

Violent Conflicts 2015

*The violent decade?! Recent Domains of Violent Conflicts and Counteracting
February 25-27, 2015*

*Organized by the
Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG)*

*At the
Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld*

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The violent decade?! Recent Domains of Violent Conflicts and Counteracting

Are we living in a decade dominated by an underestimation of forms of violence causing a lack of investment in prevention and intervention? The international Conference on “Violent Conflicts 2015: The violent decade?! Recent Domains of Violent Conflicts and Counteracting” in Bielefeld provides a state-of-the-art description and analyses of current inner-societal forms of violence which have the potential to cause massive crisis within as well as between societies.

Four characteristics determine the conference program: The central facets *conflict* and *violence* are connected in discourse to deal with a fundamental question: When does conflict lead to violence and when on the other hand does violence initiate or perpetuate conflict? Secondly the conference focuses on the political dimension of current and historical phenomena of violence posing a threat to societies. Thirdly the conference aims at representing the state-of-the-art of international research on conflict regarding potential of science-to-action transfer and thus fourthly wants to provide a forum for science in conjunction with other publicities through a systematic exchange of findings and perspectives.

Topics are:

- Youth and Violence – Generations of conflict (Panel A)
- Violence and Football – Arenas of conflict (Panel B)
- Violence and Religion – Spheres of conflict (Panel C)
- Expressive Violence – Radicalization of conflict (Panel D)
- Pacification of political violence – suppression of conflict (Panel E)

In order to achieve a systematic exchange the conference is composed of three components. Every day will start with a keynote on conflict and violence research, follow up with the panel-sections and end with a panel discussion concerning the variety of topics presented in the panels. To further give room to fruitful discussions there also will be social events in the evenings.

Further information concerning the calls is provided below.

General Information

Venue: The conference is hosted at the Center for interdisciplinary research (ZiF) in Bielefeld.

<https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/%28en%29/ZIF/Allgemeines/anreise.html>

Fee, travelling and accommodation: There is no fee for participating but we are not able to reimburse expenses for travelling or accommodation. Nonetheless we gladly support you with planning and booking.

Contact: For further information or to apply please contact us via conference.ikg@uni-bielefeld.de or see the conference section soon to be found at our homepage (<https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/%28en%29/ikg/konferenz.html>).

Application: If you want to contribute to a panel with an oral presentation (15 min + 10 min discussion) please send us:

- A short abstract of your paper (300 words)
- A short CV containing your name, academic grade and a selection of your work relevant to the panel you want to participate in

Deadline for submitting an application is **November 30, 2014**.

Panel A: Youth and Violence

Youth violence is a multi-layered phenomenon that has complex causes. Many explanations exist from different disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. On one hand, social conditions and socio-structural aspects are considered in order to examine and understand youth violence. Other socio-scientific approaches focus on the adolescents themselves, their personal environment and their involvement in social networks as well as corresponding relations to peers and other reference persons. On the other hand, various approaches emphasize the different possibilities for participation and co-determination. Although political participation does only partially matter for minors, other areas exist in which youths can get similar experiences of empowerment.

For an explanation of youth violence these different perspectives contribute insofar as they address different sources of recognition which therefore is understood as a unifying element of numerous approaches. Accordingly recognition can be obtained in different areas of life such as family, school, peers and leisure time. Thus, if it is not possible for young people to gain recognition for prosocial behavior or even experience disrespect, this can encourage violent behavior.

Central in this context are:

- The role of recognition as a concept within the established research approaches in the field of youth violence
- The discussion whether recognition is a new, innovative concept which can link different research approaches or whether it just gives well known issues a new name

Moreover, this panel focuses on prevention and intervention against violence within practical youth work. Contributions should be concerned with questions like: What possibilities and chances may adolescents use in order to compensate and counterbalance experienced recognition deficits? How can we succeed to give young people the chance to improve their self-efficacy, without permanently stressing the pressure to perform? How can the practical youth work contribute to prevent juveniles from considering the use of violence as a legit option to act against experiences of disintegration and recognition deficits?

Panel B: Football and Conflict

Although there are numerous studies in Europe about the broad field of football research, especially in Germany very little is known, however, about conflict in the field of “football”, e.g. respective experiences and motivations of football supporters or ethnic conflicts in lower leagues. International in scope, this panel addresses contributions from academics whose work examines the rich and diverse range of football research. Authors are encouraged to submit papers that are theory-driven, empirical-based, or position papers written from the full range of perspectives in the social sciences (e.g. sociology, educational science, pedagogy, political science, policy analysis, cultural studies, anthropology, management and organization, etc.) on topics such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Fan cultures and identities
- Conflicts between fans and police
- Relation between football fans and violence
- Ethnic conflicts in football
- Possibilities of dealing with conflicts in football

Panel C: The role of religion in conflicts – between authenticity and politicization?

Religion remains a factor causing and driving conflicts in everyday life (e.g. prejudice and discrimination towards religious minorities) as well as in national and international contexts. Currently this factor seems to be severely relevant because of the fierce emergence of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq possibly involving the whole region as well as the rest of the world in a new violent, transnational conflict.

In recent decades, research as well as the media focused more on those religious movements entangled in conflicts and thus also more on the extreme side of the phenomenon. Movements like the Christian right in the U.S. or the Muslim Brothers in Egypt are examples from the upper end of a spectrum which proceeds down to radicalized cases meeting the criteria for political extremism. These extremist groups, such as the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, Al- Qaida and its affiliated groups, or Boko Haram in Nigeria, reject the existing political systems as

well as anybody who does not fully adhere to their religious ideologies. The use of violence is programmatic and essential for their existence.

