



THE BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH ON AGGRESSION

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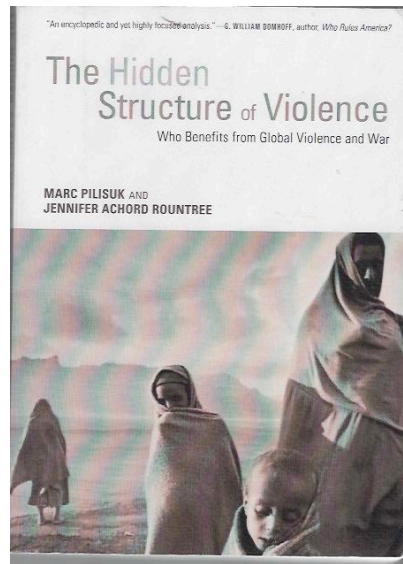
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BOOKS REVIEWS



THE HIDDEN STRUCTURE OF VIOLENCE: WHO BENEFITS FROM GLOBAL VIOLENCE AND WAR

BY Marc Pilisuk and Jennifer Achord Rountree

Published by Monthly Review Press, 2015

ISBN 978-1-5836754-2-7 (Paper)

Text 300 pgs, End Notes 44 pgs, Index 15 pgs

This book should be of interest to anyone constructing an understanding of the causes of violence, particularly as fed by the power motive and influenced by hidden psychological processes. It is a “must read” and a valuable reference for one’s personal library.

The Hidden Structure of Violence (Pilisuk & Rountree, 2015) is an expansion in scope of their first book, *Who Benefits from Global Violence and War: Uncovering a Destructive System* (Pilisuk with Rountree, 2008) published by Praeger Security in 2008. The earlier book traced the hidden structures and their powerful influences in eight (8) chapters and 225 pages. Especially important was their discussion of structural violence (Galtung, 1969). Its importance derives from the powerful influences resulting from mismatches in power and the hidden nature of the influences themselves.

Both books begin with a review of The Costs of Modern War. The discussion in Chapter 2 extends characterization of violence to “Killing: War and the Minds of Men. The reason wars are fought follows from the institutions that humans have created, i.e., our culture.

Chapter 3 begins the discussion of *structural violence*. Structural Violence is a theory developed by Johan Galtung (1969), the founder of peace studies. Structural violence is defined by its relationship to cultural violence. Galling conceptualizes a *violence triangle* in which the three nodes are constantly

interacting. *The nodes are direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. Cultural violence* refers to the normative beliefs and practices of a society by allowing dehumanization of certain persons or groups. Cultural violence leads to *structural violence* when the violence is codified into legal and economic exchanges of the society. Individual acts of violence have many causes and likely are the result of hidden structures of cultural and structural violence.

The authors take care to reveal these hidden structures in a way that is clear to the reader. For example, they ask us to recall the well-known observation by Hanna Arendt that “the most shocking fact about the genocidal brutality of the Nazis was the ordinariness of the perpetrators. They were remarkably like the rest of us.”¹

Chapter 4 “People, Farmland, Water and Narcotics,” Chapter 5 “Networks of Power,” Chapter 6 “RealPolitik: Strategies and Tactics for winning, Chapter 7 “Disinformation,” and Chapter 8 “Values and Habits that Maintain a Violent system” were similar to the same chapters in their 2008 book with some examples refreshed with new information and with the addition of new subsections. Chapter 9 “”The Evolution of Concentrated Corporate Power to Inflict Violence and Injustice: Dangers and Hopes” was added to the 2015 book.

I used the 2008 book in my psychology of aggression class and my peace psychology class. I feel that book was one of the best resources I had and an education for our students. I am now making plans to use the 2015 book in adult learning classes.

Short biosketches of the authors:

“**Marc Pilisuk** teaches at Saybrook University and is Professor Emeritus of Human and Community Development at the University of California at Davis. He is a former president of the society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence and a steering committee member of Psychologists for Social Responsibility. He has published ten books and more than 140 articles over an academic career spanning five decades.

“**Jenifer Achord Rountree** is research manager at the National Indian Child Welfare Association in Portland, Oregon. She has a Ph.D. in psychology from Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center in Sznfrancisco and supports American Indian/Alaska Native tribes and urban Indian communities in community-based participatory research.”²

Hal S. Bertilson is the reviewer. He is a professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

References

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Pilisuk, M., & Rountree, J.A. (2015). *The Hidden Structure of Violence: Who Benefits from Global Violence and War*. Monthly Review Press.

¹ Pilisuk & Rountree, p. 83.

² From the outside back cover of Pilisuk, R. and Rountree, J. S.(2015). *The Hidden Structure of Violence: Who Benefits from Global Violence and War*. Monthly Review Press.