

CONF 695.003
The Enemy and the Innocent in Protracted Conflict

Thursday 4:30-7:10 (Arlington)

ARL 250

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Description:

In protracted violent conflict, the innocent suffer most. Whether by rape, extreme poverty, displacement, or mass murder, the catastrophe of innocent suffering represents one of the great crises of our day. The twentieth century has witnessed willful destruction in staggering proportions; it is a century of speechless horror (Arendt 1958). The overwhelming evidence shows that the Innocent Other (women, children, the displaced) are the major victims of such conflicts. In World War I, the ratio of casualties of the innocent to the military combatant was 1 to 8; today the figure is reversed—8 to 1.

Realists in international relations tend to locate innocent suffering as byproducts of hostilities among the protagonists, reducible to causal consequences of war. For realists the innocent neither begin nor end war. Their fate is consequential to the *realpolitik* of statecraft and power. They are war's survivors or collateral damage. But this explanation of innocent suffering represents a radical distortion of the defining elements of many contemporary conflicts. The realist explanation of innocent suffering is fatally flawed, particularly for conflicts involving identity groups (religious, racial, ethnic, or national).

This course examines how the relationship between the Enemy Other and the Innocent Other is a defining dimension of protracted conflicts between identity groups (ethnic, racial, nationalistic). This relationship is thoroughly embedded in, and central to, the dynamics of conflict.

In this course we explore the interdependency of the Innocent Other and the Dangerous Other in violent conflict. The concepts and principles of positioning theory will be deployed. A positioning system of conflict protagonists is defined by normative commitments that unify its members, accentuate group differences, and define identities in terms of good/bad, right/wrong, and virtue/vice. Particular attention will be given to ways in which women and children are positioned (and then targeted) as dangerous. As women are thought to harbor, support, assist, or possibly join the ranks of the militant enemy, they are subjected to a malignant repositioning during times of protracted conflicts. The devastating results are found in episodes of systematic rapes, torture, ethnic cleansing, displacement, and extreme violence.

Course Themes

A. The “Unstoppable” War Machine. Studies of war frame violent conflict as effects of mechanistic forces of military and political institutions. Such forces are cold, colorless, and unstoppable. They devour the Innocent Other as they move “forward.” The Innocents are inert specks in relations to massive military machine. They are positioned as puny spectators, atomized into insignificance under the movement of enormous forces of history.

B. Disempowering the Innocent. Through various kinds of institutional practices, the Innocent Other are positioned as powerless, inert, and insignificant. Their fate rests neither on their criminality nor their degeneracy but on the technical rationality of strategic thinking. The rationale for military engagement carries with it a positioning of the Innocent Other as powerless. Not only are they incapable of stopping the techno-machines of war, they also lack political authority to so do. (H. Arendt) The Innocent cannot prevent their own elimination. They can be killed without being murdered.

C. The morality/immorality of strategy. Of course, many nations responding to the terrorist threats have particular beliefs about treatment of innocent civilians. Whether or not innocent civilians are intentionally targeted, the “moral calculus” of balancing enemy casualties against civilian deaths constitutes a pivotal expression of value commitments. The social-psychology associated with rationalizing such deaths has the effect of reinforcing normative boundaries, that in turn establish a moral distance in relation to both the enemy and the civilian Other, and solidify axiological supremacy of the (virtuous) ingroup. (Rothbart/Korostelina)

Schedule and Readings:

Week 1: August 30. Introduction to Course

UNIT 1: GENOCIDE, RACE, AND NATIONALISM

Week 2: September 6. Genocide and Race

1. "The Armenian Prelude", A Century of Genocide
2. "Genocide in the Twentieth Century" A Century of Genocide, Introduction
3. "Race and Nation" A Century of Genocide, Chapter One

Week 3: September 13. Nation, Race, and State Socialism

1. "Nation, Race, and State Socialism" A Century of Genocide, Chapter Two
2. Hannah Arendt: “On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding” in Essays in Understanding 1930-1954.

