range once to become member, and the Kauhajoki perpetrator visited a shooting range four times in the months prior to acquiring his gun permit (NBI 2008, 2009).

After the shootings in Kauhajoki, the Finnish government identified two main problems in the firearm permit process. First, the police did not have access to sufficient information about the applicants of firearm permits. Second, the rules for proving one's active shooting hobby were too broad. A political process started after the Kauhajoki shooting, and the handgun license regulations were tightened in 2011. The police can now get access to the healthcare information of the applicants, and healthcare professionals have a duty to inform the police about individuals that are assessed to be unsuitable gun permit holders due to health reasons. A license for a handgun is now obtainable only after two years of hobby shooting, and every five years license holders must prove that they are continuing their hobby. An aptitude test screening applicants for violence and suicidal thoughts is also required before the permit is granted. Additionally, the age limit for gun license was raised from 18 to 20 years for handguns, and from 15 to 18 years for other guns. (Lindström et al. 2011.)

Finland has been known for its high suicide rate, and the shooting cases examined here also ended with the suicide of the offenders. However, the number of suicides in Finland has been steadily decreasing since the 1990s. Approximately 100 Finnish young men (under 25 years old) commit suicide every year. Most suicides in Finland are committed by adult men (approximately 500 suicides per year are committed by 25-65 year old men) and it is these suicides that have been decreasing the most. (Statistics Finland 2010.)

The above information about violent crimes and homicide in Finland helps in situating school shootings as a completely new phenomenon of mass violence in the Finnish context. However, to examine the experience of a crisis or disaster in specific communities, we need to take a closer look at the social and cultural contexts of those communities, because the experience is inseparable from the larger context and history of the communities (Park et al. 2010). In the next two chapters, I will introduce the communities of Jokela and Kauhajoki, and the rampage shootings that took place in them. Because the interviews that comprise the main data of the empirical section of

this dissertation have given me information about the social relations and local identities in Kauhajoki and Jokela that could not be found from any other sources, the following is partly based on them. The interview data is further presented and discussed in chapter 4.

Public discussion and media coverage on the school shootings in Finland have strongly centered on the perpetrators' actions and their personal lives, leaving the victims aside as a group of anonymous people without voices or faces (Hawdon et al. 2012c). The same applies to much of the research on school shootings. While it is understandable that the shooters' actions and motives must be examined in research on the causes of the incidents, this – combined with the media representations – can cause the the victims and consequences of the violence to fade from the picture. Because this study focuses on the consequences of the shootings in the targeted communities, I chose not to use the names of the perpetrators, and to provide only what little background information was necessary for examining the aftermath of the incidents. This enables us to focus on ordinary people's experiences, memories, and stories.

2.2. Jokela school shooting

The small suburban town of Jokela is situated near the Helsinki metropolitan area, a 40 minute train ride from Helsinki. With a population of 6300, Jokela is a part of the larger municipal district of Tuusula. Historically, the local identity centered on the match and brick industries that helped the town develop at the turn of the 20th century. The old match factory now houses a prison that employs 90 people. The present day image of Jokela is that of a growing but quiet middle-class suburban town. A large number of the residents commute to Helsinki daily. In the interviews, local participants mostly described Jokela as a close-knit community. Some made a division between the "old Jokela people," whose families had lived there for generations, and the newer inhabitants who continue to move to Jokela as the community grows. The participants who had lived in Jokela for a longer time stated that community orientation and cooperation had decreased over the preceeding decades. This was thought to be due to population increase, which meant that the residents did not know each other as well as before. Those who had recently moved to Jokela described it as a welcoming community toward newcomers.

The perpetrator of the Jokela shooting moved to town with his family when he was 7 years old. During their first years in Jokela, everything went well, but the perpetrator was bullied in school starting from the age of 10. While still very young, he took an interest in history and politics, and experimented with different ideologies – Nazism being the last. He suffered from anxiety in social situations, as well as insomnia, and was diagnosed with mild panic disorder and prescribed anti-depressants in 2006. According to his mother, medication did not help; his symptoms became worse and he

started to act aggressively when upset. (NBI 2008.) Sometime in 2007, the perpetrator started to plan a rampage shooting. He idealized other perpetrators of school shootings and terrorist attacks. Beginning in August 2007, several students of the school reported the perpetrator's changed behavior to a youth worker. The perpetrator was threatening others and told them they would die in the "white revolution." The youth worker had several discussions with the perpetrator and also with the targeted school's principal, who told the youth worker that the school was keeping an eye on him. Because the perpetrator was 18 years old, he was able to prevent the school or the youth worker from contacting his parents. (Jokela Investigation Committee 2009.)

On November 7th, 2007, the perpetrator took his newly purchased gun to school, shot and killed 8, wounded one, and attempted to set the school on fire. After the 20-minute rampage shooting, he shot himself and died in the hospital later that day. All but one of the victims were Jokela residents. He left behind a diary that reports the process of planning the shooting, a political manifesto advocating "natural selection" to terminate most of the human race, a suicide note for his family, and videos and pictures of himself and his gun. (NBI 2008.)

Students, teachers and staff members that fled the school during the shooting or were later evacuated by the police went to a nearby church and congregation building and to an elementary school next to it. The church building was appointed as the official crisis center. Later, the local youth facility was also given the status of a crisis center, because many students from the targeted school gathered there. Tuusula municipality (namely, social workers and youth workers), crisis workers from neighboring towns, the local church, and volunteers from the Finnish Red Cross were the main participants in the psycho-social crisis response efforts. In this study, I call the individuals participating in these efforts crisis workers – whether they were employed or volunteers. Crisis workers were available for one-on-one conversations in both crisis centers on the day of the shooting and the following four days. (Jokela Investigation Committee 2009.)

2.3. Kauhajoki school shooting

Kauhajoki is situated in rural western Finland, in the region of Ostrobothnia, 330 kilometers form Helsinki. Its population is now 14 000, and has been slowly decreasing since the 1980s. The municipal area of Kauhajoki consists of the center – the town of Kauhajoki – and of several villages that surround the town. The manufacturing industry is the largest employer, with farming and forestry also employing a considerable number of people. (Kauhajoki Municipality 2013.) In the interviews for the present study, most participants talked about the regional Ostrobothnian identity that is well known around Finland: the people of the region were described as honest, stubborn and proud. Participants mentioned that there was

(and used to be even more) co-operation and mutual help between neighbors, particularly in the small villages. However, many portrayed the community as reserved and unfriendly toward outsiders and newcomers.

The perpetrator of the Kauhajoki shooting had moved to town only a year before the shootings to study hospitality management at a unit of Seinäjoki University of applied sciences. According to his suicide note, he had been planning the shooting for several years. He had been bullied in school when he was younger, but not when he studied in Kauhajoki. The police report describes him as depressed and anxious, having lost loved-ones and having had traumatic experiences in his life. However, he was social and had friends. His classmates and friends had been worried because he was drinking, seemed anxious, had talked about committing a rampage shooting, and had bought a gun. He was interested in the Jokela shooting and went to Jokela to take pictures of the targeted school. He bought a gun from the same store in Jokela where the Jokela perpetrator bought his gun, and took pictures of himself and his gun, imitating the pictures taken by the Jokela perpetrator. He dated a girl for about a month in late summer 2008, but she ended the relationship a few weeks before the shooting. Ten days before the shooting the perpetrator was questioned by the police because a friend reported that he had threatened to shoot people at a hotel that he hated. He denied having such a plan and assured he would not do such things. The day before the shooting he was again questioned by the police because someone had reported the shooting videos that he had uploaded on YouTube. (NBI 2009.)

On September 23rd, 2008, the perpetrator walked into the class where his fellow students were taking an exam. He shot and killed 10, one of which was a teacher he said he hated. He wounded one person and lit several fires around the school before shooting himself. He was found unconscious inside the school and died later that day in a hospital. (NBI 2009.) The student victims had only lived in Kauhajoki for about a year, having moved there to study.

As in Jokela, psycho-social support was cooperatively organized by the town of Kauhajoki, the Lutheran congregations of Kauhajoki and neighboring Ilmajoki, Finnish Red Cross, and the targeted school. The psycho-social counseling activities had to be extended beyond Kauhajoki, as the victims were from neighboring towns. Four days after the shooting, a joint project by the Southern Ostrobothnia Hospital District, the town of Kauhajoki, the Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Education, the Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Health, and the Ilmajoki Municipality was established in order to coordinate and organize psycho-social care. This project, called the "Kauhajoki Initiative," functioned until the end of 2013, with 20-25 employees and 35 therapists offering counselling as outsourced service. The local Lutheran church had its own aftercare project that also extended to the neighboring congregations. The church also cooperated with the "Kauhajoki Initiative" and the targeted school. (Kauhajoki Investigation Committee 2010.)

3. THE AFTERMATH OF MASS VIOLENCE

3.1. Violence, disasters, and social solidarity

Sociological literature on disasters has considered the collective consequences of crises more than the research focusing on rampage shootings. Even though school shootings are not disasters in the traditional sense, rampage shootings fit the broad definition of disasters. The theoretical perspective of disaster research is applicable in the study of school shootings, and provides it with the central notions of solidarity and conflict.

There is no consensus on the exact definition of the term "disaster" (Quarantelli 1985, 1995). The general criteria often used to define disasters includes the disruptiveness and totality of the events (see e.g. Fritz 1961, 655–656; Horlick-Jones 1995). In a classical definition, Charles Fritz (1961, 655–656) states that disasters are something other than "everyday crises" and "ordinary accidents"; disasters are characterized by major material damage and human casualties that provoke disruption of social structure and the functioning of communities. Disasters make it impossible to carry on with everyday life as usual, and the impacts of disasters involve "all dimensions of a social structural formation" (Oliver-Smith 1999, 20).

Although school shootings do not completely disrupt the social structures and functioning of the surrounding communities, they nonetheless do so in the targeted schools and can in no way be described as "ordinary accidents." In the broad definition of disasters that comprises technological crises, terrorist attacks and epidemics (Oliver-Smith 1999, 22–23), school shootings may well be included in the scope of man-made disasters.

Another character of disasters stated by Fritz (1961, 684) is that the threats and dangers must come from outside the community. Regarding this characteristic, there is an ambivalence in school shootings; perpetrators are mostly members or ex-members of the attacked communities, but they are often excluded (or feel that they are excluded) from their communities either at schools (see Newman et al. 2004) or in the local community altogether, as will be seen further in the analysis of the Jokela school shooting case.

The aftermath of crises and disasters includes two major consequences; solidarity and conflict, that are understood as occurring consecutively in the recovery process. The idea of solidarity after collective crises is often based on the thoughts of Émile Durkheim (1893/1964; 1912/1995, 212–213), who noted that social activity becomes more frequent as people seek each other's company in exceptional times: "Crime brings together upright consciences and concentrates them. We have only to notice what happens, particularly in a small town, when some moral scandal has just been

committed. They stop each other on the street, they visit each other, they seek to come together to talk of the event and to wax indignant in common." (Durkheim1893/1964, 102.)

