

Critical Perspectives on Peace and Conflict in the African Continent

15262 Hauptseminar
Friday, 12-2pm (online)
First session: October 22, 2021
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Seminar description: In this seminar, we will seek to develop concepts for understanding war and conflict in the African continent. So-called “weak governance” and patrimonialism have been presented as the main reasons for war and conflict in different African countries, while other key mechanisms that perpetuate repressive political orders and poverty are being erased. As part of a discursive practice, a rather one-sided, non-reflecting reading is being produced in different university curricula around the world. We will therefore focus on the role of capitalism and neo-colonial politico-economic structures in the emergence and persistence of war and conflict in the continent. Students will read texts, lead discussions and produce their own projects in response to the content of the course.

Seminar plan: This seminar will be divided into two main parts: First, building an understanding of the competing discourses of peace and conflict and a critical investigation of present-day peace and conflict terms, concepts and policies and of the role of capitalism as a system of production and neo-colonialism as a form of economic restructuring and governing within the context of conflict and civil war. This part will take approximately six of the sixteen sessions in this semester.

In the second part, we have ten sessions to concentrate on experiences of conflict and war in Nigeria, the DRC and South Africa, and try to understand them on the basis of our readings and discussions in the first part. Here, we will also try to find answers to the question of why Gabon has been named an “island of peace in the Central African region” and what exactly the parameters of ‘peace’ within this discourse are.

Requirements: Reading notes, short presentation (10-15 minutes), and for those who plan to obtain the full credits, a term paper/ term project

Course material / bibliography

- Amin, Samir: *The Liberal Virus*. New York 2004
- Bernault, Florence: *Colonial Transactions - Imaginaries, Bodies, and Histories in Gabon*. Durham 2019
- Chari, Sharad: *The ocean and the city: Spatial forgeries of racial capitalism*. In: *Society and Space*. 2021
- Dearing, Caitlin: *A Global Approach to Regulating Trade in Conflict Goods in the DRC*. In: *International Affairs Review*. 2010
- Depelchin, Jacques: "This War Must End". An Interview with Jacques Depelchin on the Congo. In: *The Thinking Africa Resource Centre*. 2013
- Depelchin, Jacques: *Reclaiming African History*. Cape Town 2011
- Freire, Paulo: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Introduction, Preface and Chapter 2. New York and London 2000. Originally published in 1970
- Heathershaw, John: *Towards better theories of peacebuilding: beyond the liberal peace debate*. In: *Peacebuilding*. Volume 1. Issue 2. 2013
- Igwe, Isaac O.C.: *History of the International Economy: The Bretton Woods System and its Impact on the Economic Development of Developing Countries*. In: *Athens Journal of Law*. Volume 4, Issue 2 – Pages 105-126. 2018
- Pugh, Michael; Cooper, Neil and Turner, Mandy: *Whose Peace? Critical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Peacebuilding*. London 2008
- Roy, Arundhati: *Capitalism a Ghost Story*. Preface and Section one. Chicago 2014
- Sabaratnam, Meera: *The Liberal Peace? A Brief Intellectual History of International Conflict Management, 1990-2010*. In: Campbell, Susanna, Chandler David and Sabaratnam, Meera (eds.): *A Liberal Peace? The Problems and Practices of Peacebuilding*. London 2011
- Uche, Chibuike: *Oil, British Interests and the Nigerian Civil War*. *Journal of African History*. Volume 49. Issue 1. 2008

- Yates, Douglas A.: *The Rentier State in Africa: oil rent dependency and neocolonialism in the Republic of Gabon*. Trenton 1996

- Zondi, Siphamandla: *African Union approaches to peacebuilding - Efforts at shifting the continent towards decolonial peace*. In: *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*. Volume 17, No. 1. 2017