

Zentrumstage 2022

Societal Conflicts: Collective Action in an Unequal World

The *Zentrumstage 2022* took place between the 14th and the 16th of July 2022 at the Center for Conflict Studies, Philipps University Marburg. Around 100 participants, affiliated with institutions from all over Germany or internationally, spent three days discussing excellent research on inequality, social movements, protests, and political inequalities. Across 23 presentations, scholars from all over Germany, Europe and the world shared their theoretical and empirical insights into their respective areas of the research in the light of the conference topic. The conference further brought together researchers in different phases of their respective careers, ranging from PhD and postdoc projects, participants from graduate schools, as well as input from more senior scholars. For junior and senior scholar alike, this further enriched the conference.

The panels covered a wide variety of subjects, such as socio-economic inequalities; gender-focused and feminist perspectives; and overall questions of transition, resistance, or uprising on different levels of action and by different actor groups; environmental conflicts. Two roundtables further ‘pulled together’ the scope of the conference: one by addressing the roles conflict studies could play in tackling social inequalities, the other by its discussion of social consequences brought about by the war in Ukraine in the region, which addressed the contemporary, critical developments of the conflict. The conference hence brought together researchers from a plethora of disciplines, theoretical and methodological interests, and regional focuses, and aimed to provide a space within which these scholars could meet, exchange views and ideas, and identify shared interests.

The two keynotes were given by Priska Daphi (Bielefeld University) and Nils Weidemann (Konstanz University). They both provided inspiring addresses that combined a broad view on inequality and social conflict with specific examples from their excellent research. They offered complementary views on the relation between inequality and social mobilization. Priska Daphi provided a view from a social movement angle and Nils Weidemann from a political geography perspective.

Incidentally, the Center for Conflict Studies celebrated the 20th anniversary of its founding on July 15, with a separate program and celebration that enriched the conference nevertheless and pointed towards the continued importance of critical peace and conflict research. Throughout the panels, keynotes and roundtables, but also in conversations during breaks and after the core program, it became clear how relevantly connected the fields of inequality and social movements indeed are, and how fruitful a more conscious effort to connect them truly is. Rising levels of inequality as well as the prevalence of protest movements both in authoritarian regimes as well as in consolidated democracies may not inherently, barring a conscious effort, speak to each other, and the *Zentrumstage* conference made a successful effort to bridge this gap.

We owe our thanks and gratitude to the presenters and attendees of the conference, who shared valuable insights into their research and discipline and were crucial to bringing about the fruitful and stimulating atmosphere of the conference. We are further immensely grateful to the German Foundation for Peace Research (DSF), whose funding made this conference possible, as well as to the student assistants, researchers, and organizers at the Center for Conflict Studies, who were vital to this endeavor.