Solidarity rises from this interaction intensified by crises or crime. Criminal acts in particular threaten the collective values of the attacked community, and that is why they are met with collective resistance to protect these values. This thus promotes unity in the affected community. The attention that large numbers of individuals focus on the crisis, communicated by symbolic signals such as flags, candles or flowers, also contributes to the increasing solidarity (Collins 2004). Durkheim also described a phenomenon that he called effervescence, which is the more frequent social interaction and higher moral sensitivity that emerges after crises or disasters (Durkheim 1912/1995, 213). Later, Paul Connerton interpreted this as a performative practice and compared it to modern commemorative ceremonies (Connerton 1989, 103). Solidarity is the result of this arousal of emotions, which Durkheim first observed in the religious practices of hunter and gatherer groups. Later, it has been recognized that the symbols do not need to be religious, but that all elements of culture can arouse emotions (Turner & Stets 2005, 72).

Solidarity has also been examined in relation to altruism or social movements. Solidarity can mean anything from social support and helping behavior to the feeling of belonging to a group. For example, it has been defined as non-violating interaction (Jeffries et al. 2006, 69), a positive attitude toward others (Sorokin 1947, 93–144, 1954, 13), or justice in interaction and intergroup relations (Pieper 1966, 43–53). While helping behavior is defined as a key element in social solidarity in most accounts, others also include emotions such as feelings of sympathy and responsibility in their definition of solidarity (Wilde 2007, 171). In this study, in addition to social support in interaction, I emphasize the emotional togetherness and the sense of belonging as vital parts of solidarity after mass violence.

One of the earliest findings in disaster studies was that after disasters there is a rise in social solidarity and cooperation (e.g. Fritz 1961; Drabek 1986; Quarantelli & Dynes 1977; Sweet 1998 Hawdon et al. 2010). In empirical research, solidarity can be understood as a sense of community combined with engagement in community activities, manifesting in things like community pride, trust in neighbors and collaboration (Hawdon et al. 2012a). Intensified social solidarity is a widely accepted consequence of disasters, to the point that unity between disaster victims is even thought to occur after all disasters, no matter where they happen and what they are like (Hoffman 1999, 141). However, for solidarity to occur, the crisis must be collectively interpreted as disrupting everyday life, and affecting the whole collective, or the "moral community" of unwilling participants in the tragedy (Ryan & Hawdon 2008).

Solidarity leads to positive outcomes on both individual and collective levels. Solidarity – even merely the sense of belonging without social support – has been

found to protect individuals from depressive symptoms both immediately after mass shootings and over the long term (Hawdon et al. 2012b, 32, 2012a). Fritz (1961) even outlined a "therapeutic community," where disasters temporarily break down social and cultural distinctions by placing all individuals under similar conditions. Although most might not agree with this in the present day discussion, the tendency is to see the aftermath of crises in solely positive terms of heightened solidarity that unfortunately disappears at some point during the recovery period (Hoffman 1999; Oliver- Smith 1999). Studies have then sought to find out how this beneficial period of solidarity could be extended (Collins 2004; Hawdon & Ryan 2011). However, solidarity also has direct negative consequences. For example, family members of victims of mass violence have reported solidarity becoming a burden and the amount of attention and expressions of sympathy from the community members being overwhelming (Hawdon et al. 2012, 33).

The ideas of euphoric state of post-disaster solidarity and therapeutic community seem to assume that communities live in a balance that is interrupted by catastrophes (Oliver-Smith 1999, 23). Of course, this is not always the case; while crises do create new problems and conflicts, they also underline and make visible the existing social relations, structures, and divides that may go unnoticed in everyday life. Traditional gender roles, for example, are a fundamental social structure that seems to persist after disasters (Bradshaw and Linneker 2009, 77, 80–82; Enarson & Scanlon 1999; Peek & Fothergill 2009). The problem with interpretations emphasizing solidarity and unity in the aftermath of crises is that they are often incomplete. For example, most interpretations of the 9/11 terrorist attacks focused on solidarity and feelings of belonging, leaving out the exclusion and discrimination that Muslim Americans experienced after the attacks (Peek 2011). The unity that brings together members of the victim communities is often achieved by emphasizing negative emotions creating anxiety and resentment toward outsiders (Hutchison & Bleiker 2008; Collins 2004, 77). Post-disaster solidarity has its downside and may lead to conflict, social divides and exclusion (Webb 2002).

Conflict is another major social consequence of crises and disasters. It has been linked to the process of increasing and decreasing solidarity in victim communities; after disasters, the surrounding communities first express solidarity and unity with the victims, but after the initial aftermath, conflict often emerges between the victims and the larger community, as well as within the group of victims (Hoffman 1999, 139–148). Blame is an inevitable part of the aftermath of man-made disasters and easily leads to conflicts (Peek 2011; Kaniasty & Norris 2004). Crises that involve intentional acts of violence are particularly prone to cause conflict and are recognized as particularly problematic for both individuals and communities (McMillen et al. 1997; Norris et al. 2002; Peek 2011, 166–167). I will return to the subject of conflict throughout the following sections.

3.2. Emotions and collective grieving

Most deaths in the Western world today are not totally unexpected because the majority of the dying are elderly, often suffering from a terminal illness. This explains why the elaborate mourning rituals of pre-modern times are no longer followed. Accidents, disasters and violence cause exceptional deaths because their victims often include young and healthy people. According to one interpretation, people are now less prepared for these extraordinary deaths than they were in pre-modern times, which is why these deaths require large scale public mourning rituals. (Walter 2007.)

Several theorists have talked about the process of privatization and subjectivization of death in modern societies (e.g. Mellor 1993; Walter 2007). In traditional societies, death was dealt with and mourned collectively, while in modern societies it became a private matter for the family of the deceased. In late- or postmodern cultures, a turn to collective grieving is again occurring in the form of publicly shared expressions of sorrow and mutual support groups, online and offline, for people who have suffered a certain category of loss, such as the death of a child (Furedi 2004; Walter 1991). This is seen as a shift towards a "confessional" culture that emphasizes public as well as private expressions of emotions (see Furedi 2004).

Emotions are linked to social relationships that we establish between individuals and between us and the world (Burkitt 2002). They result from social interaction and its outcomes – real, imagined, or recollected (Kemper 2002). Emotions are thought to have both bodily and discursive aspects; feelings are part of practical consciousness and deal with how we can act, and emotions are part of discursive consciousness and deal with how we can articulate feeling through emotional vocabulary (Burkitt 2002). What makes emotions essential to the study of communities experiencing mass violence is that emotions are also a process of drawing boundaries between individuals and communities (see Ahmed 2004, 10).

To understand the bystander experience of mass violence, it is crucial to understand how and why people who are not present at traumatic incidents and who do not suffer direct or indirect losses may still experience emotional and stress reactions. Identification with victims has been found to be one reason for bystander posttraumatic stress (Dixon, Recling, & Shiwach 1993), as is proximity to a site of mass violence or a terrorist attack (Schlenger et al. 2002; Schuster et al. 2001). Mass violence incidents may also create nationwide traumas through intensive media coverage (see e.g. Silver et al. 2002). In the case of school shootings, while the violence may not directly harm or affect a large number of local residents, the incidents disrupt the everyday routines of bystanders and, judging from the large scale expressions of public grief, cause considerable emotional reactions.

Why is mass violence so shocking, and why does it cause various emotions in distant witnesses? One possible explanation is the idea of “catchy” or “contagious” emotions

that has been presented in different forms in the sociological discussion of emotions, as well as in the feminist theories of emotion and affect. All emotions are not our own. They are always dependent – at least to some extent – on cultural and social factors; this explanation suggests that emotions do not originate in individuals, but are transmitted between people on a social, biological and physical level (Brennan 2004, 2–3; Nummenmaa et al. 2012). This phenomenon is witnessed especially in exceptional situations, such as crises and disasters, with mass media further amplifying and extending the communication of emotions (Gibbs 2001). Other theorists have written about dominant emotions that in exceptional situations may become virtually universal (Kemper 2002, 64). This is related to changes in social interaction under crises; as Durkheim (1912/1995, 213–218) noted, social solidarity is created in mass interaction as mutual gestures of individuals become more synchronized, which creates effervescence, focuses interaction, and heightens emotions. This process changes individual emotional experience and expression that spreads between individuals, creating solidarity (Collins 2004).

What follows this process of spreading emotions is that in times of disasters, danger, loss and suffering become public (Fritz 1961). One way of spreading emotions in unusual situations is circulating stories of the events that are happening or have just happened. Further, in the last 20 years, a new set of public grieving rituals such as spontaneous memorialization has emerged in western countries (Peterson 2010, 141–146; Foote & Grider 2010). People bring flowers, candles, and other objects to places associated with tragedies, building what are called spontaneous or vernacular memorials. Spontaneous memorials seem to manage feelings of insecurity and disorder caused by unexpected incidents (Haney et al. 1997; Doss 2010, 112). The first known spontaneous memorials for victims of mass violence in the U.S. and other western societies occurred in the 1980s, and since the 1990s, vernacular memorials have emerged after practically all mass violence incidents. Public spaces and death sites have, overall, become more important in the memorialization of violent deaths, adding new elements to the more traditional grieving in funerals, cemeteries and homes (Foote & Grider 2010, 195).

Spontaneous memorialization has been criticized for failing to mobilize political and social initiatives for change (Doss 2010, 115–116). Public mourning and "metaphysical interrogatives" can also replace the questions of moral responsibility; focusing on the big and often unresolvable question – Why? – allows people to replace moral responsibility with destiny and bad fortune (Riley 2005, 59–70). The same applies to referring to events as "tragic" instead of focusing on the political and social structures that allow the "tragic" event to happen (Gorton 2007). However, there can also be a political aspect in the public memorialization of victims of mass violence. Public mourning serves to demonstrate unity and a sense of community in the face of a disruptive and wrenching crime, condemning the violent acts, and possibly trying to

communicate a message about policy implication such as gun control or improved mental health care.

Collective practices of memorialization can provide a sense of community but they are also a source of conflict (Foote & Grider 2010). Many people find spontaneous memorials disturbing, presumably because they bring death out of cemeteries and hospitals and into everyday life (Peterson 2010, 154). The objection is often yielded to the fact that individuals participating in the memorialization do not know the victims, which makes their grief false and unjustified (Petersson 2010; Walter et al. 2011).

However criticized, public and spontaneous memorialization is clearly important to a lot of people, and serves some purpose. This may have to do with finding meaning in tragedies that are perceived as random, inconceivable, and disruptive to everyday life and one's sense of security (Brennan 2008, 3). Spontaneous memorialization also helps to form communities, both existing and new ones, which are imagined and created as individuals feel unity with those affected by the crisis. Images and stories of the vernacular memorials that are replayed in the media are central in this process of forming communities around crises (see Anderson 1991/1983). People often form virtual relationships with individuals they have never met, such as deceased celebrities or murdered children whose stories become familiar through media. This form of grieving that Walter (2007) calls "virtual mourning" is typical of postmodern societies (since the 1990s). Public memorialization – both spontaneous and organized by administrative leaders – also serves in creating feelings of belonging and solidarity by helping individuals to position themselves inside the affected community.

3.3. Social memory and recounting collective experiences

Telling stories of what happened helps people deal with crises and disasters. Publicly expressed emotions and mourning practices after mass violence accumulate shared memories of the incidents. As with emotions, memories are not created in contained individuals, but as a part of social processes. As noted by Maurice Halbwachs (1952/1992, 38), we remember things because other people recall them to us; we acquire, localize and recall our memories in groups and in society, using the social frameworks of memory.

