



Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study

Perspectives on International Politics and Peacebuilding

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Organizers

Prof. Dr. Martin Butler

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EMMIR - European Master in Migration and
Intercultural Relations

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Program

Conference with Prof. Dr. Christine Andrä, Prof. Dr. Devon E. A. Curtis, Prof. Dr. Ranabir Samaddar, valedictory by Prof. Dr. Paula Banerjee

09:30 – 9:45 **Welcome & Introduction**

09:45 – 10:30 **What is Peace? Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies** – Prof. Dr. Devon E. A. Curtis

This presentation introduces the field of peace studies and discusses the main ways that peace and peacebuilding have been conceptualised. It explains the myriad perspectives on peace, and where migration fits within these diverse ways of understanding the possibilities and constraints of building peace. It highlights some of the big debates that have animated the field and how practices have evolved over the last 30 years. The presentation will also address the current ‘crisis’ of international peacebuilding. After its heyday in the post-Cold War period of the 1990s and early 2000s, there is arguably no longer the same kind of belief and commitment to ending armed conflict and promoting peace. The failures of international intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the continued armed conflict in places such as Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan have led many to believe that the era of international peacebuilding is over and that geopolitical competition and power politics are the sole determinants of conflict and peace trajectories. The presentation will suggest some ways of thinking beyond the current peacebuilding impasse and what this might mean for both scholarship and practice.

Christine Andrä. 'Crafting Stories, Making Peace? Creative Methods in Peace Research' *Millennium*, Vol. 50(2), 2022, p. 494-523.

Bliesemann de Guevara, B., & Kostić, R. (2017). Knowledge production in/about conflict and intervention: finding ‘facts’, telling ‘truth.’ *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 11(1), 1–20.

Distler and Salehi, "Knowing Violence in International Politics" in Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Katarzyna Kaczmarek, Ximena Kurowska, Birgit Poppo and Andrea Warnecke (eds.), *Handbook of Knowledge and Expertise in International Politics*, OUP, forthcoming 2025.

Available at: <https://cloud.uol.de/s/iyWZkCLRZZLa8go>

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00 – 11:45 **Peace Research, Peacebuilding and the Production of (Counter-) Knowledge about Conflict and Peace**

Prof. Dr. Christine Andrä

This presentation will focus on the (international) politics of knowledge production about conflict and peace as an emerging field of research. It will start with an overview of the different kinds of actors engaged in the production, dissemination, and consumption of knowledge about conflict and peace in international politics. Thereafter, it will propose a range of theoretical and conceptual tools for thinking about the politics of knowledge production as well as discuss a few selected empirical examples of research on knowledge production in the (broadly conceived) field of peacebuilding. Finally, through an example from my own research on the Colombian peace process, the presentation will also raise the question of the critical potentials of counter-knowledges of conflict and peace, in particular those offered by arts, crafts, and other creative means to enable alternative imaginaries and transformative practices. EMMIR students will be encouraged to bring in examples from contexts that they are familiar with and to link the topics discussed to their own field of study.

Available at: <https://cloud.uol.de/s/98q5KxmrRDqHjqi>

11:45 – 12:30 Security at the Crossroads in the Neoliberal Age
Prof. Dr. Ranabir Samaddar

1. Efforts are on in the Global South to decolonise the security question and relocate it in the context of the post-colonial societies - their problems of underdevelopment, issues of basic rights such as of food, shelter, education, work, and health, and the adverse impact of internal conflicts and conflicts with neighbours on these societies, and their struggles for justice. The security question in the South is entangled with issues of life – life of the nation, people, and in particular lives of the vulnerable population groups in society, who face a generalised state of insecurity of life. To look at the question of security from the biopolitical angle is to disengage it from colonial paradigms and to decolonise the security problem.

2. Traditional approaches to the security issue could not reflect on the massive transformation in the last few decades, consequent to globalisation, in countries of the South. It thereby failed to achieve a deeper understanding of the insecurities of marginalised people. Some critical security studies specialists in the post-cold war decade however focused on rights, and critiqued the traditional approach to security by talking about the emerging new underclass of people, their constraints and insecurities produced by war, oppression, and poverty. However, they could not go beyond and recognise the implications of these popular insecurities, which have resulted in increasing vulnerabilities. These insecurities require attention, analysis, and call for proper approach that is suffused with issues of rights and justice. The more the macro security of the state and the polity has been reinforced, the more it has produced micro insecurities in society, leading to ethnic clashes, spread of homeland demands,

conflicts over resources, public health disasters, and not the least - mob lynching in the wake of the spread of racial, religious, community, and caste hatred. They have also resulted in making women from the impoverished classes the permanent underclass who find it particularly difficult to get out of that condition. Probably this is the question of women's security in a post-colonial world. At the same time, labour in even informal enterprises in the post-Covid time is declining. Security of the nation is unable to address these grave maladies. Hence, to highlight the links between macro-security and micro-insecurities and draw appropriate implications is the need of the time. The issue of security is now at the crossroads of rights, justice, and vulnerabilities.