However, this conflict prone role of religion in the political context is also visible on a less extreme level in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, or Turkey. Here, a constant debate on where to draw the line between religion and politics dominates the daily agenda and entails demonstrations, political crisis, or even violent clashes.

At the same time religion can also play the opposite role in conflicts: as an agent for peace and conflict resolution. Prominent examples are the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church or the Dalai Lama who regularly call for peace and moderation in different conflicts around the world. There are also a lot of initiatives founded in the midst of different religious communities to promote peace and coexistences.

This panel will approach the ambivalent role of religion in conflicts from two different perspectives.

The first approach relates to conflict causing role of religion with a special interest in the relationship of religion and politics. A major question is if politicized religions are still distinguishable from other non-religious ideologies especially when thinking of the extremist violent cases. This is followed by the question of what factors might make them unique in comparison to non-religious ideologies.

The second approach is concerned with the potential for peace of religions and religious movements. Here it is of special interest how peaceful coexistence can be created preventing conflicts based on religious arguments from the start as well as the role of religious leaders or communities in mediating conflicts and reconciling divided conflict parties.

Given this background the panel is especially interested in:

- Studies dealing with the politicization of religion and/ or the relation of religion and politics in general; of special relevance are studies on religious fundamentalism or studies on the general function of ideologies; the approach can be of solely theoretical as well as of empirical nature
- Studies examining the role of religion in prejudice and discrimination
- Studies analyzing the role of religion in major conflicts ranging from the intrastate level up to inter-state wars or transnational conflicts; here the focus can be on the causing but also on the moderating role of religion

- Studies examining the role of religion in radicalization processes of individuals, groups, or whole societies
- Studies evaluating programs or initiatives for conflict resolution and peace building where religious organizations/groups play a major role
- Studies dealing with prevention programs or similar initiatives promoting peaceful coexistence, peace building etc.
- In all cases we are very much interested in studies from other than the Christian context, for example, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, or Hindu background

Panel D: Expressive Killings and Processes of Radicalization in Western Countries

Expressive Killings are intentionally committed deeds by lone actors and groups which aim to generate a climate of threat and fear within society. The deeds are serving perpetrators to express their personal and social identities, to mark and intimidate certain groups of victims as well as to motivate sympathizers to equivalent acts of hostility. Terrorism and Hate Crimes are prototypes of such expressive and communicative forms of violence.

In recent times attacks by lone actors and small autonomous groups are becoming increasingly objects of research. Violent acts like school shootings, the series of murders by the National Socialist Underground, the attacks of Oslo and Utøya or the Boston Marathon Bombing show that the phenomenon presents itself in the garment of a wide array of social movements, ideologies, and narratives legitimizing violence. Over the years, several scientific disciplines like social and forensic psychology, sociology, criminology, and education have identified a multitude of risk factors in the personalities, biographies, and the socio-cultural environments and networks of perpetrators. Numerous approaches of explanation have been developed on this basis, each with different ranges and scopes.

The conference provides a framework to bring together perspectives from various disciplines and to shed light upon the phenomenon of expressive killings, the interplay between environment, personality and opportunity structures – and deriving from this – chances and problems for threat management, prevention and intervention. Furthermore the following themes shall be covered within the panel:

- New forms of expressive violence (e.g. lone operators inspired by the Islamic State narrative)
- Comparative Analyses of different forms of expressive violence
- Political and social discourses on expressive violence
- Radicalizing and de-radicalizing contexts in the run up to expressive violence
- Methodological approaches for the examination of processes of radicalization, de-radicalization and expressive violence
- Opportunities for threat assessment, prevention and intervention for expressive violence

Panel E: Remembering Political Violence: Commemorative peace building activities of social movements since the 19th century

Research on Social Movements has long been dominated by structurally biased approaches. It is only recently that research has left behind its abstract perspectives and has become conceptually more open, especially towards cultural perspectives. This cultural turn found its expression not only in studies on gendered aspects but also in a growing body of research on the role of stories, symbols, history, music and patterns of communication in social movements. Moreover, the question how activities on the local level interact with global problems has found much attention.

The section seeks to contribute to this cultural turn by inviting international scholars from a wide range of scholarly disciplines (from history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, to political sciences and media studies). Papers should be focused on commemorative activities of social movements in peace building processes which are related to political violence (from civil war, to left and right terrorism to state induced violence).

In order to foster a fruitful collective debate the geographical range of the contributions should be focused on Europe and on Latinamerica.

Putting one of the following seven aspects/questions of peace building activities of social movements into culturally informed (incl. gender aspects), locally sensitive and globally oriented perspectives is highly recommended. Papers which address comparative, transnational or entangled aspects will be given high priority:

- Group building processes, identity formation, images of threat
- The role of labor movement activists and how this changed since the 19th century
- Differences between late 20th/early 21st century peace building activities of social movements to the actions and aims of the peace-movement of the 1950/80s
- A comparison of peace building activities of victims of terrorist attacks on the one hand with the actions of victims of state induced terror on the other hand
- The (changing) role of collective action (ranging from street gatherings, mourning ceremonies to neighborhood initiatives)
- Could cultures of memory mainly be constructed around heroes, martyrs and victims?
- Which role did the end of the cold war and of related colonial regimes play for successful peace building through social movements?