Individual bystander memories of school shootings are made of different layers; personal first-hand experience, other people's recollection of their experiences, articles read in newspapers or online, and images from the press and the television – all of these contribute to what individuals later remember when they think back to the shootings. The acts of sharing and transferring collective memories include talking, as well as other types of performative, repetitive action, such as commemorative practices, which communicate and sustain social memory (Connerton 1989, 39). This is how social memory expresses shared experiences of the past (see e.g. Fentress &

Wickham 1992, 25). It is a continuous activity of recounting past events and experiences that are preserved in the stories told of these events. But stories do more than act as a container for memories; they also provide an interpretation of the past, and a perspective for interpreting the present and the future (Fentress & Wickham 1992, 51), and thus direct collective action.

Durkheim's school used the term "collective memory", stressing the collective nature of social consciousness, while paying less attention to the relationship between individual and collective consciousness (Halbwachs 1952/1992; Fentress &Wickham 1992, ix). Terms such as "cultural memory," "popular memory," or "social memory" have later been used to include the interconnectedness of personal and shared memories. In this study, I prefer to talk about social memory, agreeing with Olick's and Robbins' (1998, 112) description of social memory as a "distinct sets of mnemonic practices" rather than "collective memory as a thing." These practices of shared memory have been increasingly used and examined in social sciences and the humanities since the 1980s.

When examining the social memory of a school shooting or any other past event, it is important to note the interconnectedness of individual and social memory. Early on, theorists of social memory noted that group dynamics affect the individual's memory (Bartlett 1932/1995, 244–245, 255). According to Halbwachs (1952/1992, 50–51), individuals remember, but the group or community defines what is worth remembering and how it is to be remembered: "Society from time to time obligates people not just to reproduce in thought previous events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them, or to complete them." Memories thus typically contain both personal and social aspects (see e.g. Fentress & Wickham 1992, 7). Personal narratives are interconnected with narratives about the groups that are central to the individual's identity (Connerton 1989, 21), and dominant narratives and interpretations promote certain memories over others.

Examining the social memory of school shootings helps to map how mass violence events are collectively interpreted and what kind of action follows from these interpretations. Social memory is always selective; interpretations are made according to the values and morality of the community. Studies of remembering have shown that as time passes, people tend to emphasize their own interpretation of a story or an event. In an experiment by Frederic Bartlett (1932/1995, 63–94, 118–129), people had to read and remember a story that was hard to understand because it included several incidents with little interconnection. Initially, individuals were more aware of the fact that they had their own interpretation of a non-consistent story, but with time they tended to forget the parts of the original story that did not fit their interpretation. The past is, however, not infinitely malleable, for the number of interpretations that are available and acceptable to the individual is limited, and social conflict over the past means that interpretations cannot always be easily remodeled (Schudson 1992).

As for school shootings, they may be hard to fit into a coherent story-form, because they often end with the suicide of the perpetrators, meaning that the fundamental reasons and motives behind the shootings can never be fully determined. However, forming coherent and meaningful narratives is a part of the process of remembering (Connerton 1989, 26), and the creation of social memories entails a process of conceptualization that may include changing some features in the narrative to better match the story to the interpretation made of it (Fentress & Wickham 1992, 58). When the coherent narrative is constructed, the recounting of the event may become habitual, using the same words and expressions whenever reproducing the narrative (Russel1921, 166). The memorialisation – be it recounting or acting in some other way – can even become a ritual that is repeated on, for example, every anniversary of the event and that includes reproducing the dominant narrative of what happened or repeating the ritualistic bodily gestures and movements (for example, a walk to a memorial site, lighting and placing a candle on the site, standing silently and contemplating the candles and flowers at the memorial site). These repeated actions can imprint and sediment shared memories in the body (Connerton 1989). Paul Connerton (ibid., 61, 71) claims that social memory is performative and can be observed in commemorative ceremonies that – unlike other rituals – often include a re-enactment of the event that is being memorialized.

There is also the possibility that complicated crises do not enable the production of a consistent collective interpretation: it may be difficult to construct coherent narratives from these seemingly senseless sudden and unforeseeable actions. Missing and conflicting information leads to contrasting interpretations and narratives. Several interest groups may challenge each other's version of the reasons and consequences of the crises (Alexander 2004; Smelser 2004). On the other hand, coherent collective narratives have been created for school shooting incidents, even if not on the community level. The typical narrative interpretation of school shootings, expressed for example by media or law enforcement, rests on the assumption that violence is not random and that violent events are predictable and thus preventable. This sort of narrative leads to the conclusion that mass violence could have been prevented with appropriate intervention by one or more actor – be it law enforcement, health care or social officials. (Thomas 2008.) This assumption is beneficial for the damaged sense of security of the inhabitants of the targeted communities, but it might also lead to conflict, particularly in small, close-knit communities because finding explanations is closely connected to assigning blame. The interpretations made of the past shooting incidents affect the present and future functioning of the targeted schools and communities and possibly also the surrounding schools and communities. Communicated through the media, these interpretations also frame the experiences of future mass violence incidents in other communities.

3.4. Narratives of inclusion and exclusion

Constructing narratives of a traumatic event works as a means to normalize the unusual situation (Abbott 2008, 44). Shared narratives and memories are relevant in action because memory filters the experience of the present through past experiences (Fentress & Wickham1992, 24). The interview narratives analysed in the present study offer insights into how mass violence was experienced in the studied communities. And, as memory is central in community formation (see Bellah et al. 1986), the narratives can also show how personal and collective identities are formed through memories and stories of past events.

There are different ways in which communities are constructed in the aftermath of crises trough rituals of solidarity. The most well known of these is perhaps converging on the site of the incidents; the media present pictures of this activity after each critical event. Applying Durkheim to the present day society, Walter (2001) notes that when thousands of people gather at a vigil after a mass violence incident or a death of a celebrity, it is a "congregation of the nomads" with a sense of community that does not exist in everyday life. However, the rituals of today's public mourning are different from the ones that Durkheim described; they are inclusive (anyone can join), but there is little or no social interaction. That is why it can be questioned whether these gatherings are actually communal rituals. Walter also states that there is no collective effervescence, but that people are together in their silence. (Walter 2001, 508.)

Also applicable here might be Victor Turner's (1969) idea of "communitas"; a collectivity that emerges in liminal periods and shares a profound consciousness of common identity. Although Turner did not write about disasters as liminal phases, it makes sense to understand the aftermath of a disaster as a liminal period; the old structures and the feelings of security have collapsed, and the "new normal" of the post-disaster everyday life has not yet been established (see Alexander 2004; Abrams et al. 2004).

The postmodern, highly mediatized way of processing certain deaths and disasters has been said to form a new kind of global community (Walter 2007). This happens through support groups and social networking sites that provide an arena for friends, colleagues and family to find each other and possibly form a bereaved community (Walter et al. 2011). Online memorial sites have been found to create a sense of community among people who have never met offline; it "allows the bereaved to expand their modes of communication and means of support, using cyberspace to enhance traditional existing ties, to develop online ties, and to create new relationships online which may eventually include more conventional forms of communication" (Roberts 2004, 72).

Social memory, in the form of narratives, also constructs communities after crises. In remembering and transmitting memories in narratives, communities are structured

through how the past is remembered and what is remembered of the past. (Fentress & Wickham 1992, 7.) Narratives help build and maintain solidarity and a sense of belonging in groups and communities, which is why narratives are important in crises situations that threaten and change collective identities (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). Social memory – its collectively accepted interpretations of past events – also legitimize the present social order (Connerton 1989, 3).

The publicly shared emotions related to the shooting incidents shape group and community identities. Emotions construct the boundaries that distinguish individuals and groups, however, the emotions are not situated inside these individuals or groups (Ahmed 2004, 10). Halbwachs noted that shared memories are also used to create social differentiation (Wood 1994, 126). The traditional sociological literature on disasters usually emphasizes the positive aspects of post-disaster solidarity, but the post-crisis community-building, solidarity-fuelled practices are not simply a positive phenomenon. It includes negotiations, contradictions and conflict – all of which may also lead to exclusion as the community defines its borders while constructing shared narratives of the crisis.

Emotions and memories of a traumatic event do not exist only within the individual psyche but also within the sphere of cultural, social, and historical contexts (e.g. Gemignani 2011). The process of collective sense making, recounting and remembering that takes place after a crisis has been described as the cultural trauma process. Comparing individual trauma with collective trauma, Kai Erikson (1976, 153–154) noted that if only a few individuals in the community experience a crisis, the rest of the community supports the victims. But if the whole community is victimized by a disaster, it cannot provide support for the victims, and the trauma becomes collective (ibid., 153–154).

In the cultural trauma process, the reshaping of collective identity to include the memory of the traumatic event becomes central (e.g. Alexander 2004; Smelser 2004a, 2004b; Sztompka 2000). Incidents such as school shootings that are sudden and unexpected, that shatter the feeling of security, and that have particular social origins (perpetrators are members of the attacked communities), may lead to cultural trauma. It is not automatical, but a process of symbolically constructing and framing the incident as something that "leaves indelible marks upon [communities'] group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity" (Alexander 2012, 6). The production and restriction of solidarity is an important part of remodelling collective identities in the aftermath of traumatic incidents (Alexander 2004). Similar features can be seen in commemorative ceremonies that remind communities of their collective identities and their important narratives (Connerton 1989, 70, Bellah et al. 1986, 154).

In the aftermath of a crisis, groups of victims that begin to form as a result of shared experience have a simultaneously inclusive and exclusive character. Victim status and

membership of the group are often determined by the degree of victimization (Hoffman 1999, 142). The community may be divided into "insiders" (i.e. victims) and "outsiders" (i.e. other members of the community who were not personally affected) (Carroll et al. 2006, 262). In addition, the unity of the victim group later starts to fracture, as the divisions and inequalities that were there before the crisis start to re-emerge (Hoffman 1999, 148). Technological and man-made disasters are particularly prone to the creation of negative consequences such as conflicts and division of the community (Freudenburg 1997). This may be a relevant concern in school shootings, when the perpetrators attack their own community.

The consequences of mass violence incidents thus seem to include group and community formation, fuelled by heightening solidarity. Conflict, on the other hand, occurs in the renegotiation of collective identity and the possible exclusion of some members of the affected group or community. Group conflicts can be solved by exclusion and labelling of certain individuals. Violence is controlled and the community purified by finding a scapegoat and projecting the source of violence outside of the group (Girard 1990). For instance, people who perpetrated violent acts in the Finnish civil war were, decades later, defined as outsiders in their home town, while their victims were defined as belonging to the community (Heimo 2006). Understanding the causes of these violent attacks as something that comes from outside the community can be a means to make sense of and cope with difficult experiences. This may include seeing the outsider or other as evil (Alexander 2001; Baumeister 1997; Girard 1990). The externalization of the crisis and the exclusion of some people associated with it works together with the inclusive practices of converging on the disaster site, creating spontaneous memorials, and other expressions of solidarity to build communities in the aftermath of mass violence.

4. RESEARCH PROBLEM, MATERIALS, AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research problem and questions

The aim of this dissertation is to *examine the collective process of making sense of school shootings.* This task involves examining the practices of remembering, narrating, and commemorating the incidents, as well as their consequences.

