

Arbeitskreis „Gewaltordnungen“ in der DVPW

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Bericht über die 19. Veranstaltung des AK Gewaltordnungen

Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization

at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld, April 6-8, 2011, funded by
the Volkswagen-Foundation

The conference “Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization” at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld was hosted by the International Journal of Conflict and Violence (www.ijcv.org) in collaboration with the Working Group “Orders of Violence” in the German Association for Political Science (DVPW). The conference was organized by *Lorenzo Bosi* (EUI, Florence), *Chares Demetriou* (University of Cyprus), *Stefan Malthaner* (Bielefeld University), *André Bank* (GIGA, Hamburg), *Teresa Koloma Beck* (University of Marburg), and *Alex Veit* (University of Bremen). Among the 65 participants were established experts and young scientists from the United States, the Netherlands, Turkey, Israel, the United Kingdom, Italy, Greece, Switzerland, Denmark, Ireland, France, Spain, Russia, and Germany.

The conference aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of processes of radicalization and de-radicalization by approaching the topic interdisciplinary and from an internationally and historically comparative perspective. It explicitly sought to go beyond the common focus on Islamist terrorism and included case studies and comparative works on a broad range of violent phenomena and theoretical contributions on numerous important aspects. The combination of keynote-talks in plenary sessions with smaller panel-sessions thereby gave the event a common framework of guiding concepts and questions but also offered opportunities for intensive discussion.

I. Plenary session

The first day of the conference was dedicated to the discussion of general approaches and questions in the study of radicalization and de-radicalization. After a welcome address by the president (Rektor) of Bielefeld University, *Gerhard Sagerer*, and an opening talk by the director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence and editor of the IJCV, *Wilhelm Heitmeyer*, two keynote presentations introduced and developed the topic of the conference. *Martha Crenshaw* (Stanford University), drawing on her vast experience in the field of research on terrorism and political violence, discussed existing approaches to studying radicalization and de-radicalization, pointing in particular to a lack of historically comparative works, and laid the ground for further debates by formulating several crucial questions and problems. Drawing on data collected at Maryland University, *Gary LaFree* then took up a number of common misconceptions regarding terrorism and radicalization-processes, providing an informed overview of current phenomena of terrorist violence.

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IIa. Panel: Radicalization and de-radicalization in repressive settings

Chair: Teresa Koloma Beck

The second day started with Panel IIa, which focussed on the problem of radicalization and de-radicalization in repressive settings, i.e. on the interdependencies between repressive politics and the radicalisation or moderation of radical groups. Four papers explored the problem, each presenting an in-depth case study from a different regional context (Middle East, South-East Asia, Latin America, Europe):

Penelope Larzillière analysed the trajectory of radical political Islamism, especially the Muslim Brothers, in Jordan. Based on this case study, she developed the argument that in repressive settings the development of radicalisation- or de-radicalisation-dynamics is linked to the emergence or not of alternative arenas of politicisation, which would permit the articulation of views and/or attitudes in opposition of the government.

Felix Heiduk then reconstructed the role of radical political Islamism in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Challenging a common hypothesis according to which political participation leads to moderation, he showed that the democratisation process in Indonesia opened up spaces not only for moderate Islamist civil society organisations and parties, but also for the evolution of violent and radical groups.

Magaly Sanchez R. explored radicalisation of state politics in Venezuela, tracing the progressively authoritarian performance of an outwardly democratically organised government. In the focus of the analysis were exclusionist discourses and politics of the government which, supported by state controlled media, fostered social conflicts and an endemisation of violence.

Christian de Vito finally reconstructed the trajectory of prisoners' movements in Europe. He showed that the end of the common prisoners' movement was tightly linked to the rise and subsequent imprisonment of violent political activists in the 1970s. The emerging polarised situation, with terrorist groups on one side and an ever more repressive state on the other, limited the margins of action for the common prisoners' movement and their outside supporters. At the same time it fostered a further radicalisation of political prisoners.

The papers and the subsequent discussion showed that the relationship between repression and radicalisation is a complex and highly context-dependent. On the one hand, the panel challenged the liberal conception promising that transition from a repressive regime to more open and participatory forms of governments necessarily is associated with moderation of radical forces. On the other hand, the case studies showed, that in situations of transition or political crisis, radicalisation and de-radicalisation occur at the same time, although in different social milieus.

IIb. Panel: Legitimacy of radicalization and de-radicalization

Chair: Chares Demetriou

Panel IIb brought together paper presentations on the topic of the legitimacy of radicalization and de-radicalization. This is a central topic in the study of processes of radicalization and/or de-radicalization because a population's stand vis-à-vis political contention and its tactics affects the contention's waxing and waning. At the same time, this is a very complicated topic because this popular stand varies along a wide range of contexts of contention. The four papers presented in this panel demonstrated the topic's varied manifestations as well as its importance.

