Thoughts on Peace and War Research: A Passage from India

By Lester Kurtz, Delhi University, University of Texas at Austin

"Whether the elephants are fighting or ... [making love]," according to a bit of Argentinian folk wisdom, "it is still dangerous to be under foot." The new love affair between the superpowers should not obscure the fact that the entire human family is trapped in a structure of violence which holds a global system in place.

Violence in the 20th century is viewed with marked ambivalence: it is everywhere abhorred and employed. Systems of power from the global level to the household are held in place by violence and the threat of violence, and those who use it most frequently (especially nation states) are those who denounce it most vociferously.

The fear of violence propels people to construct systems of security. Ironically, however, people have become trapped in the very structures they have created to defend themselves, and their security is more endangered than ever (please see Kurtz 1989). It is my concern about these developments in our time that have led me to India and a study of Mahatma Gandhi’s theories of nonviolence (see Gandhi 1942-1949). I would like to share three brief observations I have gained from my work since coming to India last January.

First, cross-cultural work in our field is imperative, both intellectually and practically. This suggestion is nothing new to most members of the Peace and War Section. Cross-cultural research provides an opportunity for reflexivity on both micro- and macro-sociological levels. In carrying it out, we gain as much knowledge about our own traditions as about the culture we are studying. Our section should lead the way in mitigating the practice of generalizing about human behavior on the basis of observations of North American society. (Ironically, the military sociologists, more consistently than most peace researchers, have developed a transnational perspective.) Comparative work enables us to “take the role of the other” to some extent, not only to see their ideas and structures, but to get a fresh look at our own. A global perspective is essential to solving the kind of violence with which we are faced, which is globally organized.

Second, we need a good theory of conflict without violence and research on how it works and does not work historically. Some of the most vital and creative work being done by members of our section is in the area of conflict resolution. Specific conflicts might be resolved, but conflict as a form of human interaction will not be.

The problem of how to fight without destroying each other leads to my third observation: that Gandhi’s life and work deserves more attention from sociologists. Gandhi was not naive about the existence of conflict and violence in human nature, but he forged a perspective for conflict without violence—and acted on it. Johan Galtung (1978) claims that Gandhi is to “conflictology” what Newton and Einstein are to physics.

Several elements of Gandhi’s theories of conflict provide a radical, and perhaps effective, response to the problem of contemporary global violence. Violent behavior is, in large part, fueled by insecurities and fears.

We encourage our members to submit articles on any subject that you feel is pertinent to Section members.

Deadline for submission to the next edition of the Newsletter is Jan. 1, 1991
Acting as the program organizer of the two sessions allotted the Section on the 1990 program, 89-90 Chair John Lofland co-organized, with David Segal, a well-attended session on “Peacekeeping.” The second session was devoted to refereed roundtables, which consisted of fourteen papers organized into five thematic tables captured “Paradigms in the Study of Peace and War,” “Military Institutions and National Security Strategy,” “Peace Movements and Politics,” “Cohesion in Military Organizations,” and “Effects of Participation in Military Organizations.” Each of the five had about a dozen participants and all were quite spirited.

This was the first year in its history that the Section has offered refereed roundtables. Members are quite pleased with the strength and enthusiasm of the response to them and 90-91 Chair, Louis Kriesberg, and Chair-Elect, David Segal, have announced that they will organize a session in this format during their respective terms as Chair.

Section Endorses the Seville Statement

The Section’s Council and Business Meetings considered and enthusiastically endorsed the Seville Statement on Violence. The Statement consists of five main propositions declaring that it is scientifically incorrect to say (1) that humans have an inherent tendency to make war, (2) that war is genetically programmed into human nature, (3) that there has been selection for aggressive behavior more than for other kinds of behavior, (4) that humans have a violent brain, and (5) that war is caused by instinct or any single motivation.