The precise research questions can be summarized as follows:

1. How were the shooting incidents understood and explained collectively, and what were the consequences of different interpretations in the local communities? (Articles 1 and 4)

2. How did bystanders express and share their emotional experience of school shootings and did this experience or its expression vary in different social groups? (Articles 1, 2 and 3)

3. Which forms did solidarity and conflict take in the communities after the shootings? (Articles 1, 3 and 4)

4.2. Collecting research materials

I first started gathering data for this study by conducting "expert interviews," meaning interviews with people who would have extensive knowledge of the ways in which local communities reacted to the shooting incidents. People who had worked in the field of psycho-social crisis management were identified as having this knowledge. Those interviews – although very informative – did not provide enough material for my dissertation. After going through a number of mail surveys for a research project on school shootings with respondents writing long accounts about their experiences in the open commentary box, I thought there was potential for more research material to be gathered with the residents of Jokela and Kauhajoki. I then set out to conduct focused, narrative interviews that turned out to be the main material for this dissertation. Both sets of interviews were focused in the sense that they engaged participants who had been in a particular situation (working in the psycho-social care after school shootings or living in the targeted local community at the time of the shootings), and concentrated on their personal experiences (see Merton et al. 1956, 3).

This dissertation is a part of the research project "Everyday life and insecurity," which examined the social consequences of school shootings in Finland (Hawdon et al.

2012b). Gathering research material in the project included mail surveys of Jokela and Kauhajoki residents, and the interviews that make up the main data for this dissertation. All the empirical data of this study were gathered after the school shootings, so it is not possible to compare the results with the situation before the shootings. However, a study that measured community solidarity before and after a university rampage shooting found that solidarity increased about 18 percent after the shooting, and remained elevated for six months, after which it started to return to the level prior to the incident (Hawdon et al. 2010). If this held true in Jokela and Kauhajoki, the interviews would have been conducted after solidarity returned to pre-shooting levels. However, empirical verification of this issue is extremely problematic because Jokela and Kauhajoki lack any social measures prior to the shootings (Räsänen et al. 2014).

Susanna Hoffman (1999) outlines a model of disaster recovery consisting of three stages. The first stage after a disaster is marked with a sense of isolation as the everyday social groups and communities dissolve. In the second stage, survivors form groups with a strong sense of unity and new collective identities – this would be the approximately six month long period of increased solidarity, although Hoffman only notes that it can start soon after the crisis hits and continue after it has passed. The third stage is the end of the disaster, when people resettle and return to their everyday lives. (Ibid.) This recovery pattern was identified in natural disasters, so it is not necessarily the best way to understand the aftermath of school shootings. However, based on Hoffman's model, we can hypothesize that the interviews were conducted in the third stage of recovery, meaning that the most intense effects of the shooting incidents had already passed

4.2.1. Focused interviews with crisis workers

To gain information about the community level reactions to school shootings, and to familiarize myself with what had happened in Jokela and Kauhajoki after the incidents, I interviewed 11 individuals who had worked in the communities before and /or after the shootings. The idea was to learn about aspects of the aftermath period that were not covered in the mail survey. For instance, the survey asked about social interaction and social support in the present tense, but did not ask how it had been prior to the shootings, or if there had been changes in the respondents' interaction with others or social support given or received after the shooting incidents. The collective process of experiencing and making sense of the incidents was easier to map in discussions with people who had worked with groups of local residents after the shootings. The participants could be said to be experts in the subject of collective experience of the school shootings in their working community. Many of them also lived in or nearby the targeted community, which means they were part of the communities in question.

Relevant entities that produced services as part of the crisis relief efforts in both towns were first identified. In Finland, the services provided by the public sector and non-governmental organizations after crises are usually divided in two phases; acute *crisis work* takes place during the incident and its immediate aftermath, until *aftercare* work takes over. In both Jokela and Kauhajoki, the local municipalities (mainly social work and youth work), the Finnish Red Cross, and local Evangelical Lutheran churches were the main actors in crisis work and aftercare services. After the acute crisis work period, psycho-social care was organized by the government funded aftercare projects that were run in cooperation with the local municipalities (in the case of Kauhajoki, also the surrounding towns' municipalities), local hospital districts, and, at least in the case of Jokela, experienced trauma psychologists that had worked with previous large scale crisis in Finland. The aftercare projects provided psychological support for the students, faculty and staff of the targeted schools, for the victims' families and for anyone who was affected by the shootings. In addition, local municipalities (especially youth and social work) and non-governmental organizations as well as churches participated in the aftercare by maintaining and strengthening their core functions. (Jokela School Shooting Investigation Comission 2009; Kauhajoki School Shooting Investigation Comission 2010; Ala-aho et al. 2011.)

I started by contacting the relevant entities identified from reports on the crisis and aftercare work, and then asked the possible participants to recommend other central actors as participants for the study. The criteria for choosing the participants were that they had participated in either the crisis work or the aftercare work, and that they were familiar with the local community prior to the shootings. Familiarity could be based on working or living in the community or in a nearby community before the shootings. Only one participant in Jokela did not meet the criteria, because she was not familiar with the town before participating in the crisis work there. However, she was an experienced youth worker and offered valuable insight on the reactions of the young to the shootings, which is why her interview was included in the study.

The leaders of the government funded aftercare projects refused to participate in interviews or provide any information such as annual reports for this study. Thus, a central actor in the aftercare work is missing from these data both in Kauhajoki and Jokela. However, the aftercare projects did not start their work until well after the initial aftermath period, so the acute crisis period was better covered by interviewing other actors, namely the local municipal actors and representatives of churches and non-governmental organizations. For example, the local Evangelical Lutheran churches played a central role in both towns by immediately responding to people's need to gather together and receive social support.

All except one of the crisis worker participants gave permission to state their names and occupations in the publications of this study, and were further promised that interview quotes would not be linked with the participants' names. However, the

names of the participants are not published because with the occupational information provided in research article 4, it might be possible to link participants with interview quotes, which would present an ethical problem. The list of participants by occupation is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Interviewed crisis workers by occupation.

		Occupation			
	Total	**Youth work**	**Church**	**Social work**	**Voluntary work**
Jokela	6	3	1	1	1
Kauhajoki	5	2	2	-	1

Interviews were first conducted in Jokela in January and February 2009, approximately 14 months after the shootings. In Kauhajoki, the interviews were conducted in September and November 2009, 12-14 months after the shootings. Prior to the interviews, the participants were provided with a short briefing about the research project and the main themes that would be discussed. I met all the participants at their place of work, except for one participant, whom I met at the local library.

The interviews were semi-structured (see Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 130), consisting of four themes: background information (i.e. work history, familiarity with the local community), experiencing a sudden crisis in a community (reactions and social relations during crisis, crisis work), aftercare and the consequences of the crisis, and social solidarity during and after the crisis (see appendix 1). The participants took different roles during the interviews. Some held on to a professional, matter-of-fact attitude, while others expressed more personal emotions and experiences. Working with a community facing a shocking event, while also being more or less part of the community, made the work of these participants emotionally demanding, which is why it is not a surprise that a few of them even cried while talking about their experiences. Of course, the attitudes of the participants also varied during the interviews; one participant, for example, remained strictly matter-of-fact for most of our discussion, only to end by talking about the perpetrator in an affectionate way, imagining him as a little baby and wondering what could have been done to help him.

The interviews were between 47 and 107 minutes long. All interviews were recorded and transcribed[6] word for word with sighs, laughs, and sobs marked. The quotations from these interviews throughout this dissertation are my translations of the

[6] The interviews of crisis workers were transcribed by Juho Sintonen, Johanna Strömbäck, and Tuomas Uotila, along with the author.

participants original Finnish. When words or sentences have been omitted from the quotes, it has been marked with (…).

4.2.2. Focused, narrative interviews with residents

After listening the crisis workers in Jokela and Kauhajoki talk about the local residents' reactions to the shootings, I wanted to examine the residents' experiences in more detail. The crisis workers had mostly interacted with people who were involved in the shootings, either having suffered personal losses or having been a student, teacher of staff member in the targeted schools. The crisis workers' knowledge thus concentrated on the context victims, not providing much information about the members of the communities who were not personally involved.

Participants for resident interviews were recruited through a letter sent together with a questionnaire that gathered survey data for a study on community reactions to school shootings (Hawdon et al. 2012b). A total of 31 people from Jokela and 21 from Kauhajoki volunteered, which was more than could be interviewed within the frame of this study. Some could not be reached, a few decided not to participate after all, and finally a few had to be left out of the study. The final criteria for choosing participants included making sure that the group of participants was as balanced as possible in terms of age, gender, residential history and personal experience with the shootings. To ensure that the participants could collectively paint a multi-faceted picture of the communities facing violent crises, a variety of experiences ranging from participants who were personally involved with the shootings (e.g. students and parents of student of the targeted schools) to participants who were not at all involved (e.g. people living far from the town center who did not hear or see anything) were covered. This is important when studying a controversial subject that is likely to raise conflict in the community that is being examined (Rubin & Rubin 2005, 68).

The motivation to participate differed from participant to participant. While some wished to process emotions and experiences related to the shootings, others wanted to give their opinion about why the shootings happened or the way in which the incidents were managed by the authorities, and many said they wanted to be of help in the research. Men are usually less likely to volunteer for interview studies (Squire 2008, 48), however, particularly in the case of Jokela, a large number (13) of men aged 50-75 volunteered, and many had a true desire to discuss the shootings.

In this study, it was more difficult to reach young adults; only six participants were under 36 years old, and there were no participants under 20 years old. As the focus of this research was in the local community level experience of the shootings and not on the targeted school communities, I did not seek to interview the students of the schools in question. Moreover, the youth in Jokela had already undergone a second victimization (see Altheide 2004) when, after the initial shock of the shooting, they had

to endure the prolonged interest of the media, with reporters interviewing students fleeing the targeted school in shock and pursuing them around town during the following days (Raittila et al. 2010). According to the youth workers in Jokela, the young were extremely suspicious of all adults who came from outside of their community, even long after the shootings. It would have been very difficult if not impossible to find participants among the young in Jokela. And more importantly, because many of the students of the targeted school in Jokela had already been interviewed by the police and participated in a study measuring post traumatic stress (Suomalainen et al. 2010), it would have been ethically questionable to persuade these young people to relive, once again, the trauma of the shootings for the purpose of obtaining research material. The same goes with the students of the targeted school in Kauhajoki. Additionally, in Kauhajoki, the students of the targeted establishment were over 18 years old, so if they were officially residents of Kauhajoki, they were included in the population from which the survey samples were obtained and thus potentially received the invitation to participate in the interviews.

Table 2. Gender and age of participants in resident interviews.

		Gender		Age		
	Total	**Female**	**Male**	**20-35 years**	**36-55 years**	**56+ years**
Jokela	21	10	11	2	10	9
Kauhajoki	22	13	9	4	9	9
Total	43	22	19	6	19	18

A total of 36 interviews were conducted with Kauhajoki and Jokela residents.[7] The interviews were conducted in Jokela in October 2009 (23 months after the shootings) and in Kauhajoki in April 2010 (19 months after the shootings). In order to give participants a chance to prepare for the interview and thus help them to give more detailed and nuanced information about the events that happened over a year before the interviews, a letter containing information about the study and the interview (including themes and main questions) was sent to all participants beforehand. The interviews were mostly conducted in the participants' homes, with a few exceptions when the participants requested that the interviewer meet them in a café. The length of the interviews varied from 20 minutes to three hours, but most interviews were 60-90 minutes long. All interviews were recorded, and the interviewers also wrote a short account about the interaction with the participant(s) before and after the recording. This assured that no information was lost, because many times the participants started

[7] Kauri Lindström conducted eight interviews and was a co-interviewer in two interviews. Miika Vuori was a co-interviewer in one interview. Other interviews were conducted by the author.

their account before the interview officially started, and continued when the interviewer was already standing in the doorway, ready to leave.

