The Heller School of Social Policy and Management

Brandeis University

MA Program in Coexistence

Religion, Identity and Conflict

Autumn Module 1, 2011

Adjunct Prof. David Steele

Course Description:

This course examines the role that religious identity can play in both the escalation and mitigation of conflict. Students will study the role that ideology, belief, values, and faith-based relationships can play in developing and legitimizing, or in transforming and resolving, deeply rooted conflict dynamics. The focus of this course will be on both integration of religious identity factors into conflict analysis and an introduction to faith-based interventions skills, used by religious actors to foster coexistence. During the course, we will explore how to understand and handle conflicts perpetrated by extremist religious groups. We will also explore the diversity of faith-based reconciliation processes (such as hospitality, healing ritual, apology, etc.) as well as the kinds of roles performed by a wide variety of religious actors (education, advocacy, mediation, dialogue facilitation, etc.). Examples and case studies will be drawn from a wide variety of religious traditions and diverse cultures. In addition to those cases presented in the readings and by the professor, each student will be required to select cases on which to make class presentations and write a paper. The purpose of these assignments, and the course in general, is to provide students the opportunity to assess concrete conflict situations in which religious identity is a factor, know the potential contribution that faith-based actors can make to coexistence, and evaluate how best to function in faith-based peacebuilding roles and reconciliation processes that interest them.

Requirements:

Attend all class sessions

Preparation of all required readings

Participation in class discussions and any small group work

Timely submission of presentations and paper

Class Presentations

Each student will be required to make two class presentations. Depending on the size of the class, these may be individual or group presentations. The topics for these presentations are

listed below under class sessions for weeks 5 and 7. The outline for each presentation, and possible resources, are stated in the description of the class session.

Paper

One 8-10 page paper will be required of each student and will be due on September 28, near the mid-point of the course. In the paper you are asked to pick a conflict in which religious identity plays a major role. The assignment is to:

1. Describe the primary factors involved in the conflict
2. Identify the specific role that religious identity plays, naming and describing the conflicted religious parties
3. Assessing the role that religious beliefs/ideology, values, and relational dynamics play in exacerbating the conflict
4. Identifying some actors (religious or secular) which have attempted to intervene (if there are any) and evaluating their degree of success/failure
5. Presenting your own recommendations regarding the best way this conflict might be addressed by an intervener (religious or secular)

Grading

Class participation 15%

Each class presentation 25%

Paper 35%

Class Sessions:

Week 1: September 1, 2011

The Nature of Identity Conflicts, especially Religious Ones

This session will cover:

-   The role of identity markers in conflict situations: the place and nature of group boundaries; in-group/out-group relations; tensions between group loyalty and treatment of the "other;" the need for balance between bonding dynamics and bridging dynamics.
-   The role of religion in identity conflicts: Sources of religious identity; links between religious belief/ideology and identity; importance of the role of religious values; identifying positive religious values and their impact on society; identify the negative role religion can play in values conflicts

Required readings

Korostelina, Karina, *Social Identity and Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 127-54

Jussim, Lee, Richard Ashmore, and David Wilder, "Introduction: Social Identity and Intergroup Conflict," and Brewer, Marilynn, "Intergroup Identification and Intergroup Conflict: When Does In-Group Love Become Out-Group Hate?" in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict and Conflict Resolution*, ed. by Jussim, Ashmore and Wilder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) pp. 3-41

Inman, Patrick and James Peacock, "Conclusion: Ethnic and Sectarian As Ideal Types," in *Identity Matters: Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict,* ed. by Inman, Peacock and Patricia Thornton (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 205-34

Hicks, Donna, "The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, ed. by Raymond Helmick and Rodney Petersen (Radnor, Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001), pp. 129-49

Volf, Miroslav, "Exclusion and Embrace," Unpublished paper

Aslan, Reva, *Beyond Fundamentalism* (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. 3-12 and 15-33

Week 2: September 8, 2011

Dealing with Religious Identity as a Source of Conflict

This session will cover:

- The ideological factor: Awareness that some conflicts/tensions are supported by strong frameworks of religious belief; examination of the kinds of religious imperatives that foster conflict/violence (including concepts of fairness, justice, etc.); evaluation of religious justifications for rebellion and violence; characteristics of extremist religious groups that adopt a violent, confrontational posture; relationship between such groups and the wider faith tradition of which they are a part.
- The relational dynamics: Examination of dynamics that have their roots in a sense of faith-based victimization and grievance; the religious mythologies that have arisen to portray and justify the need for "believer" loyalty; the role religion plays in a resulting identity defined by enmity and a behavior infused with prejudice and stereotyping; the confusion of faith-based justice with a revenge mentality.
- The meeting of functional needs: Examining how some groups solidify religious loyalties by providing basic services of aid and development exclusively to one's own faith community; the use of religious calls for charity to deepen in-group/out-group perceptions and exacerbate divisions.
- Examination of case studies from Christian Eastern Orthodox and Shi'ite Muslim traditions.
- Ways to address the problem of extremist religious groups, embedded within conflicted communities.