The Council and Business Meetings also voted to urge the ASA Council to endorse the Seville Statement. Representing the Section, John Lofland presented a resolution to this effect to the ASA Business Meeting on August 14, where it was unanimously adopted. In support of the adoption, he reported that many scientific and professional associations have already endorsed the Statement, including the American Anthropological Association (by mail ballot to the membership) and various bodies, including the Council of the American Psychological Association. The ASA Council will consider endorsement at its January 1991 meeting.

Judith Klinghoffer wins the 1990 Boulding Award for Distinguished Student Paper

The Peace and War Section announced Judith A. Klinghoffer as the winner of the 1990 Elise Boulding Award for Distinguished Student Paper. Her paper, “Peace Now and the Israeli Political Culture: History and Future Prospects,” is an examination of the Israeli peace movement. Ms. Klinghoffer’s paper explores the movement’s origins, membership, and relationships with Israel’s political culture “in an attempt to explain (the movement’s) past limitations and to suggest a way of overcoming them.”

Among the reasons the Award Committee selected Ms. Klinghoffer’s paper were the significance and timeliness of the topic, and the author’s perceptive suggestions for moving the Israeli peace movement beyond its present status to increased levels of effectiveness.

Ms. Klinghoffer is a Ph.D. candidate in American History at Rutgers University. She has an M.A. in Public and American History from Rutgers, a certificate in secondary education from Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and a B.A. in History and Philosophy from Hebrew University. Ms. Klinghoffer’s publications include “Israel and the Soviet Union: Alienation or Reconciliation?” as well as other articles on criminal justice in the United States.

The Elise Boulding Award for Distinguished Student Paper is presented annually at the ASA meetings. All students, undergraduate and graduate, are eligible. We urge you to encourage your students to write papers in your courses that are appropriate for this contest. It is an excellent way to get students interested in the sociology of peace and war. The success of this paper competition largely depends on our Section members publicizing it to their students. For further details of the 1991 competition, contact Elton Jackson, Ballantine 744, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47401, (812) 855-2847.

Minutes of the Sociology of Peace and War Section:
Council and Business meeting,
August 12, 1990

The Section Chair (Lofland) asked for Committee reports at both the Council Session and the Business Meeting. These reports are as follows:

Treasurer’s report (Colwell): According to ASA, as of June 30 there was $1702.40 in the section account. According to the Chair, approximately $450 would be paid out of this account soon, for the Student Award ($200), the cost of a plaque, and the cost of the joint reception with the CBSM section on Capitol Hill ($200).

Nominating Committee report (Marullo): David Segal was elected to be Chair-Elect and William Gibson and Mady Segal were added to the Section Council.

Membership Committee report (Raisz): Membership is slightly over 200 and is expected to be about 225 in October. The previous year’s effort to increase membership above this point had limited success. The Chair provided a table showing that the Section membership has been between 200 and a peak of 270 since its beginning.

Newsletter Committee (Hlavacek): Les Kurtz was the editor for the first issue of the newsletter in Fall 1989; Jen Hlavacek edited the subsequent editions. She reported that having an editorial board was substantial help. During the Business meeting she urged members to report their publications and other activities of interest to the Section and to submit articles
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for inclusion in the newsletter, similar to the two-part article written by Marullo this past year. There was general agreement that the newsletter was greatly improved under the current editors.

Student Award Committee: In the absence of Robin Crews, Lofland reported that the winner of this year's Boulding Award is Judith Apter Klingshofter of Rutgers University. The title of her paper is "Peace Now and the Israeli Political Culture: History and Prospects." A plaque will be sent to her since she was not present at the meeting. Helen Raisz announced that the first Boulding Award winner, Eleanor Hodges, would finally receive her plaque.

Ad Hoc Committee on Awards Policy (Segal): This is an interim report since the committee was appointed for a two-year period. The committee decided a second award by the Section should be given for either a single piece of work or an outstanding career of scholarship related to the sociology of peace and war. There appear to be enough worthy recipients to make this an annual award. The committee is considering a suggestion to name the award for a deceased member or members whose work was of major importance in the field. In discussion it was agreed that the award could be created without the names of specific scholars and that it could be named for two scholars who represent the major areas of interest to the section.