All interviews were scheduled with only one participant, but in six cases family members that were present in the interview situation participated on their own initiative.[8] These interviews were much like those conducted with one participant regarding the themes, the depth, and the confidentiality of the discussions. This increased the number of people reached with the 36 interviews to a total of 43[9].

The interviews were semi-structured around four themes (see appendix 2). The first theme was labeled "Residential history, family and social life", and it worked as an easy way to start the interviews with a set of simple questions that aimed at locating the participant in the surrounding community and finding out how involved they were in the community. The second theme, "Jokela/Kauhajoki community," mapped the participant's view of their home town.

The third theme, "School shooting," was introduced using a narrative approach; participants were asked to relate their experience of the shootings, starting from when they heard that something unusual was going on. The interviewers would stress that they were interested in the participants' own experience, and the participants were asked to talk about the things related to the shootings that they found important and wanted to tell the researcher. After listening to the participant's account, the interviewer would then ask additional questions if information that was needed about the participant's experience was missing from their account. This part of the interviews thus followed the typical course of narrative interviewing (see Wengraf 2001).

The fourth and final theme of the interviews was "Things that have remained the same and things that have changed" in the community and in the participant's life after the shootings. This theme mapped the consequences of the incidents. Together with the second theme, this theme completed the personal narratives about the shootings by adding the social context before and after the shootings. This resulted in research material dealing with personal experiences that was also deeply embedded in the social and collective experience of the crises.

Most interview participants are given full anonymity in this study. Information provided about them is limited to gender, age group and residential location. However, there are two interviews with two participants that are so different from the rest of the

[8] As a result, five couples were interviewed together, as was one family as a whole (parents and their 20-year old daughter).

[9] The number of participants varies in different research articles. Article 3 uses only the interviews with crisis workers in Jokela. The other articles are based on resident interviews, but the interviews with the parents of the Jokela perpetrator were omitted from article 2 because they focused on slightly different themes than other interviews, and thus did not provide useful information for the analysis of gendered emotional experiences.

data that they could not be treated in the same anonymous way in the analysis. These participants are the parents of the perpetrator of the shooting in Jokela. They contacted the research project themselves and offered to participate even after being informed that anonymity could not be guaranteed for them in the publication of this study. I had some concerns about interviewing the parents; I was afraid that the interview would turn into a therapeutic interview (see Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 41) and become emotionally challenging for both the participants and myself. However, the therapeutic aspect was already present in many other resident interviews, and the parents of the perpetrator had ongoing therapeutic relationships that would help them process any upsetting issues that might come up in the interviews. To ease the challenge posed by these interviews, I decided to conduct them with another researcher. After confirming that I had the informed consent of these two participants, I conducted the interview with the help of Kauri Lindström in January 2010. A year later, the participants informed me about some new developments concerning the family's interaction with the local community, and I conducted another interview with the help of Miika Vuori in June 2011. Both interviews provided valuable information about the social processes in the Jokela community after the shootings, that could not have been acquired in any other way, which, together with the informed consent of the participants, justified conducting these interviews.

Almost all other participants were indirectly exposed to the shootings; they knew a victim or a perpetrator or their families, their children went to the targeted school, or they were following the unfolding and the aftermath of the shootings around town and in the media. However, the effects of a major trauma, such as a terrorist attack or a school shooting, are not predictable by the amount of exposure, as people not directly exposed to traumatic events may have as intense emotional reactions as those directly exposed (Silver et al. 2002; Hawkins et al. 2004). Experiences can be defined as memories of events that individuals have lived through, and narrating these experiences makes them meaningful (Klein 2006).

The interviews conducted for the present study dealt with possibly sensitive topics. The school shooting as an event had been emotionally difficult for many of the participants, and the other themes discussed during the interviews, such as violence, death, and conflicts in the community were sometimes challenging as well. However, an upsetting experience such as a school shooting does not necessarily mean that it will be a sensitive interview topic, for the discussion can be healing as well as re-traumatizing; whether an interview theme is sensitive or not depends largely on the relational, cultural, and contextual circumstances, such as the relationship between the interviewer and the participant (Hydén 2008).

In participating in a study that explicitly deals with mass violence, participants were taking the risk of difficult emotions surfacing because of the interviews.When people discuss past events, these events are remembered and relived in the body (Kleinman &

Kleinman 1994, 715). For some participants, but not for all, school shootings were a sensitive and emotionally charged topic. While all participants found the shootings deeply regrettable, some reported not having been shocked or upset, and thus it was not difficult for them to talk about the incidents. For others, however, the interviews evoked uncomfortable feelings related to the shootings or other past experiences of violence. Memories were translated into bodily actions and reactions in the course of recounting their experience of school shootings; during the interviews, many cried, and others reported getting worked up by anger or grief, or getting a headache. Sometimes painful memories of past experiences, such as being subjected to violence or the death of a loved one, were evoked by the interview themes. While no follow-up was organized to help participants process the feelings brought up by the interviews, participants in both towns had access to free counseling, organized as part of the aftercare provided for the community. Discussing the upsetting event also had possible positive and empowering consequences. For example, some participants said that the interviews provided them with a well needed chance to discuss and process the shootings, which they had not been able to do before due to their own reluctance or that of their family and friends.

In addition to being possibly harmful for the participants (especially if they concentrate on victimization and negative consequences), these kinds of interviews can be emotionally consuming and challenging for the researcher. Finding the right ways to respond and react to participants' expressions of intense emotions may also be difficult. When encountering such situations around sensitive topics, I tried to act as more of "a listener than a questioner" (see Hydén 2008), and pay attention to positive things that the participants shared about their experience as well as negative (for example, some participants listed not only negative but also positive personal and collective consequences of the shootings).

Interview narratives are always produced in an interactive process between the researcher and the participants (see e.g. Riessman 1993, 10). I recognize that, especially in the beginning, my own perception of the aftermath of the shootings affected the questions that I asked and the issues that I focused on. I expected practically everyone in the affected communities to have been shocked, upset and/or sad because of the shootings. This was reflected in the outline for the interviews, where I simply noted that I should ask people what helped them to recover from the shock. I was somewhat surprised when some of the first participants responded to this question by saying that they had not been particularly shocked by the shootings. From media texts and interviews with crisis workers, I had adopted the discourse of people needing to recover and work through their traumatic experience and I had not considered how resilient individuals and communities can be when facing a sudden crisis. In the course of the interview process, however, I learned to be more open to the participants' unique experience, and modify my own approach accordingly.

It is necessary to acknowledge that a qualitative interview setting – as any other social interaction – involves reflecting and performing gendered cultural practices and values (Oakley 1998; Broom et al. 2009). As some of the interviews were conducted by a male researcher and some by a female researcher (the author), the influence of the gender of the researcher on the research material may play a role, but is, however, extremely difficult to define. Participants do not automatically confide more in a researcher of the same gender – my interviews with male participants often resulted in deep and confidential research material. In fact, some suggest that men find it easier to talk about emotions with women, because they feel uncomfortable showing emotion to other men (Seidler 1998, 208).

Interviews were transcribed,[10] word for word, with the length of pauses and relevant nonverbal expressions (laughing, crying, sighing etc.) indicated. The quotations from these interviews throughout this dissertation are my translations of the participants original Finnish. In translating the quotations, I have tried to be as literal as possible, but sometimes the original wording had to be changed so that the resulting translation would transmit the idea in English. When quoting the interviews I have sometimes left out my own sounds and utterances that did not seem to contribute in or influence the participant's account, as well as the length of the pauses. Similar to the interviews with crisis workers, omissions in the quotes have been marked with (…).

4.2.3. Survey data

The third research article uses a triangulation of survey and interview data to map the social consequences of the shootings in the Jokela community. The survey data in question (N=330) were gathered as a part of the Everyday life and insecurity –study project in May-June 2008, 6-7 months after the shooting in Jokela. The population frame of the survey was local adult residents, aged 18–74. A detailed description of the survey data is available elsewhere (Hawdon et al. 2012b). The second research article of this dissertation also presents the details of gathering the survey data. Descriptive statistics based on these data were used to complement the interview material in providing information about social interaction, belonging, and solidarity in the Jokela community.

4.3. Analysis

As often stated in qualitative research, analysis cannot be separated from the process of gathering data. However, there are several analytic tasks that are conducted only after the research material is gathered, but qualitative research reports often lack detailed descriptions of this phase of the analysis. Nonetheless, it is of great interest to know

[10] Transcriptions were done by Kauri Lindström, Alina Salonen, Emmiina Vihervirta, and the author.

how researchers decide what leads and ideas in the research materials they choose to follow – this is influenced by the personal, political, and theoretical biographies of the researcher. Data analysis is also where research participants' voices and perspectives are especially vulnerable, since participants are usually not included in this phase of the analysis (Mauthner & Doucet 1998).

My own analytical process was mainly guided by the theoretical ideas discussed earlier (see chapter 3) – namely, the concepts of solidarity, conflict, emotions, narratives, and belonging that emerge after crises and disasters. I have no doubt that I was much more eager to follow statements and hints of solidarity and conflict in analyzing the transcribed interviews than, say, participants' discussions on what politicians should do to prevent school shootings. Regardless, the interview material contained some themes that I had not been able to anticipate, but that started to feel more and more important to me as I read and re-read the interviews. One was the notion of evil that participants used in the process of making sense of the shootings, another one was the way in which participants discussed emotions in relation to gender. I chose to follow these leads in making both the notion of evil and the gendered emotional experience the focus of a research article. Different research traditions related to these themes are also discussed in the articles.

Although I used a narrative approach in the resident interviews, I did not conduct narrative analysis in the strict sense in all of the research articles, but rather used various analytical methods depending on the research questions of each article. The preliminary analysis of the interview data was always done by reading the interviews first, as I would read a novel – paying attention to what was happening and what the main arguments and the story were in each interview. I then re-read the material paying special attention to whatever "lead" I was following in the research article I was working on – be it the notion of evil or the themes of conflict and solidarity. The first round of systematic analysis was usually done using content analysis or thematic analysis, and then complemented with more interpretative analysis.

For example, in the fourth article, content analysis was first used to see whether resident participants did or did not make use of the concept of evil when making sense of school shootings, and the participants' statements about evil were then analyzed by identifying and categorizing different ways of discussing and processing evil related to the shootings. Content analysis was also used in the second article to map what kinds of personal emotional reactions residents reported having experienced, and what crisis workers and residents said about the gendered emotional reactions of other people. These statements were then further analyzed by constructing two types of cultural, emotional orientations towards school shootings, and their connection with gender was examined. The third article includes a triangulation of qualitative interview data and quantitative survey data, combining different information from the survey and the interviews to build a more comprehensive analysis of social solidarity in the community (see Newman & Benz 1998). While the research articles all use a different

perspective to analyze the community experience of mass violence and have distinct research questions and methods, they all conclude with an examination and interpretation of the consequences of the collective practices identified in the analysis.

