The Collaborative Research Centre "Dynamics of Security" (SFB/TRR 138) and the Anthropology of Peace, Conflict, and Security (APeCS) network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) are organizing the joint, interdisciplinary conference:

Peace, conflict, and security in times of existential crises:

Critical, interdisciplinary, and public engagements

21–22 March 2024, Marburg, Germany

Call for papers

Panel 14. Ethnographic inquiry, decolonial epistemologies, and ethics in peace, conflict, and security research

Convenors:
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While narratives of crisis multiply in the contemporary context marked by turmoil, the positionality of those speaking of crisis is not always made visible and explicit. Yet, we could contend that 'crisis' is largely understood to happen in spaces and times of unusual turmoil, as opposed to relative peaceful periods of time. But some people - Kurds, Palestinians, Roma, African Americans, Ukrainians after the full-scale invasion by Russia, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ+, Uyghurs, racialized and illegalized migrants, and others - live, in some contexts, in what can be seen as a permanent state of crisis. Speaking about and 'for' these groups also raises important ethical questions about authorship and the ethical conduct of research. Especially considering battlefield ethnographic research, it is easy to dominate or reshape the narratives of colonized people, as they can be seen to not have the academic capability to represent themselves, and they are often used as mere data collectors without the power to shape knowledge; their stories can be colonized too. In some contexts, universities' concerns for liability, framed as ethical principles, impose obstacles to the ethnographic research of war, occupation, and violent struggle: for instance, it is impossible to conduct ethnographic research in Ukraine if access to the field is restricted by ethical review boards. Privileged academics expect from non-western scholars to follow data collection and bureaucratic processes according to their rules; they also have the power to select what does, and what does not end up being considered research, which can lead to arbitrary selections that do not do justice to the struggle of research participants. In contrast, relying on the narratives of people under perpetual conditions of crisis, giving space to their truth and lived experience, and

seeing 'crisis' from their own perspective might be productive of different, politically explicit, epistemologies.

Our panel seeks to disturb common narratives of crisis and the monopoly of research ethics under conditions of crisis, by addressing a set of interrelated questions:

1. (How) Does the concept of crisis - understood through different theoretical frameworks - capture the lived experience of peoples living under durable violent structures of oppression?

2. What other concepts stemming from decolonial theory may we use to understand the permanent state of crisis produced by durable and violent colonial structures, or protracted surveillance? In other words, what kinds of decolonial epistemologies could we mobilize, produce, or render generative to understand the complexity of the lived experience of those living in permanent states of crisis?

3. How do we avoid occupying the narratives and reshaping the story of peoples in struggle? How can we conceptualize narratives without imposing our own voice? How can academics embrace the emic terms used by colonized people rather than superimposing concepts which do not do justice to their struggles?

4. How can we use ethnographic inquiry in decolonial ways to decenter, deconstruct, and denaturalize 'crisis' narratives? How can academic knowledge concretely support struggles against oppression, beyond the 'ivory tower' of the university?

5. How does ethics in ethnographic research relate to narratives and storytellers of colonized and subaltern groups, especially in situations of active war and perpetual crisis? How can we reshape the conversation about ethics in research with regards to questions of power, legitimacy, and struggle in contexts of war and crisis?

Considering these questions, we are looking for contributions tackling these, and related questions that can break new paths in our understanding of crisis and research ethics beyond disciplinary boundaries and theoretical frameworks. We seek in particular contributions that combine ethnographic research methods able to generate in-depth accounts of the lived experience of oppressed peoples living under continuous colonial violence with decolonial concepts 'from the margins'. By bringing together such contributions, we aim to open up a debate on narratives of crisis seen from the perspective of those most impacted by structural and colonial violence on a continuous basis. While the concept of 'decolonizing' knowledge has often been co-opted by white, privileged academics, we seek to shape a space where knowledge produced 'from the margins' gains centrality in how we think about crisis, conflict, peace, and security, and how we struggle against colonial violence.

Abstract proposals of up to 300 words, accompanied by titles, names, bios of up to 100 words, and affiliation and contact details of authors should be sent to the convenors by **the 2nd of October 2023**. We expect to notify the selected participants by the 16th of October.

We also remind you that (limited) funding will be available to precarious scholars on a reimbursement of real costs basis. Also, for scholars from the Global South in need of a visa, the organisers can issue letters of invitation.