Tracer of Strayed Projects (Grimshaw): The bibliographic project that had been sent to the University of Georgia has been recovered and is now at Grimshaw's office at Indiana University. He wants to find a home for the effort and asked for suggestions. Anyone willing to take responsibility for an annotated bibliography in the sociology of peace and war should be in touch with Grimshaw.

Chair's report (Lofland): The most important activity of the year was planning the paper session and refereed roundtable sessions for this annual meeting. He recommended that a roundtable session be included in subsequent annual meetings to increase participation. Another activity was the planning of a joint reception co-sponsored by this section and the Collective Behavior and Social Movements section scheduled for Monday, August 13, in the Caucus Room of the Cannon House of Representatives Office Building. Our use of this room was arranged by Sam Marullo, who spent a year as AAAS fellow working in Congressman Lee Hamilton's office. Another major item was the great improvement of the Section newsletter.

At the end of the Council session Louis Kriesberg became the Chair. The call for papers for the 1991 meeting in Cincinnati described the major paper session topic, "Explaining the Transformation of World Conflicts," and listed the second session as refereed roundtables. Papers on the main topic and roundtable suggestions and papers should be sent to Kriesberg.

There was a vote of appreciation and thanks to John Lofland for his work this past year as Chair of the Section and for the increased level of Section activity.

At the end of the Business meeting there was a discussion led by Jen Hlavacek on the Seville Statement on Violence.

Copies were distributed for members to read. It was agreed with one member abstaining from voting that the Section would endorse the Statement and forward it to the Council of the ASA for endorsement by the whole association. Hlavacek took responsibility for getting the request to the Council by the deadline that afternoon.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Anna Colwell, Secretary-Treasurer.

Section Council and Committees, 1990-91

Council
Chair: Louis Kriesberg, Sociology, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-4400, (315) 443-2367.
Chair Elect: David Segal, Sociology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-1315, (301) 405-6439 (O)/(301) 935-5286 (H).
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Chair: Elton Jackson, Ballantine 744, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47401, (812) 855-2847.

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Co-Editor: Les Kurtz, Sociology, University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712, (512) 320-0202.

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Award Policy Ad Hoc
Chair: David Segal, Sociology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-1315, (301) 405-6439 (O)/(301) 935-5286 (H).

Curriculum
Chair: Robin Crews, The Peace Studies Association, Campus Box 471, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309-0471, (303) 492-7718.
Member News

We are especially proud to announce that Section member Elise Boulding was nominated for the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize by the American Friends Service Committee. As many of you know, she is an active sociologist in the field of peace research. For the past two years she has served as General Secretary of the International Peace Research Association and has been a consultant on peace research to UNESCO and the UN Institute on Training and Research for the past twenty years. She was a founding member of the ASA Section on the Sociology of Peace and War and served as Chair in 1981.

Jen Hlavaček, University of Colorado, has been named Managing Editor of Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Research, published by Sage, Inc.

Charles Moskos, Northwestern University, had his article “Army Women” published in the August 1990 issue of The Atlantic Monthly.


Many Section members were active this year in a variety of international meetings. A partial list of those involved in organizing sessions and giving papers at international meetings are:

Abigail Fuller, University of Colorado, presented “Patriarchy and War: An Agenda for Research.”

Jen Hlavaček, University of Colorado, was actively distributing our “The Sociology of Peace and War” Newsletter to IPRA members and gathering information for the Newsletter.

Louis Kriesberg, Syracuse University, organized several sessions of the International Conflict Resolution Study Group.


Metta Spencer, University of Toronto, presented “Oligarchy in the Canadian Peace Movement.”

Paul Wehr, University of Colorado, presented “Toward Common Security in Central America.”