The analytic processes are presented in detail in each research article. The table below summarizes different materials and methods used in the research articles.

Table 3. Research materials and methods in each article.

Article	Research materials	Methods used
1. Making Sense of School Shootings	Focused, narrative interviews with Jokela (N=21) and Kauhajoki (N=22) residents	Narrative analysis
2. Affected or Detached? Gendered Emotional Reactions to School Shootings	Focused, narrative interviews with Jokela (N=19) and Kauhajoki (N=22) residents Focused interviews with crisis workers in Jokela (N=6) and Kauhajoki (N=5)	Content analysis Constructing typologies
3. The Norm of Solidarity	Focused interviews with crisis workers in Jokela (N=6) Survey of Jokela residents (N=330)	Thematic analysis Descriptive statistics
4. Expressions and Projections of Evil in Mass Violence	Focused, narrative interviews with Jokela (N=21) and Kauhajoki (N=22) residents	Content analysis Thematic analysis

In two of the articles, I utilized thematic analysis, which entails organizing the data based on certain themes. Themes can be defined as summary statements, causal explanations, and conclusions that participants present in their interview accounts (Rubin & Rubin 2012, 194). As explained earlier, most of the themes I used were rooted in the theoretical background of this study, although some originated in the participants' accounts. Thematic analysis helps to identify patterns and categories in the data (Mabry 2008).

In the first article, I conducted narrative analysis. Narrative research includes a diverse set of practices, but different analytic strategies usually identify narrative themes or structures (Gubrium & Holstein 2001, 673). There is no consensus on the exact definition of narrative; however, in this study I define narratives as representations of sequenced events (see e.g. Abbott 2008). The narratives that I was interested in were those that told stories about the two school shootings and the communities that

experienced them. These included descriptions about the communities, as well as accounts about the participants' lives before, during, and after the shootings.

Stories and narratives that accompany school shootings are important to understand the shootings and to unfold the events that lead to the incidents (Kimmel & Mahler 2003, 1440). They also tell us what happened in the towns after the shootings, and how the participants reflected on the shootings' influence on the future of the communities. More importantly, narratives are a key element in making sense of the incidents and finding meaning in living through them. With the help of a plot, participants made the sequence of events around the shootings non-random – Paul Ricoeur calls this emplotment (Ricoeur 1985, 8). Emplotment is based on the interpretation of the events. Thus, the narratives that were the material of this study do not report or mirror the "real" experiences of the participants, but rather their interpretation of the experience. They are also told in a specific interview situation and they may be intended to do much more than simply contribute to the research information about the shootings.

In the interviews, participants recounted their memories and explained their interpretations of the shootings. They formed their narratives out of multiple elements, such as first- and second-hand experiences, stories heard from others and acquired from the media. Although in most narratives in this study there is usually only one narrator – the interviewee – sometimes the narrating voice describes the experiences of a group of people, such as the participant's family or the whole community. These are examples of how personal and collective narratives are always entwined. Personal narratives are always a part of an encompassing process of community formation and maintenance; they contain elements of master narratives that interpret past events and legitimize the community and its experiences (see Hinchman & Hinchman 1997).

I conducted narrative analysis by first summarizing individual interview accounts of the shooting incidents and their aftermath, identifying the central argument in each narrative (see May 2001, 84). This phase included a thematic narrative analysis focusing on the content of the narratives (see Riessman 2008, 53), paying special attention to narratives of solidarity and conflict after the events. First, I examined both communities separately, looking for similarities and contradictions between the accounts within the communities. These observations were then condensed into ideal-type, master narratives. Master narratives provide a frame for individual storytellers and shape the collective interpretations of different situations (Donnan & Simpson 2007, 17–24). I also identified counter narratives that challenged the interpretations of the master narratives (see Andrews 2004). Last, I compared the master and counter narratives of the two communities, and identified the consequences that these narratives had in both communities.

Catherine Riessman (1993, 8–15) has pointed out that in the course of narrative research, experience is interpreted and represented on five different levels; the participant is first *attending* an experience, then *telling* about it in an interview, which is then *transcribed*

and *analyzed* by the researcher, after which the research report is *read* by people who make their own interpretations about the representation of the participant's experience. There has been a long debate about what narratives can tell us about the "real" experience. The two opposing opinions are the realist view that states that narratives document reality and the narrativist view of narratives being part of reality but not reflecting the lived experience as such (May 2001, 76; Riessman 1993, 15). My own interpretation lies somewhere in between, albeit rather on the narrativist side of the continuum. I realize that the interview accounts are participants' interpretations of what happened in their lives and in the local communities. Nonetheless, these interpretations are based on true experiences, and the participants have tried to provide as accurate accounts as possible about the incidents and their aftermath. Together, their narratives paint a multifaceted picture of the communities living through school shootings.

As is understandable in the light of master and countering narratives, different participants offered conflicting descriptions and information about what happened before, during, and after the shootings. The perpetrator of the Jokela shootings, for example, was portrayed both as being a very nice, well behaved, happy child and as a child who was unsociable and overly interested in violence. This kind of contradiction and contestation often occupies a central place in social memory (Olick & Robbins 1998, 126), and the different recollections about the perpetrators were true to the participants and brought sense and meaning to their narratives about the shootings. Examining social memory does not give factual information about the shootings as much as it gives information about the shared meanings, memories and images attached to the incidents (see Fentress & Wickham 1992, 59). Being interested in shared memories and narratives, I did not try to verify the historical accuracy of conflicting memories – it would not even be possible based on only the interview narratives. Some statements, often about the perpetrators, were quite extreme, but I decided to include them in the analysis, particularly when examining the ways of exclusion in the affected communities. The interview narratives are interpretations of the shootings, and more important than their historical accuracy is whether they are considered true and acceptable interpretations by the local communities.

My analysis combines voices from different levels of the communities that experienced school shootings to paint a multidimensional picture of how mass violence was experienced and what kind of consequences it had on the studied towns. These voices include those of the crisis workers, local residents who either did or did not have a firsthand experience of the shootings, and even the parents of the perpetrator of the Jokela shootings. While the overall narrating voice and the interpretations in this study are my own, I have tried to keep the stories and the voices from the two communities alive throughout the dissertation. While I understand that no "authentic" community experience can be presented in this study, I hope that what results here is a balanced negotiation between the perspectives of the participants, my own interpretations, and the theoretical conceptualizations that I make use of.

5. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary of the main results

Article 1: Making Sense of School Shootings. Comparing Local Narratives of Solidarity and Conflict in Finland.

In the first article, I focused on the collective experience of mass violence as represented by local residents' narratives of the shootings and their home communities before and after the incidents. I was also interested in how the shared narratives (re)construct the targeted communities. Analyzing the interview narratives of Jokela and Kauhajoki residents, I found considerable differences in the shared trauma narratives and the consequences of the shootings in the two communities. My aim was to find out

1) how did the participants describe their communities and the dynamics of solidarity and conflict in Jokela and Kauhajoki after the shootings, and

2) which elements made the trauma narratives of the two communities different, even though the mass violence incidents were quite similar.

In Jokela the community was constructed as a victim, whereas in Kauhajoki, the community was portrayed as a mere site of mass violence. In Jokela, the master narrative promoted public expressions of solidarity and memorialization that were considered important in the recovery process. In Kauhajoki, public expressions of solidarity were seen as unnecessary, although solidarity was expressed through a "culture of silence." The differences in the shooting incidents and the different characteristics of the two communities contributed to the difference between the dominant narratives in Jokela and Kauhajoki. Both communities experienced a mixture of solidarity and conflict in the aftermath of the shootings. The residents of Jokela had conflicting attitudes toward the family of the perpetrator. In Kauhajoki, public expressions of grief and the pace of personal and collective recovery processes were a source of conflict.

The article concludes that solidarity and conflict may occur simultaneously after a crisis, even though many theoretical accounts present solidarity and conflict as different, successive phases. The results also show that in violence-related incidents, symbolic and emotional solidarity seem to play a bigger role than solidaristic helping behavior that is often emphasized in the study of crises and disasters.

Article 2: Affected or Detached? Gendered Emotional Reactions to School Shootings.

This article explored whether gendered norms and beliefs about emotions persist as people relive and recount unexpected incidents of mass violence. I examined and compared men's and women's emotional experiences of school shootings in Jokela and Kauhajoki, based on qualitative interviews with local residents and crisis workers. My aim was to find out

1) what kind of personal emotions did participants express and what emotional reactions of other people did they describe when discussing school shootings;

2) if these emotional reactions and descriptions were associated with gendered ways of expressing emotions;

3) if specific coping actions were associated with gender.

Two emotional orientations in relation to school shootings were identified: being affected and being detached. The affected emotional position subscribed to the interpretation of the shootings as a traumatic experience for community members, and underlined discussing one's emotions as a part of recovery. The detached orientation promoted the interpretation that school shootings were not traumatizing for bystanders, stressed the importance of moving on, and saw discussing the shootings or one's emotional reactions as unnecessary. These orientations framed individual emotional experience of school shootings, at the same time performing gender and maintaining gender boundaries. Women were associated more with being emotionally affected and men with being detached. Thus, traditional gender roles in the expression of emotions remained fairly stable after school shootings. However, the situation was so rare and exceptional that there were conflicting interpretations on how men and women should express emotion. People identifying with the affected orientation tended to see the detached orientation as symptomatic of denying one's emotions, which was thought to lead to emotional problems. Those identifying with the detached orientation blamed the affected for unjustified and pretentious emotional expressions, as well as for pressuring others to talk about their feelings. One consequence of the gendered emotional orientations was that women, and even girls, were assigned the role of emotional caregivers more often than men.

Article 3: The Norm of Solidarity. Experiencing Negative Aspects of Community Life After a School Shooting.

While the sociological literature on crises and disasters underlines the positive consequences of post-disaster solidarity, negative consequences of increased solidarity in post-crisis situations remain understudied. In this article, we examined the

community experience of the school shooting in Jokela, focusing on the negative consequences of the crisis. The analysis was based on focused interviews with crisis workers (N=6) and a survey of Jokela adult population (N=330). We approached the community experience with the following research questions:

1. What kind of community was Jokela in the aftermath of the shootings?
2. What kinds of negative processes related to the shootings were identified in the community by crisis workers?
3. Which of these negative processes were considered to have a long-term impact on the daily life in the community?

The survey and interview data suggested that Jokela was a close-knit community with a high sense of belonging and a strong local identity. At the same time, however, survey respondents did not report much co-operation and participation in social activities. Our analysis showed that the Jokela community experienced a sudden rise of social interaction and solidarity after the shooting. The incident was perceived as a collective crisis in the community. Common practices for expressing solidarity included: gathering together, comforting each other, and taking candles, notes, or flowers to the public mourning site that was spontaneously formed around a pond next to the targeted school. However, increased solidarity also had negative effects. Collective guilt felt by some of the community members due to perceived collective failure of the community to prevent the shooting was one of them. Community members also felt that their town was labeled and stigmatized as Jokela became the synonym of school shooting in public discussion. In addition, group division occurred within the community, with young people forming a closed group that excluded even their own parents, and developing a group identity centering on the shared experience of the shooting. This promoted solidarity inside the group, but restricted solidarity toward and interaction with outsiders, ultimately limiting some adolescents' social life and educational choices. There was also struggle between different groups over the significance of the trauma.

Article 4: Representations and Projections of Evil: Coping after a Violent Tragedy.