3. Contemporary South Asia is marked by paradoxes that reflect the growing securitisation of states in the region. Politics of the region are characterised by a division of insiders and outsiders, and thus by definition between citizens and aliens. Decolonisation happened through demarcation of borders of respective postcolonial states by departing colonial powers. In certain cases, where colonial rulers could not control frontier areas, they granted some autonomy to deter "outside" powers and buy peace in the region. In a historical sense, borders and boundaries of the newly decolonised countries of South Asia were demarcated through acts of partition. As a result, politics and geographies were permanently fractured, population groups in borderland areas were rendered homeless, stranded minorities were created, and migration was criminalised. Ethnic, racial, and communal hatred exacerbated. The situation is aggravated by neoliberal restructuring of economies resulting in everyday production of insecurities all around. This, as stated earlier, is the paradoxical milieu of macro security and micro-insecurities. These insecurities call for recognition of the paramount principle of justice often expressed through acts of claim making and rights. They force our attention to the question of the responsibility of the States to protect vulnerable population groups. They call on the polity to adopt as a norm of governance the principle of care and protection towards providing security to population groups debilitated by a condition of fundamental rightlessness and thus rendered gravely vulnerable. Security of life calls for the principle of responsibility of those who govern for the lives of millions and to protect the latter from destitution, precarious life conditions and the ever-present possibility of impending death.

4. In the wake of neoliberal reforms and relentless urbanisation, crime and urban insecurity have become an interlinked issue overwhelming the public mind. Crime has become synonymous with the birth and growth of the city. Urban governance structure, increasingly shaped by global governance norms, is geared towards managing and pacifying claim-makings of urban population groups with tools of surveillance and coercion. The overriding aim of urban governance is to ensure the conditions of reproduction, including reproduction

of an unjust urban order characterised by a growing impoverished underclass. Cities world over have had experiences of urban governance creating mayhem in the city in the name of abolishing crime. Rudy Giuliani, the mayor of New York City (1994-2001), was not only trying to free New York City of crime. That figure of a cleaner of crimes has been part of the contemporary history of many cities of the South. And, almost everywhere the assumption has been that immigrants are the root cause of crime. They are the scourge. Prostitution, drugs, trade in illicit goods, corruption, trafficking, gang warfare, and mafia activities... The crime line is straight, and we are told, all that a city needs is a determined and ruthless cleaner who can order his/her forces to press triggers to save the city. On the other hand, everyday life of the lower classes in the city is marked by for instance lack of safety of female commuters in public transportation system, lack of drinking water, housing, fuel, even lack of minimum sanitation facilities, various consequences of repressive approach to street vending, and insecurity associated with street level economic activities resulting in two parallel figures of the policeman and the street vendor or the sex worker - each watching the other as the typical margin of a society marked by disorder, crime, and informality, yet constantly interacting with each other. The question of security emerges at this intersection of issues of daily life. Security cameras, civil guards, anticipatory arrests, creating a race of habitual offenders, and repressive techniques of surveillance and crowd control – these are marks of an urban biopower geared towards controlling the lives and bodies of the popular classes.

5. Against this is the phenomenon of biopolitical practices from below that take shape in the course of resisting the power at the top. Trust building networks, solidarity efforts, practices of care and protection coupled with an ethic of solidarity and hospitality, result in new social leaderships and various forms of self-organisation. These features mark the counter-power – the biopolitical responses of the insecure marginal classes. Even though there is a daily-ness in what is described here, they are most evinced in times of crisis, such as the recent cyclones in Bengal in the midst of an epidemiological crisis, and the epidemiological crisis itself, which the Global North marked as a once in a century event, while in reality epidemics have remained a cyclical reality in the global south. In other words, biopolitics from below does not dismiss the question of security, it approaches the question of security from the angle of trust, solidarity, and the overall question of life.

12:30 – 12:45 **Concluding remarks** – Prof. Dr. Paula Banerjee

12:45 *Lunch*