Section Members Robin Crews, Executive Director of the Peace Studies Association, and James Skelly, Associate Director for International Projects at the Center for War, Peace and the News Media, New York University, were also in attendance.

A partial list of Section members attending the XII World Congress of Sociology, Madrid, Spain, are:

Elise Boulding presented “Ethnic-tribal values and Modernity in Cultural Development.”

James Burk, A. & M University, presented “Armed Forces as a Vehicle to National Identification—The Military Obligation of Citizens.”

Kai Erikson, Yale University, presented “Technologie et Catastrophe.”

Dana Eyre, Stanford University, presented “Social Psychological Aspects of Deterrence Theory: A Social Learning Analysis.” He also acted as discussant for a very interesting session on “Armed Forces in a Warless Society.”

Jen Hlavaček, University of Colorado, gathered information for our Newsletter and passed out copies of the Newsletter to interested parties.

Louis Kriesberg, Syracuse University, presented “Dilemmas in Nonviolently Settling International Conflicts” and “Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, and Conflict Resolution.”

Charles Moskos, Northwestern University, presented “Armed Forces in a Warless Society.”

David Segal, University of Maryland, presented “Peacekeeping as a Military Mission.”

David and Mady Wechsler Segal, University of Maryland, presented “The Role of Women in the Chinese People's Liberation Army.” Mady Wechsler Segal also chaired a session on “Social Psychology of Peace.”

Nora Stewart, U.S. Army Inst. Behavioral & Social Sciences, chaired the session on “Armed Forces in a Warless Society.”

Call for Papers

The Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS) will hold its biennial conference on October 11-13, 1991, in Baltimore, Maryland. IUS is an international body of scholars—in academia, government, the uniformed military, and other institutions—with interests in a broad range of issues having to do with military establishments and civil-military relations. IUS fellows represent many professional disciplines, e.g., sociology, history, law, psychology, economics, philosophy, and political science.

IUS conferences provide an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas among a diverse body of people having a common interest in armed forces and society. The meeting format is largely one of panels and symposia, and some plenary sessions. Examples of some of the issues of interest to IUS conference participants have been: change and controversy in military organizations, arms transfers and African armed forces, military women, technology and doctrine, defense and the economy, case studies of the military and European society, military families, Warsaw Pact structural change, culture and military effectiveness, peacekeeping, nuclear policy, the role of reserve forces, public opinion and the military, defense organization and budgeting, long-term effects of military service, health and the military (AIDS, drugs, etc.), arms races in the third world, and conscription vs. volunteer manning.

Organizers of the 1991 conference are seeking proposals for papers, and panels. The above list is illustrative and we welcome submissions in any relevant area. One-page abstracts should be submitted to the program committee chairman, Professor Jay Stanley, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Towson State University, Towson, Maryland 21204, no later than January 15, 1991. Decisions about the specific content of the meeting will be made no later than April 1, 1991, and proposers will be notified around that time. Please provide three copies of abstracts. Questions about the program may be addressed to Professor Jay Stanley, (301) 830-2928, or Dr. Wallace Sinaiko, Smithsonian Institution, (202) 357-1829. Questions regarding other conference arrangements may be addressed to Professor Sandra Carson Stanley, Towson State University, (301) 830-2849.
Papers on International Cooperation and Conflict

The International Conflict and Cooperation Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems sponsored three sessions at the annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in August.

Sam Marullo, Alexandra Chute, Georgetown University, and Mary Anna Colwell, University of San Francisco.
“Pacifism in the American Peace Movement.”
Mary Anna Colwell, University of San Francisco. “Membership Participation in Peace Groups in the United States: Data from the 1988 Survey.”
Amy S. Hubbard, Syracuse University.

Paper Session: Women, War and Militarism

Anyone interested in any of these papers should contact the authors.