This article tackled the concept of evil that interview participants used in their accounts about the shootings and their perpetrators. Based on the analysis of the focused, narrative interviews with Jokela and Kauhajoki residents, we set out to examine how people understand and see evil, and how they associate it with a mass violence incident that happens in their home town. The research questions were:

1. How did participants define and represent evil in relation to school shootings?

2. How was the concept of evil used in local communities to process incidents of mass violence committed by young people?

Our analysis showed that the notion of evil was used by most participants, either explicitly or implicitly, to understand and explain school shootings. Evil was primarily associated with the shooting incidents themselves, as a chaotic and inconceivable force. It was also associated with the perpetrators. Evil experienced in relation to school shootings was processed by projecting it onto the perpetrators and then excluding them, or even their families, from the local communities. The fear of evil was assigned to individuals who even vaguely associated with some aspects of the image of evil. We concluded that the image of evil is particularly compelling in the case of school shootings, because there are a number of possible reasons for the incidents and even experts cannot agree on which ones to emphasize. However, we found that resorting to evil as an explanation for violent incidents may lead to the exclusion and even fear of certain individuals or groups associated with evil.

5.2. Discussion

My aim was to examine the collective process of making sense of rampage shootings through narrating and memorializing the incidents. The first research question sought to determine how the shooting incidents were understood and explained collectively, and what consequences different interpretations had in the local communities. The first and fourth research articles primarily concentrated on this question. Understanding and explaining the shootings was a complex endeavor in the local communities. Along with their personal views and accounts, the participants of this study evoked shared interpretations and narratives making sense of the shootings. My analysis showed that the shared experience of the shootings was formed with different, sometimes contesting narratives and interpretations. However, dominant narratives were formed and they had different consequences for the social interaction and practices in the communities.

Both communities simultaneously experienced solidarity and conflict in the aftermath of the shootings. Particularly in Jokela, there was a temporary rearranging of social relations in order to deal with the new situation; solidarity was amplified and the community made tighter. This experience was made possible by the relatively strong master narrative that portrayed the shooting as a crisis for the whole community. However, as observed in studies on the aftermath of school shootings (Newman et al. 2004, 210–211; Hawdon et al. 2010) and other crises and disasters (Hoffman 1999; Fritz 1961; Quarantelli & Dynes 1977), the phase of increased solidarity lasted only a few months. In Kauhajoki, a more modest form of solidarity toward the community was manifested in the dominant narrative that portrayed the town as a mere site for the incident, situating the incident within the targeted school and in the victims' home

towns. This narrative protected community members from emotional turmoil and normalized the situation faster than a narrative promoting victimization of the whole community.

The processes of enforced solidarity were partly made possible by exclusion; in Jokela, the family of the perpetrator was excluded in some accounts by labeling them as different from the "normal" local families, and in Kauhajoki, the whole incident was externalized. This included associating the shooting events, certain places, and certain individuals with the concept of evil, which helped to understand and explain the inconceivable incidents. Projecting the violence and its source outside the community can also act as a way to control the insecurity caused by the violence (Girard 1990). Globally, the category of "evil young people" was identified after the shootings at Columbine high school, which marked the start of demonizing school shooters in the media, which in turn directed public attention away from the background causes of the shootings (Böckler et al. 2011, 265).

My second research question dealt with how community members expressed and shared their emotional experience of school shootings, and if this experience or its expression varied in different social groups. The consequences of the two shootings did extend beyond those directly affected: some bystanders were deeply shocked and affected by the incidents, although it is good to remember that not all were similarly affected. I explored this question from a slightly different perspective in articles 1, 2, and 3. In the first article, I examined the collective grieving that was influenced by the trauma narratives, and stated that in both communities, collective grieving rituals were common – even though quite strongly criticized in Kauhajoki.[11] Many people expressed and shared their emotions publicly in participating in the creation of spontaneous memorials. These shared emotions were contributing to the feelings of solidarity and belonging in the communities. Participants also described expressing and processing their emotional experience in more private conditions, in small groups consisting of their families or friends.

In the second article, I identified the emotional orientations of being affected or detached that provided two possible frames for making sense of individual emotional experience. As discussed earlier, these orientations were gendered, although not automatically or without exceptions. Still, this is one of the ways in which gender is reproduced trough instances of violence (Shepherd 2008, 51); enduring the situation of abrupt violence with controlled and rational emotional reactions was seen as something that distinguished men from women. Young people, regardless of gender, were described as framing their experience more along the lines of the affected orientation. This resulted in the young in Jokela having a more intense group experience of the

[11] It is likely that in Kauhajoki, many people who contributed in the spontaneous memorial were residents of the neighboring towns, because that is where the victims came from.

shootings and forming a group identity around this experience, as discussed in article 3.

The last research question examined the forms that solidarity and conflict took in the communities after the shootings. This was analyzed in research articles, 1, 3, and 4. In Jokela, solidarity, unity and belonging were experienced as people gathered around the pond next to the targeted school, as they consoled each other and offered concrete help such as meals for victims' families. The Kauhajoki community did not experience such a strong and lasting increase in feelings of belonging and solidarity, but the community was nevertheless more or less united in aspiring to move on and put the mass violence incident behind them rather quickly. Although it has been observed that declaring that an incident has been worked through shortly after it has occurred may cause tension in the communities (Newman et al. 2004, 189), in the case of Kauhajoki I interpreted this tendency more as a way to avoid conflict and blame in the community, and contribute to the process of silent solidarity.

While the bereaved in Western cultures today are often isolated (Walter 2007), after school shootings there was less isolation at least in Jokela because of the large number of the victims. This can have both positive and negative effects. The grieving families were not totally alone in their grief, but on the other hand the interest and needs of the media and other townspeople to get information about the incident might have been bothersome and disruptive of the model of "private grief," which is typical in Finland as well as many other Western societies. In the "private grief" -model, grief is seen to belong to a few close family members or friends of the deceased, and others are expected to respect their privacy and not intrude (Walter 2007, 4).

In Jokela, conflict was experienced concerning the family of the perpetrator. While most were rather neutral or friendly in their attitudes, some reacted with blame, fear, and hostility. There were tendencies and attempts to exclude the family both in concrete (they were pressured to move away, the local school and some parents did not want their younger son to go to the school where the shooting happened) and symbolic (they were described as deviant and "not normal") ways. Contradictions regarding the status of the families of perpetrators has been found typical in the aftermath of other school shootings as well (Newman et al. 2004, 214; Sullivan & Guerette 2003; Grider 2007).

As noted in the second research article, there was a conflict of opinions regarding the most appropriate and beneficial emotional orientations towards the shootings in both communities. Particularly in Kauhajoki, conflicting opinions centered on public grieving and memorialization of the incidents. The dominant interpretation was that only people directly affected by the shooting were to publicly express their emotion, while counter narratives presented public memorialization as beneficial and understandable for distant witnesses as well. Public memorialization has been found to trigger both devoted and disapproving reactions in the aftermath of other crises as well

(Brennan 2008; Petersson 2010; Walter et al. 2011). After the shootings, even bystanders had to define their attitude toward collective memorialization; was it better to grieve and memorialize the mass violence incident together, or to let go of the experience and move on with everyday life?

This question can be related to the conflict between a modernist tendency of trauma psychology to get people to "move on" and "let go" of their grief and a return to traditional mourning with postmodern aspects (see Walter 2007). Different paces of healing are indeed known to create conflict in communities after mass violence (Newmal et al. 2004, 207; DeJong et al. 2003). One example of this was the group of young people in Jokela who collectively mourned the shooting and its victims, finding relief and unity in the group of people with the same traumatic experience (see article 3). However, when countering narratives challenge the dominant interpretations and expectations, community members can feel at a loss about how to show and process their emotions and memories concerning the shootings.

Collective memorialization includes performative action that sustains the social memory and establishes a continuity between the commemorating group or community and the commemorated past event (Connerton 1989). This helps to explain why the opposition to public memorialization occurred in Jokela and especially in Kauhajoki regarding the anniversary of the shooting; it is an attempt to deny the continuity and connection between the local community and the shootings. In addition to the official commemoration, other types of performative action occurred in both towns. A musical play and video art about the shootings were made by young people in Kauhajoki. Hundreds of candles were lit on the vernacular memorial sites on the anniversaries of both shooting incidents, but for some, the simple act of visiting the site sufficed to commemorate the tragedies. After the shooting in Jokela, text messages inviting people to light a candle in their window to honor the victims spread throughout the country. Online memorialization of the victims also occurred on Facebook and other SNS platforms.

It has been claimed that Western societies delegate the interpretation and ritualization of death to medicine, psychology, and media that have taken over the expertise of death from its traditional expert, religion (Walter 1991, 304). This indeed occurred regarding school shootings in Finland; trauma therapists positioned themselves as leaders of the grief and recovery process. In some aspect this appeared to be working in the framing of individual emotions for some participants who followed the progression of their own grieving process on a brochure given to them by trauma therapists. However, doubts have been expressed about whether medicine, psychology and media are able to generate meaningful rituals for the bereaved (Walter 1991, 304).

While crisis therapy is popular after disasters and mass violence, its effect in coping has been questioned. Professional counselling was found to have no effect on individual wellbeing and in fact having adverse effect on solidarity after the mass

shooting in Virginia Tech; individuals who saw a counsellor expressed significantly lower levels of solidarity than those who did not seek professional help (Hawdon & Ryan 2011). This may be because the therapy approach is usually individualistic and focuses attention away from the surrounding community, whereas social interaction and collective mourning rituals – especially after incidents touching a great number of people – focus attention toward the community (Hawdon & Ryan 2011; Walter 1991, 304). This is how social solidarity can create lasting networks of social and emotional support that benefit long term wellbeing and recovery far more than short term trauma counselling does. In the cases of Jokela and Kauhajoki, I found that, on occasion, the bereaved communities offered support to those who did not see themselves eligible for counselling but nevertheless needed someone to talk to or someone to be with. Nevertheless, community activities were also restricted in the case of the shooting in Jokela, where the officials leading the aftercare of the shooting intervened and cancelled a public meeting about the shooting that people were going to organize about two weeks after the incident, on the grounds that it was too early to have such meetings (Hawdon et al. 2012c).

In Finland, the trauma counsellors in Jokela and Kauhajoki were aided by the local Evangelical-Lutheran congregations in managing the aftercare of the shootings, which adds a possibly communal dimension to the trauma therapy approach. (The Evangelical-Lutheran church is the established church of the Finnish nation and it is a strong leading institution in many national mourning events. Around 76 % of the Finnish population belongs to the church, with an increasing number of baptized members leaving the church every year.) On the first anniversary of the shootings in Kauhajoki, a procession from the targeted school to the Evangelical-Lutheran church was organized, connecting these two main mourning sites, one secular and the other religious. In a way, this procession also performed – communicated and sustained – the connection and cooperation of the secular and religious communities.

5.3. Conclusion

The shock that is caused by the inconceivable violence, of young people dying, shot at random in their own school that was so far presumed to be a safe environment, can create a collective experience of chaos, uncontrollability, and evil. This shock includes a loss of control on the societal level; because identifying potential shooters and preventing the attacks is extremely difficult, it forces societies to accept that all risks are not controllable (Böckler et al. 2011, 261). To manage the feelings of uncontrollability and insecurity, communities need shared interpretations of the causes and consequences of the incidents, and strategies that help to restore a sense of security and normality in the everyday life.

