

Network Event Report

The Making of Peace, Conflict and Security: Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion

6th Bi-annual Peace and Conflict Studies in Anthropology meeting (PACSA)
28-30 August 2017, University of Amsterdam

Submitted by PACSA conveners (Erella Grassiani, Andreas Hackl)

The conference theme

Conflict and peace-making have fundamentally shaped and remade boundaries and relationships in the world we live in. These transformations include processes of inclusion and exclusion that accompany conflicts and the efforts to resolve, transform or secure them. Inclusion is commonly associated with peace rather than conflict, but violent means are often justified in inclusive or productive terms: the renewal of a unified people, the protection of a national economy, or the toppling of an old regime to make way for a more inclusive future. Whether it is peace-making, conflict or securitisation: boundaries, borders and relationships are frequently reified, contested or hardened through these processes. In this sense, both conflict and peace are interrelated ordering principles at the heart of which lie questions about inclusion and exclusion, relation and disconnection. As some are drawn into the centre of a violent cause, others might be ostracized, targeted or displaced as inevitable Others. Similarly, approaches to peace-making and conflict transformation – often seeking to be inclusive – might lead to unintended exclusive consequences: political settlements negotiated by elites can exclude the voices of marginal groups, or override calls for historical justice; and as peace-making tends to involve power struggles, its outcomes can lead to new grievances and renewed conflict.

In particular, security and forms of securitisation, as part of major ordering mechanisms, play a key role here. In the name of security, freedom is protected, borders are militarised and interventions justified, often in ahistorical, depoliticised ways. Metaphorically speaking, the boundaries between unpredictable outsiders and to-be-protected insiders must be guarded and reaffirmed: between nations and globalised flows of people, between security compounds and war-zones, between citizens and non-citizens and between the rich and poor. Questions about inclusion/exclusion are central to our understanding about how dynamics of peace, conflict and security interrelate. Moreover, these dynamics have an often suppressed and distorted temporal and historical dimension, as some histories are ignored and others are shaped, while long-term processes of inclusion and exclusion can become buried underneath the spectacular buzz and noise of immediate crises that claim moments of unprecedented truths.

The event as it unfolded

As one of PACSA's largest conferences to date, the 6th Bi-annual meeting at the University of Amsterdam can be considered a major success. In addition to EASA's generous support, the event

benefited from the collaboration with a number of partners: the Anthropology of Security Network, SECURCIT (University of Amsterdam), the Dept. of Anthropology (VU University Amsterdam) and the research centre 'Dynamics of Security: Forms of Securitisation in Historical Perspective.' Alongside these partners, the summit benefitted greatly from the support of a diversity of individuals, including Ana Ivasiuc, Jelke Bosma, Giulia Traversari, Muriel Kiesel, Limor Samimian-Darash, Lior Volinz, Michael Rabi, Koen Donatz and Matthias Teeuwen.

With more than 150 participants, the conference spanned 20 panels distributed between three full conference days in four parallel rooms. The detailed programme can be accessed via the website under the following link: <http://pacsa-web.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PACSA2017-booklet-def.pdf>

In a multi-stage process, we had invited panel proposals and then peer-selected panels involving an advisory group of participating scholars. The successful panels were then compiled into a general call for papers whereby each paper proposal applied for a particular panel (some panels had already been proposed with a full list of speakers in the first place and were thus marked as closed). This allowed for a good mix of open and pre-organised panels. The panels were all geared to offer new insights and exciting discussions around the overall conference theme, exploring issues as diverse as peacebuilding, securitization, (non)violence, displacement, borders, the state, citizenship, and more. We received a record number of paper abstracts and successfully accommodated most of them.

In its aim to support young scholars and facilitate productive outputs, PACSA encouraged all conveners to think about follow-up initiatives and concrete publications as part of their panels. A dedicated early career workshop brought together a number of scholars in an open forum to discuss challenges and think about solutions to widespread problems collectively.

Alongside a fully-funded conference dinner for all participants in downtown Amsterdam, the summit offered a unique afternoon activity in collaboration with 'Lampedusa Cruises': a canal boat tour highlighting the role migrants have played in the making of Amsterdam, guided by recent migrants and refugees who arrived to the Netherlands. This made a great fit with the theme of Barak Kalir's provocative keynote, 'From Apartheid to Departheid: Or why "stop deportation" campaigns do not succeed'. Organised as an informed discussion rather than a singular lecture, the keynote featured a panel of discussants who are leaders in the field of refugee studies (Cindy Horst and Simon Turner). Unfortunately, a second keynote had to be cancelled last minute due to illness.

PACSA also used the opportunity of this successful event to streamline its website and commission a graphic designer to create a new logo. With the support of Nomad IT, the website has been transferred to Nomad IT's servers and changes have been put in place to make the administration of website hosting and management easier in times of changing leadership.