The Constitution of Peace - Current Debates and Future Perspectives

It has become a common place in academic scholarship to regard peace as an ontologically suspicious concept, as troubling in its own way as war. It is thus surprising that despite recent scholarship the term still remains largely under-studied and under-theorised. If we follow contemporary criticism regarding the prevailing conceptualisation of peace—that it is firmly embedded in liberal thought, for example—the question arises whether it is possible to consider alternative ways of thinking peace. Moreover, since practises of building peace have come under severe criticism from both an empirical and a conceptual perspective, it is time to consider new approaches. The conference seeks to push the debate forward by proposing and discussing alternative ways of understanding peace.

The Zentrumstage will take place in Marburg 11.-13.10.2012. For further information see http://www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/events/zentrumstage.

Lecture Series

The lecture series "Conflicts in Present and Future" is organized by the Center for Conflict Studies and the Seminar on Ecology and Safeguarding the Future (ISEM). Responsible for the Organisation are PD Dr. Johannes M. Becker and Prof. Dr. Hans Ackermann.

For further information see http://www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/events/lecture-series.

Peter Becker Award

Since 2005 the Peter-Becker-Award is being granted every two years to support the transition of peace research into practical projects. Endowed with 10,000 euros it is the highest prize awarded in Germany in the field of peace and conflict studies. The aim is to support projects which make a significant contribution to promoting peace.

The deadline for this year's applications or nominations is June 30, 2012. For further information see http://www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/events/peter-becker-award.
Research

The Center for Conflict Studies predominantly focuses on conflict dynamics as both the driver and the result of social change. On the one hand social change is often laden with (latent) conflict because its processes always generate winners and losers. In addition, social change often leads to the erosion of prevailing norms and institutional structures, which in turn creates space for conflicts to arise. On the other hand, the non-violent management of conflicts allows for productive social change by institutionalizing the pluralism of opinion, values and interests.

In recent times, social change has been prompted by the shift in the relevance of the nation state, processes of social modernization, the change of commonly shared values and identities, and through addressing collective crime as well as the structural change of the international system. With regard to this, research activities in the Center are characterized by a dual approach: not only do we analyze the role of intra-national and local factors; we also focus specifically on societal actors and processes of transnationalization and debordering within our world community.

The following areas of research have been established:

- Theories and Methods in Peace and Conflict Studies
- Intergroup Conflict and Violence
- Migration Processes and Conflict Dynamics
- Violence Prevention and Mediation
- Peace-building and Transitional Justice
- Development Cooperation and Peace
- Civil Societies in Conflict
- International Violent Conflict

PhD Programme

The Center for Conflict Studies offers a PhD Programme including active participation in an interdisciplinary scientific forum, in diverse scientific events and the Marburg Graduate Center for Humanities and Social Sciences. Every PhD student is supported and supervised by two scientific mentors. In addition, PhD students will be offered the possibility to publish their original results of research or „work-in-progress“ papers within the CCS Working Paper Series published by the Center. Furthermore, the Center for Conflict Studies participates in the research training group “Group focused enmity: Causes, phenomenology, consequences.”

Since 2009, the Center hosts a structured PhD Programme entitled „Transitional Justice after Mass Violence“.

More general information on doing a PhD at the University of Marburg can be found at http://www.uni-marburg.de/international-en/postgrad.

The PhD Programme is coordinated by PD Dr. Johannes M. Becker (Contact details overleaf).

Minor Studies

Since the academic year 1995/96, the Center for Conflict Studies coordinates a minor course in peace and conflict studies which was the first of its kind in Germany. The courses are interdisciplinary and comprise 40 different alternatives each term. They include seminars in the field of social sciences and humanities as well as seminars offered by the department of medicine. The minor course may be studied as an ancillary subject to all diploma, BA or Master’s courses at the University of Marburg. Apart from the interdisciplinary and systematic structure of the course learning objectives should also be reached by the way the course is conveyed didactically. With regard to methodology, the course focuses on supervised small groups in order to give students the opportunity to learn how to coordinate different perspectives from different areas and how to cooperate with students from other disciplines.

The course – which is offered in modules – is momentarily studied by about 1000 students and it is subject to regular evaluation.

MA Programme Peace and Conflict Studies

Since the academic year 2004/05, the Center for Conflict Studies has been offering a program, in which a Master of Arts degree (MA) can be obtained after the successful completion of four semesters of study. This program concentrates on research that employs an interdisciplinary and international approach to the study of peace and conflict.

The MA programme in peace and conflict studies at the University of Marburg intends to impart analytical and practical qualifications in the field. This includes the ability to analyse conflicts according to their subject, course, their causes and their actors but also the ability to develop perspectives on pacification, the management and resolution of conflicts.

The Center for Conflict Studies has been awarded by the German state of Hessen in 2007 for the conception and implementation of the MA programme.

Double MA Programme Peace and Conflict Studies

Since the academic year 2011/12 the Center for Conflict Studies at the University of Marburg has been offering in cooperation with the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent a double MA Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies.

Students can opt to spend the first year in Canterbury and the second year in Marburg, where courses will be taught in English. Alternatively fluent German speakers can choose to spend the first year in Marburg where courses will be taught in German and spend the second year in Canterbury.

The multidisciplinary program draws on the vast pool of expertise on conflict analysis, management and resolution at Kent and Marburg. Modules are taught by political scientists, sociologists and social psychologists.

The program is supported with funds from the German Peace Research Foundation (Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung). You may obtain further information on our homepage at http://www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/study.

The PhD Programme is coordinated by PD Dr. Johannes M. Becker (Contact details overleaf).

Key Literature and Textbooks

Several comprehensive introductory textbooks have been published in the field of peace and conflict studies. They provide an overview of the field, and treat conflict theories and forms of conflict resolution. The following books correspond highly with the didactic approaches of the introductory courses of our programmes:


Other volumes and more information can be found at http://www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/publications/course-texts.

Center for Conflict Studies Book Series

Since 1986, the predecessors of the Center for Conflict Studies, the Interdisciplinary Group for Peace and Disarmament Studies (IAF) and the Association of Marburg Academics for Peace and Disarmament Studies (AMW), published 22 book volumes themselves. Since volume 23, the Center for Conflict Studies has continued the book series which is now published by the Lit-Verlag:

- „Der Libyenkrieg - Das Öl und die „Verantwortung zu schützen“ von Johannes M. Becker/ Gert Sommer (Hrsg.), Lit Verlag, Münster 2012.

A detailed overview of the series can be found at: http://www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/publications/series-on-conflict-research Books can be ordered at: konflikt@staff.uni-marburg.de.

CCS Working Papers

The Center for Conflict Studies Working Paper Series presents current research projects and new approaches in the area of Peace and Conflict Studies. The series aims at demonstrating distinct interdisciplinary approaches to conflicts and announcing them in and outside the academic world. As regards content, some orientation is given by the Center’s six focal points of research. Theoretical-conceptual but also empirical contributions „work-in-progress“ papers and results are published. The following papers have come out recently:


Further information and free downloads of all papers are available at http://www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/publications/ccs-working-papers.