Based on the present study, two simultaneous strategies that take place after mass violence can be identified; one is a process of fast-paced normalization – of letting go – and the other is that of remembering and memorializing. These strategies are ways of restoring the feelings of security that have been shattered by violent incidents. Communities use them in different ways, just like they experience mass violence incidents differently, which is related to regional and collective identities, histories and social relations.

The strategy of normalization of the unprecedented situation includes managing the crisis in appropriate ways, such as providing psychological support and organizing memorial services, and simultaneously promoting the quick return to "normal life" and daily routines. This can include for example returning to school work soon after the incident, perhaps in a temporary location. It is not a position taken only by political leaders, but also by residents of the targeted communities. Not promoting public expressions of emotions or new public memorialization practices, this is a process of "silent solidarity". It builds resilience but may at the same time repress the emotional experience of those who were not in the core of the events (see research article 1). It can also lead to externalization and exclusion as a part of normalization.

The strategy of remembering encourages commemoration, public expressions of emotions, and overt solidarity. Spontaneous memorialization practices as well as sharing one's experience and emotions with others are considered important in helping individuals recover from the shock caused by violence. It promotes both official and spontaneous gatherings and discussions for distant witnesses to process their experiences. This is a process of belonging that creates solidarity but may also include negative consequences such as externalization, collective guilt and isolation of the community (see research articles 2 and 4).

Both strategies were identified in the interview narratives of the residents of both communities. However, the Jokela community emphasized remembering while the Kauhajoki community turned more to the normalization strategy. Both strategies have positive and negative consequences. It is important to note that the tendency to memorialize is not the only path to solidarity and collective identity. Unlike some accounts contemplating social relations in the aftermath of violent events (cf. Turkel 2002), I do not see the normalization strategy as solely negative; it includes its own kind of solidarity and helps prevent the negative consequences of intense solidarity. Community members may be reluctant to talk and remember, which impacts the content of the social memories of school shootings, but the resilience of individuals and communities should not be automatically labeled as a symptom of unconscious trauma – even though it might sometimes be the case.

The interplay of these two strategies is in the core of how people and communities make sense of crises, disasters, and sudden acts of violence. In remembering and narrating rare events and in moving on with everyday life and putting the experience

aside, individuals place themselves as a part of the community that experienced the event. For example, participation in the public mourning rituals performs belonging to the affected community. In participating or not participating in these practices, individuals also claim membership in certain interest groups as well as subscribe to dominant or contesting narratives and interpretations about the events.

This qualitative, comparative analysis of two Finnish school shooting incidents can give suggestive insight into the collective experience of school shootings and mass violence in other countries. School shootings in the U.S. and in other European countries follow the same pattern or cultural script, and so do at least some of the ways in which bystanders frame their experiences and reactions to the incidents – the creation of spontaneous memorials being globally the most common (Doss 2010; Santino 2006). Other case studies on school shooting incidents (see Newman et al. 2004, 225-226; Spencer & Muschert 2009; Fast 2003; Grider 2007) have also identified conflicts related to the commemoration of the incidents, although these processes have not been the focus of previous studies. As incidents of mass violence continue to occur across Europe and the United States, the contribution of this study lies in understanding the processes after mass violence that construct communities and position individuals in relation to these communities.

This study is based on interviews that were conducted after the studied mass violence incidents, which limits the interpretation of the results in that it is not possible to empirically compare the situation before and after the shootings. This means that I cannot say for sure that certain social practices, interaction patterns, and conflicts where not already in place before the shootings. The relationship between the perpetrator's family and the local community in Jokela is one example of this; it is impossible to go back to the time before the shootings to examine how the family was situated in the community. I can only rely on people's memories that may be influenced by the fact that the shootings took place. Other limitations for the comparison of the two shooting cases include the fact that in Kauhajoki, the victims came from outside of the community, and that I did not have a chance to interview the parents of the Kauhajoki perpetrator. Thus, the impact of whether the victims were members of the studied community or not on the social practices and consequences is not analyzed in this dissertation. Online memorialization of school shootings and the possible community formation as a part of digital memory cultures (see e.g. Lagerkvist 2013) is a theme that has significance for young people, in particular, but was not emphasized in the present study because the focus was not on young people's experiences. A deeper analysis of gender and memorialization practices would also be in place, and hopefully further research will address these themes.

Narrating past events is a performative action. It simultaneously constructs the event that is being narrated and the community that lived through the event. Stories about rare events create paths and connections between the event and what happened before

it – its reasons – and what is happening now and in the future – its consequences. This is how social memory is always reconstructed based on the present moment (Halbwachs 1952/1992, 40). Although some state that diverging memories of past events impede the formation of shared experience (Connerton 1989, 3), experiences can be shared even if community members do not share identical memories of the event in question. Different, contesting interpretations of the past are a part of the shared experience, and of the social memory of mass violence incidents. Shared experiences and narratives create solidarity and strengthen the community, but at the same time different interpretations of the event and the contradictory interests that are connected to these interpretations cause conflicts and chip away at feelings of belonging and unity, placing certain individuals or groups in the margins or outside the community.

Many people have a need for discussion and sharing after mass violence incidents, but if the event has not directly affected these individuals, they may feel that they are not eligible to use counseling services or to participate in the official memorial services. Collective guilt or a culture of silence can also prevent discussing the incidents, which is why communities should be encouraged to share experiences and work through possible conflicts in the aftermath of mass violence. This is often done through collective memorialization practices, but could also include, for example, discussions in open "town meetings" free of religious and psychological content to make them accessible for everyone.

Although the shooting incidents studied here occurred six and seven years ago, the cultural trauma caused by them continues to persist in Finland. The shootings still frequently come up in public discussion on the national level, and the process of making sense and living with the consequences of the incidents continues, both in the society at large, and in the targeted communities. The communities of Jokela and Kauhajoki were at least temporarily branded by the shootings. It appears that traumatic incidents can become defining experiences that form local identities. In Jokela, a train accident that happened in 1996 was discussed by participants and compared with the shootings; and in Kauhajoki, even the murder of a young woman that happened in the region in 1953 was brought up in the interviews. Various sites, places, and buildings in both towns bring up memories of the shootings; these realms of memory (see Nora 1989) remain and remind people of the violent events, keeping the mass violence incidents in the social memories of both communities. While it is still too early to evaluate the importance of the school shootings for the long term development of collective identity in the studied communities, this dissertation shows that the social processes initiated by mass violence at a particular point in the recovery process are challenging and multifaceted.

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APPENDIX 2

CRISIS WORKER INTERVIEW THEMES

Background information

- Education and work history
- Describe your current work
- Was the crisis work after the shooting part of your job?
- Familiarity with the local community: Did you work here before the shooting? How would you describe the town?

Experiencing sudden crisis in a community

- Reactions to the shooting
- Acute crisis work
- How long did the acute crisis period last?
- Describe the different actors giving psycho-social support (authorities, NGOs, groups and communities). How did they co-operate? Did their activities overlap?
- Social relations during the acute crisis period
- Were there feelings of solidarity, tightening of the community?
- Experiences of decreased trust, fear and insecurity

Aftercare and the consequences of the crisis

- Different forms of aftercare (individual and community level)
- How would you evaluate the actions of the police, other authorities, and the media?
- Recovery and going back to everyday life
- Temporary and long term changes in social relations, local activities, and feelings of solidarity/belonging
- Changes in experiencing trust, insecurity, and fear
- If you can compare Jokela and Kauhajoki, where the consequences of the shootings different in the two towns?

Social solidarity during and after the crisis

- Do you think this was an isolated incident? (cf. survey question)
- Do you think the shooting could have been prevented? Who could have prevented it, and how?
- Defining social solidarity
- How can a community help people during and after crises?
- How can community social solidarity be promoted?
- Is there any negative sides to solidarity?

APPENDIX 3

RESIDENT INTERVIEW THEMES

1. **Residential history, family and social life**

- Living in Jokela/Kauhajoki
    - When did you move here or where you born here?
    - Where are you from?
    - Where did you move to Jokela/Kauhajoki from and why?
    - Have you moved within the community?
- Family
    - Tell me about your family
    - How do you spend your time, do you do things together as a family?
    - Where does your extended family live?
    - How often do you see your family?
- Friends
    - Where do your friends live?
    - How often do you see them?
- Work
    - Do you work or study? Where?
    - Do you participate in leisure activities at work or workers' union activities?
    - Do you see your colleagues outside of work?

2. **Jokela/Kauhajoki community**

- Town
    - How would you describe Jokela/Kauhajoki to someone who has never been here?
    - What is it like to live here?
- Neighborhood
    - What kind of people live in this neighborhood?
    - Do you say hello or talk to people you see on the street?
    - Do you know your neighbors?
    - Do you interact with your neighbors?
    - Do people in this neighborhood usually know each other?
    - Is any co-operation or activities organized in your neighborhood? Do you participate?

- Local activities
    - Do you participate in any activities in this town?
    - What kind of activity and how much do you participate?
    - Are there enough leisure activities offered?
    - What kind of activities or co-operation would you like to have?

3. The shooting

- I'm interested in your own personal experience of the shooting. Would you tell me about that day beginning when you heard that something is happening at the school? You can talk about all the things regarding the shooting you feel are important.

After the initial narrative of the participant, if not covered:

    - Where were you when you heard something was happening?
    - What did you do, what happened next?
    - Did you go to the school?
- Did you know any of the victims?
- How did you react when you heard about the shooting?
- How did your family/friends/people around you react?
- Did you go to the crisis center? Did you get counseling?
- Collective grieving
    - Did you light a candle near the school?
    - Did you go to church for a memorial service?
    - What kind of discussions did you have with people around town?
- Social support
    - Did you talk to anyone who had been personally harmed or had lost someone in the shooting?
    - Did you help or give emotional support to someone? How?
    - Did someone help you? How?
- Did you talk to anyone about the shooting via e-mail or social media?
- How did you follow the event (what media did you use)?

4. Things that have remained the same and things that have changed

- What helped you with the shock and other emotions and reactions you might have had after the shooting?
- Psycho-social care on the community level

    - What kind of support was organized for the community? e.g. meetings organized by the town/school?
    - Did you participate? Did it help?
    - What kind of support on individual and/or community level would you have wanted?
    - Did you participate in the anniversary commemorations?
- Memorial site
    - What do you think about having a permanent memorial site for the victims of the shooting?
    - Have you visited the site?
- Who were affected by the shooting?
- Talking about the shooting
    - Do you still talk about the shooting in your family, with your friends, colleagues, or neighbors?
    - How does discussing the shootings make you feel?
    - How do others feel about it?
- Change
    - Did something change in Jokela/Kauhajoki (short or long term) after the shootings? What changed and how?
    - Did your interaction with your family, relatives, friends, colleagues or neighbors change? How?
    - How did the shooting affect your life and the life of your family?
- Was there any conflict related to the shooting in Jokela/Kauhajoki?
- Fear
    - Are you afraid of something like this happening again?
    - Are there certain places around town where you feel this fear?
    - In Jokela: Did the shooting in Kauhajoki increase your fear?
- Reputation of the town
    - Have you noticed people form other places having a changed attitude toward Jokela/Kauhajoki?
    - Do you feel a need to defend your town and persuade people that it is a good town?