Required readings

Appleby, R. Scott, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), Cha 2 & 3, pp. 57-120

Carroll, James, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem* (Boston: Houghton Miflin Harcourt, 2011), Cha. 10, pp. 296-317

Armstrong, Karen, *The Battle for God* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Co., 2001), Cha. 10, pp. 317-64

Masr, Vali, *The Shia Revival* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2007), Introduction, pp. 17-29, Cha. 9 and Afterword, pp. 227-73

Love, James, *Hezbollah: Social Services as a Source of Power*, JSOU Report 10-5 (Hurlburt Field, FL, 2010), Cha 3 & 4, pp. 17-31

Cockburn, Patrick, *Muqtada* (New York, Scribner, 2008), Cha 14, pp. 163-74

Week 3: September 15, 2011

Comparison of Religious Traditions as Both Sources and Mitigators of Conflict

This session will compare several of the major religious traditions, examining the impact of their tradition on both conflict escalation and conflict transformation. The faith traditions examined will include: Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and indigenous traditions.

Required readings

Montville, Joseph, "Religion and Peacemaking," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, ed. by Raymond Helmick and Rodney Petersen (Radnor, Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001), pp. 97-116

Smock, David and Qamar-ul Huda, "Islamic Peacemaking Since 9/11," *Special Report 218* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, January 2009), pp. 1-11 (available at www.usip.org)

Kalin, Ibrahim, "Islam and Peace," in *Crescent and Dove,* ed. by Ul-Huda, Qamar ul-Huda (Washington: US Institute of Peace, 2010), Cha. 1, pp. 3-37,

Hunter, Shireen, *The Future of Islam and the West* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), Introduction, pp. 1-30.

Gopin, Marc, *Between Eden and Armageddon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Cha 8, pp. 167-93

Endredy, James, *Beyond 2012: A Shaman's call to Personal Change and the Transformation of Personal Consciousness* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2008), pp. 51-67, 89-107 and 115-34.

Bondurant, Joan, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), Cha. 2, pp. 15-35

Varshney, Ashutosh, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002) Cha. 8 "Hindu Nationalists as Bridge Builders," pp. 201-15

Chappell, David, "Buddhist Peace Principles," in *Buddhist Peacework*, ed. by Chappell (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1999), Conclusion, p. 199-226

Week 4: September 22, 2011

Religious Identity as a Potential Source of Reconciliation

This session will cover:

- Religious definitions/concepts of the terms: peace, justice and reconciliation
- Examination of a variety of faith-based reconciliation processes, including: grief and trauma healing, hospitality, confession/apology/acknowledgment of wrongdoing, justice, forgiveness, and the role of ritual.

Required readings

Philpott, Daniel, "Beyond politics as Usual," in *The Politics of Past Evil: Religion, Reconciliation, and the Dilemmas of Transitional Justice*, ed., by Philpott (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre dame, 2006), Cha. 1, pp. 11-44

Amstutz, Mark, *The Healing of Nations: The Promise and Limits of Political Forgiveness* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), Cha. 4, pp. 91-113

Week 5: October 6, 2011

Case presentations on Faith-Based Reconciliation Processes

This session will include presentation by either individuals or groups of students. Each presentation is expected to be 10-15 mins. in length. You are asked to:

- Select an example of a faith-based peacebuilder/reconciler
- Describe the conflict context in which this person/group acted
- Indicate which faith-based reconciliation processes this person/group employed
- Describe how their faith influenced what they did and how it impacted the results
- Give your evaluation of the attempted reconciliation process
- Make any recommendations regarding what you think could have been done differently

After each presentation, the class will provide feedback

Readings you might use to select a case for presentation

See bibliography at end of syllabus

Week 6: October 11, 2011

Roles that Faith-Based Actors Can Play

This session will cover:

- Who are considered to be faith based actors
- The reasons why faith-based actors often can play an important role

- What distinct functions faith-based actors can perform, including (1) observation and witness, (2) education and formation, (3) advocacy and empowerment, and (4) intermediary intervention.
- When in the life cycle of a conflict it is most effective to perform which role or function

Required readings

Bock, Joseph, *Sharpening Conflict Management: Religious Leadership and the Double-Edged Sword* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001), Cha. 5 & 6, pp. 63-103

United States Institute of Peace, "Faith-Based NGOs and International Peacebuilding," *Special Report* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, October 22, 2001), pp. 1-9 (available at www.usip.org)

Sampson, Cynthia, "Religion and Peacemaking," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict*, ed. by I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), Cha 8, pp. 273-309

Week 7: October 17, 2011

Case presentations on Faith-Based Peacebuilding Roles

This session will include presentation by either individuals or groups of students. Each presentation is expected to be 10-15 mins. in length. You are asked to:

- Select a conflict situation in a particular country
- Describe the conflict context
- Has there been any intervention by a faith-based actor? If so, describe this religious actor. What kinds of interventions have they done in the past? What roles did this person/group employ in the conflict you have selected?
- Describe how their faith influenced what they did and how it impacted the results
- Give your evaluation of the attempted peacebuilding process
- Make any recommendations regarding what you think could have been done differently

After each presentation, the class will provide feedback

Readings you might use to select a case for presentation

See Bibliography at end of syllabus

Bibliography

(from which to select for case presentations; many items below are on reserve at either the SID/Coex or Main library)

Abu-Nimer, Mohammed, ed. *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory and Practice* (cases on Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Israel, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia and Rwanda)

Amstutz, Mark, *The Healing of Nations: The Promise and Limits of Political Forgiveness*, pp. 114-210 (Cases on Argentina, Chile, Northern Ireland, South Africa)

Biggar, Nigel, ed., *Burying the Past: Making Peace and Doing Justice after Civil Conflict*, pp. 101-24 and 177-306 (cases on South Africa, Rwanda, Chile, Guatemala and Northern Ireland)

Brown, Amy and Karen M. Poremski, eds. *Roads to Reconciliation: Conflict and Dialogue in the Twenty-First Century* (cases on the United States)

European Centre for Conflict Prevention, *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World* (case synopses on Kenya, Cambodia and Guatemala)

De Gruchy, John W., *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*, pp. 10-43 and 147-213 (case on South Africa)

Frost, Brian, *The Politics of Peace* (cases on the Soviet Union, Germany, Israel, Japan, China, India, Britain and Ireland, the United States, Latin America and South Africa)

Helmick, Raymond G. and Rodney L. Petersen, eds, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy & Conflict Transformation* (cases on Ireland and Mozambique)

Henderson, Michael, *No Enemy to Conquer* (cases on Nigeria, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine, Germany, United States, Poland, India, Rwanda, England, Fiji, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Australia, and Java)

Hume, Cameron, *Ending Mozambique's War: The Role of Mediation and Good Offices*

Jeffrey, Paul, *Recovering Memory: Guatemalan Churches and the Challenge of Peacemaking)*

Johnston, Douglas, ed., *Faith-based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (cases on Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Middle East, Bosnia and Kosovo, and Sudan)

Johnston, Douglas and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, (cases on France and Germany, Nicaragua, Nigeria, East Germany, The Philippines, South Africa, and Zimbabwe)

Little, David, ed. *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution* (cases on El Salvador, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Sudan, South Africa, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Israel and Palestine, Afghanistan, Indonesia)

Rogers, Mark, Tom Bamat and Julie Ideh, eds., *Pursuing Just Peace* (Cases on Rwanda, Togo, Columbia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, India, The Philippines and Uganda))

Sampson, Cynthia, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict*, ed. By I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen (Synopses of many cases)

Shriver, Donald W., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics, pp. 73-217* (cases on the United States, Germany and Japan)

Smock, David, ed. *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding* (cases on the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia, and Northern Ireland)

Tongeren, Paul van, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, and Juliette Verhoeven, *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society* (case synopses on India, Nigeria, Cambodia and Guatemala)

Tutu, Desmond, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (case on South Africa)

Wink, Walter, *Violence and nonviolence in South Africa*

Yarrow, C.H. Mike, *Quaker Experiences in International Conciliation* (cases on East and West Germany, India and Pakistan, Nigeria)