The Interdisciplinary Seminar on Conflict and Violence promotes interdisciplinary exchanges among faculty and graduate students interested in the topics of conflict, violence and peace from a wide range of departments across campus.

Dr. John Drury, University of Sussex, UK

(Dis)empowering prejudice through collective action: An elaborated social identity model

Dr. John Drury is Reader in Social Psychology at the University of Sussex. He has been conducting research on crowds, social movements and collective action for 25 years. With Steve Reicher and Clifford Stott, he developed the elaborated social identity model, which challenged irrationalist explanations of crowd conflict. He extended the same social identity principles to explain collective behaviour in emergencies and disasters.

Some of the crowd phenomena he and his colleagues have investigated include the 1990 poll tax riot, the Hajj to Mecca, the Hillsborough disaster, the July 7th London bombings, and the UK anti-roads movement. His research findings have informed guidance on emergency response (e.g., the UK Department of Health, the Harvard School of Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response) and training in crowd safety (e.g., eResponse Crowd Safety). He is currently the editor of the British Journal of Social Psychology.

ABSTRACT: The elaborated social identity model (ESIM) was developed to explain the dynamics of conflict within crowd events. Research showed that forms of identity change occurring within crowd events could also endure afterwards, including in terms of empowerment. Based on the ESIM and in line with self-categorization theory, in this presentation he suggests that the process of collective empowerment can operate ‘vicariously’. He illustrates how this may have operated in the case of the post-Brexit upsurge in xenophobic attacks in the UK. Using the same ESIM principles and concepts, he will explain how prejudice can be disempowered – or, put differently, how collective actions against xenophobic attacks can operate successfully. The forms of collective action that have this effect are ones which deny and undermine the realization of prejudiced identity-projects, which therefore render them disorganized, lacking practical adequacy, and unsupported. These kinds of collective actions empower protest participants as they disempower the prejudiced. While successes are easier against non-state actors, he suggests that such actions can and need to take place in relation to state forces also.

Wednesday, April 12, 2017 12:00 - 1:30 P.M.
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