Funding Opportunities

The University of California offers postdoctoral fellowships to enhance the competitiveness of outstanding minority and women scholars for academic appointments at major research universities such as the University of California. Awards are for one academic year with the possibility of renewal for a second year pending demonstration of satisfactory progress. Stipends are $25,000-$29,000 plus health benefits and up to $4,000 for research expenses. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, and hold a Ph.D. degree from an accredited University. Preference is given to minority and women candidates historically underrepresented in higher education. Applications are encouraged from African-Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Filipinos, Mexican-Americans, and Latinos, and from white women in Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering.

Further information and application materials may be obtained from:
300 Lakeside Drive
18th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-3550
(415) 987-9500
Application and information materials will be available in the Fall. The application deadline is December 14, 1990.

Research Notes

Program of Research at WIDER

The World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), of the United Nations University, based in Helsinki, Finland, is sponsoring a three-year research project entitled National Development, Identity Politics, and Concepts of Feminism. The project will include a number of round tables and the publication of papers. The themes are as follows: (1) Identity Politics and Women: a cross-national study of political movements organized around questions of religious, cultural, or ethnic identity and their impact on gender, women’s status, and feminist strategies. (2) Revolution and Gender: a historical and comparative study of the place of gender in revolutions, from the French to the Iranian revolutions. (3) Perestroika and Women: an examination of the impact of perestroika on women’s employment, legal status, cultural images, political participation, and so on, in Eastern Europe and the USSR. (4) Patriarchy and Development: a comparative study of modernization’s impact on women, and causes of the differential regional trajectories of patriarchy and development within the world system.

Scholars whose current research coincides with the above themes are requested to write: V. Moghadam, WIDER, Annankatu 42C, 00100 Helsinki, Finland.

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but it is ritualized and institutionalized. I will comment on four salient elements of Gandhi's experiments with conflict: (1) creative conflict management; (2) ahimsa (nonviolence or non-harmfulness); (3) satyagraha ("truth force," or "soul force"); (4) attacking the roots of violence (especially inequality, racism, greed); and (5) his emphasis on Truth and experimentalism.

First, it is not so much the elimination, but the management, of conflict that is essential. Gandhi frequently provoked conflicts in order to combat injustice, but he distinguished between the adversary as a person and the behavior to which he objected. This strategy addresses the self-perpetuating dynamics of conflict and focuses on the long-run, rather than short-term gains.

Second, Gandhi's approach to conflict was rooted in the concept of ahimsa. For him, it is the response of a spiritual commitment, but it has practical dimensions as well: it serves to contain the escalation of conflict (which is not seen as a zero-sum game), it throws the adversary off guard (see Gene Sharp's [1973] discussion of political "jiu jitsu"), and it reduces both personal and collective motivations for harmful reciprocity. As Ramchandra Gandhi (the Mahatma's grandson) suggests, Gandhi's greatest contribution is that he added nonviolence to our vocabulary of courage.

Third, Gandhi's concept of satyagraha provides a means for engaging in conflict without violence. It is based on several assumptions about human nature that should be investigated, especially his contention that domination requires some adherence by subordinates (a perspective he shared with Georg Simmel). It is ineffective when people decide not to cooperate, as the Indian Non-cooperation movement demonstrated.

Fourth, to eliminate violence requires attacking its roots: inequality, consumerism and greed, racism, and fear. Peace must always be linked to justice, for Gandhi. His approach was to attack the old order, but to begin systematically building the new one. It is this linkage which J. D. Sethi (1989) finds lacking in Western peace movements, which he claims are more concerned with the technology of the arms race than the root causes of war.

Fifth, and finally, Gandhi emphasized the experiential element of his struggle to find "Truth." He would postulate something that he thought was true and then test it in the world. Gandhi's ideas are not to be taken as final proclamations, but as hypotheses to be tested. They are not simply hypotheses about the status quo, however, but about what human society could be like. One of those who tested his theories, however, made a proposition that is best left untested: Martin Luther King, Jr., once suggested that either we learn to live together as brothers and sisters, or we will all die together as fools.

References


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control, foreign policy, regional conflicts, and the economic aspects of global security.

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