



Image: Livio Senigalliesi

WAR & EMOTIONS

Conference & exhibition

FRIDAY 25 MARCH 2022

12:45 - 16:30 (CET)

UNIVERSITY AULA, MUSÉPLASS 1, BERGEN, NORWAY

This conference is hosted as part of the 'War and Fun: Reconceptualizing Warfare and Its Experience' research project funded by the European Research Council and led by Research Professor Antonio De Lauri at the Chr. Michelsen Institute.

WAR & EMOTIONS PROGRAM

12:45-13:00 - WELCOME

Tea, coffee & sweets on arrival

13:00-13:15 - OPENING REMARKS

Antonio De Lauri (Chr. Michelsen Institute)

13:15-14:00 - LECTURE 1

Antonius Robben (Utrecht University) - *'Emotions as Weapons of War'*

14:00-14:45 - LECTURE 2

Victoria Basham (Cardiff University) - *'The Privileges of Seeing and Experiencing War as 'Fun''*

14:45-15:00 - TEA & COFFEE BREAK

15:00-15:45 - LECTURE 3

Siniša Malešević (University College Dublin) - *'The Emotional Dynamics of Killing on the Battlefield'*

15:45-16:00 - CLOSING REMARKS

Antonio De Lauri

16:00-16:30: EXHIBITION & REFRESHMENTS

Canapes & refreshments

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MUSÉPLASS 1

BERGEN, NORWAY



OPEN TO ALL - PLEASE
REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE
IN ADVANCE

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CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS



LECTURE 1: ANTONIUS C.G.M. ROBBEN

Emotions as Weapons of War: Counterinsurgency and State Terrorism during Argentina's Military Dictatorship

Keeping emotions at bay is one of the greatest challenges of armed combat, and a key objective of military training. Treatises on conventional warfare, military doctrines and operational plans incorporate a grammar of emotion that intends to guide troops among the hazards of panic and terror to victory. Emotions in combat are mastered by subduing them through clear operations and precise orders. Such composure became complicated when conventional interstate wars made place for anti-colonial, liberation and revolutionary wars between standing armies and nonstate armed actors. These irregular wars were not waged about territory but about people, and were therefore defined as psychological warfare at heart. Emotions turned now from impediments into weapons of war. Counterinsurgency and state terrorism fused into intelligence warfare, whose defining characteristics were torture and terror rather than combat and firepower. This talk analyses emotions as weapons of counterinsurgency and state terrorism against guerrilla insurgents and the political opposition in Argentina during the 1976–83 dictatorial regime. It also addresses the manipulation of gendered notions of emotion by disappeared captives and searching mothers as means of resistance.

Antonius C.G.M. Robben is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and past President of the Netherlands Society of Anthropology. His latest books include the monograph *Argentina Betrayed: Memory, Mourning, and Accountability* (2018), and the edited volumes *Necropolitics: Mass Graves and Exhumations in the Age of Human Rights* (2015; co-edited with Francisco Ferrándiz), *Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (2017), and *A Companion to the Anthropology of Death* (2018).

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS



LECTURE 2: VICTORIA M BASHAM

Technologies of the Racialised, Gendered, Socio-Economic, and Modern Self: The Privileges of Seeing and Experiencing War as 'Fun'

In this talk I consider how technologies of production, signification, power, and the self in the context of liberal democratic societies, have come to constitute war, and preparing for war, as pleasurable activities that can lead to self-fulfillment (Foucault, 1982). Exploring war's seductive and desirable qualities allows us to better understand why societies continue to organise themselves around the production of war (Geyer, 1989). Such technologies are however, troubled by the experiences of differently racialised and gendered subjects, and by socio-economic and inter-generational conditions of possibility. By paying closer attention to those whose experiences trouble the idea of war as fun, I argue that we can also begin to make better sense of the workings of privilege that make such ways of seeing and experiencing war possible. We can expose the harms that treating war as fun does, both to those subjected to the violence of war, and to those rendered less secure through society's constant war preparedness, and challenge war's reproduction through fun.

Victoria M Basham is a Reader (Associate Professor) at Cardiff University, Wales. Her research interests lie in the field of Critical Military Studies at the intersections of feminist international relations, critical geopolitics and international political sociology. Her research explores how war, and war preparedness, shape people's daily lives and how daily life can, in turn, influence and facilitate war and other geopolitical outcomes. She is particularly interested in how gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and social class shape the prioritisation, use and perpetration of military force, especially in liberal democratic societies. Victoria is the Editor-in-Chief of Critical Military Studies (a Taylor & Francis Journal) and co-edits the Edinburgh University Press book series, Advances in Critical Military Studies.

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS



LECTURE 3: SINIŠA MALEŠEVIĆ

The Emotional Dynamics of Killing on the Battlefield

The experience of battlefield often involves killing or witnessing deaths of others. Such extraordinary events generate unique emotional situations. In this talk I explore the emotional dynamics of killing in the combat zone. The acts of close-range violence in war are often analysed through the prism of two dominant perspectives – the sociobiological accounts, which see killing as an optimal tactic of genetic survival and as such something that humans can do without any major difficulty, and the interactionist approaches, which emphasise moral qualms or paralysing fear as the key obstacles that make killing of humans extremely difficult. In this talk I challenge both of these perspectives. I argue that the killing in war is neither uniformly easy nor unvaryingly difficult but is context-dependent, variable and highly contingent. Moreover, the acts of fighting and killing do not automatically trigger pre-existing and stable emotions but the violent processes themselves generate distinct emotional experiences. Drawing on primary research with the former soldiers from wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991-1995) I show how the shared experience of close-range violence generates highly diverse forms of emotional dynamics.

Siniša Malešević is a Full Professor and Chair of Sociology at the University College, Dublin, and Senior Fellow at CNAM, Paris. He is an elected member of Royal Irish Academy and Academia Europaea. His recent books include *Contemporary Sociological Theory* (with S. Loyal, Sage 2021), *Grounded Nationalisms: A Sociological Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), *The Rise of Organised Brutality: A Historical Sociology of Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and *Nation-States and Nationalisms: Organisation, Ideology and Solidarity* (Polity Press, 2013). He is author of over 120 peer review articles and book chapters, and his work has been translated into 14 languages. His latest book *Why Humans Fight: The Social Dynamics of Close-Range Violence* will be published in April 2022 with the Cambridge University Press.

EXHIBITION & PROJECT

EXHIBITION

The 'War and Emotions' exhibition includes commissioned paintings on canvas by local Norwegian artist, Trine Berntsen and a photo exhibition with contributions from Italian photojournalist Livio Senigalliesi and researchers in the field. The exhibition also includes artefacts from a school project, produced by both teachers and students.

RESEARCH PROJECT - ANTONIO DE LAURI



War and Fun: Reconceptualizing Warfare and Its Experience (WARFUN)

WARFUN is a research project funded by the European Research Council and led by Research Professor Antonio De Lauri at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway.

Fun has every shade of connotation, from the most joyful to the most sinister. In the framework of this project, fun represents an entry point into a deeper realm of war and soldiering. An understanding of the complexity of participation in war requires an epistemic change in conventional learning and debate. The overall objective of this project is to offer a new understanding of war and soldiering through a study of the role and implications of fun for soldiers and veterans.

Antonio De Lauri holds a PhD in Human Sciences: Anthropology of the Contemporary and is a Research Professor at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway. De Lauri is the founding Editor-in-Chief of the journal Public Anthropologist, Director of the Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies, and co-founder of the Anthropology of Humanitarianism Network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists.