Week 4: September 20. The Centrality and Limitations of Identity Theory

1. Karina Korostelina: Limitations of social identity theories in relation to CAR

Week 5: September 27. Genocide in Cambodia

1. "Racial Communism: Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge " A Century of Genocide, Chapter Four

Week 6: October 4. Serbia and Bosnia

1. "National Communism: Serbia and the Bosnian Wars" A Century of Genocide, Chapter Five
2. "Conclusion" A Century of Genocide

UNIT II: LOCATING THE INNOCENT IN PROTRACTED CONFLICTS

Week 7: October 11. The Plague of Nationalism

1. Chris Hedges, War is a Force that Gives us Meaning, pp.1-82.

Week 8: October 18. The Force of Memory

1. Chris Hedges, War is a Force that Gives us Meaning, pp. 83-185.

Week 9: October 25. The Numbers

1. Rambotham, et. al., "Statistics of Deadly Quarrels" in Contemporary Conflict Resolution, Chapter 3
2. Lucina and Gleditsch, "Monitoring Trends in Global Conflict" A New Dataset on Battle Deaths" [in CONF 393 course].

Week 10: November 1. Invisibility of the Innocent

1. Carolyn Nordstrom, "Making Things Invisible" Shadows of War, Chapter .
2. Carolyn Nordstrom, "Finding the Front Lines" Shadows of War, Chapter 4.

Week 11: November 8. Violence and Power

1. Carolyn Nordstrom, "Violence" Shadows of War, Chapter 5
2. Carolyn Nordstrom, "Power" Shadows of War, Chapter 6.

UNIT III: EXPLAINING THE ENEMY/INNOCENT RELATIONSHIP

Week 12: November 15. Collective Axiology of Conflict Protagonists

1. Rothbart and Korostelina "Introduction: Identity, Morality, and Threat" in Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict.
2. Rothbart and Korostelina "Moral Denigration of the Other" in Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict.

Week 13: November 22. Situating the Innocent in Protracted Violent Conflict: The case of Rwandan Genocide

1. J. Semujanga, Origins of Rwandan Genocide. Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, Chapter 5: "From One Genocide to Another".
2. Rothbart and T. Barlett. (2007), "Rwandan Radio Broadcasts and Hutu/Tutsi Positioning." In Conflict and Positioning Theory, edited by F. M. Moghaddam and R. Harré. New York: Springer.

Week 14: December 6. Empowering the Innocent

Required Readings:

Texts:

A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation by Eric Weitz. Princeton University Press. Paperback 13: 978-0-691-12271-7

Chris Hedges, War is a Force that Gives us Meaning, Anchor Books, 2002. Paperback: 1-4000-3463-9

Carolyn Nordstrom, Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century. University of California Press. Paperback: 978-0-520-24241-8

Articles and Book Chapters:

1. Rambotham, et. al., "Statistics of Deadly Quarrels" in Contemporary Conflict Resolution, Chapter 3 [e-reserve] (password: enemy)
2. Lucina and Gleditsch, "Monitoring Trends in Global Conflict" A New Dataset on Battle Deaths" [in CONF 393 course]. [Send by email]
3. Karina Korostelina: Limitations of social identity theories in relation to CAR [Send by email.]
4. Rothbart, D. and Korostelina, K. "Introduction: Identity, Morality, and Threat" in Rothbart and Korostelina, eds, (2006) *Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict*, Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Press. [Send by email]
5. Rothbart, D. and Korostelina, K. "Moral Denigration of the Other" in Rothbart and Korostelina, eds., (2006) *Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict*, Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Press. [Send by email]
6. J. Semujanga, Origins of Rwandan Genocide. Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, Chapter 5: "From One Genocide to Another". [e-reserve] (password: enemy)
7. Rothbart, D. and T. Barlett. (2007), "Rwandan Radio Broadcasts and Hutu/Tutsi Positioning." In *Conflict and Positioning Theory*, edited by F. M. Moghaddam and R. Harré. New York: Springer. [Send by email]
8. Hannah Arendt: "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding" in Essays in Understanding 1930-1954. [e-reserve]. (password: enemy)

Course Requirements:

1. Take-home exam after Unit I, week 6. (33% of course grade)
2. Term paper: Case study of enemy/innocent relationship in a violent conflict. (33%)
 - a. Plan.
 - b. Paper. 15-20 page paper.
 - c. Due: November 29.
3. Take home exam (33%)