The panel's first paper presentation was appropriately broad in scope. Titled "Where Have All the Moderates Gone? Sociology and the Study of Violence, Conflict, and Peace," *John Stone's* presentation set the tone by offering a sweeping account on mainstream sociology's approach to the

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question of radicalization and de-radicalization. Sociology's is by and large a record of omission, Stone argued. Curiously, even sociologists who experienced violence first hand, like Alexis de Tocqueville, downplay both the existence of violence and its social role. The main exception to this record of omission comes from area studies – themselves belonging to the margins of sociology – focusing in particularly troubled places of the world, most notably settings of ethnic conflict in Africa.

The second paper presentation was of a case study. *Eitan Alimi's* “Struggling to Remain Relevant: Intersecting Ties, Boundary Deactivation, and Controlling Contention in the Jewish Settler Struggle against the Gaza Pullout” was a report of the author's research on the 2005 disengagement of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip. Using a sophisticated series of quantitative and qualitative evidence, Alimi offered an analysis of the strategic maneuvering of the leadership of the settler movement vis-à-vis both the movement's base and the Israeli state's disengagement policy tactics. This case is particularly important for understanding de-radicalization because a clash between the Israeli authorities and the settler movement was imminent at the eve of the disengagement, yet did not materialized.

The third paper presentation was historical. *Bill Kissane*, in a presentation titled “Elections as a mechanism of de-radicalization in independent Ireland” offered an account of the early decades of political life in Ireland following the signing of the 1921 treaty between the Irish and the British warring factions. At the center of Irish politics during that period was the question of whether to honour the treaty or not. Kissane maintained that the growing acceptance of the treaty was part of a process of de-radicalization of politics and that critical role in that process was played by the series of elections that took place. Thus the popular stand through elections gave legitimacy to de-radicalization creating along the way a complicated and nuanced brand of Irish nationalism.

The fourth paper presentation was a contemporary analysis of politics. *Mounah Abdel-Samad's* “Political Inclusion in Morocco and its Impact on Peace” offered an analysis of the current security threats in Morocco from domestic and foreign insurgents. Relying on interviews with Moroccan legislators which he contacted, Abdel-Samad maintained that the low levels of violence in Morocco are a result of the relatively high levels of political inclusion in the country. This factor is critical given that the Moroccan population is highly fragmented along ethnic, tribal, religious, and other lines; most population fragments are therefore integrated, to one extent or another, to the political system.

Just as the paper presentations were thought provoking, the discussion of them in the panel was thoughtful. Cross-fertilization of ideas ensued as, for example, questions regarding inclusion were raised for the case of Ireland and questions on sociological perspectives were raised for the case of Gaza. In general, the panel succeeded in highlighting the central concern regarding legitimacy by discussing it in specific contexts and through sophisticated and erudite analyses.

IIc. Panel: Historical Periods of Transnational Diffusion

Chair: André Bank

Panel IIc focussed on the time-bound character of transnational radicalization and de-radicalization. Moving beyond often still too methodologically nationalist perspectives, the four paper presentations looked at different instances the transnational-local interlinkages of repertoires of political action. The used methodologies ranged from social movement approaches to protest diffusion over social network and media studies-inspired web content analyses to hermeneutic-interpretative understandings.

Organized chronologically, the panel's first paper examined the transnational diffusion of “1968”, a global signifier for a broad variety of leftist political movements. *Emin Alper's* “Protest Diffusion in the Turkish 68 Movement” thoroughly examined two cases of indirect diffusion that rendered the Turkish '68' part of the global protest movement: anti-imperialist demonstrations following the Arab-

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Israeli War of June 1967 and the impact of the 'Paris May' of 1968. He stressed the role of agency and selective adoption of the Turkish activists, who were not mobilized by the Vietnam War, as it was in the U.S. and parts of Western Europe at the time. Rather, the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 as well as the existence of the U.S.'s Sixth Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean served as the 'closer-by' mobilizing symbols around which the movement formed and thrived. Overall, Alper's presentation raised awareness about the complexity of transnational diffusion and emphasized the context-specificity of radicalizing protest movements.

The second paper presentation, *Roel Meijer's* "Saudi Arabia's War on Terror. Combating Passions, Ignorance and Deviation", studied the post-9/11 state rehabilitation programs with radical Islamist activists and thus analysed the de-radicalization side of the processes of radicalization and de-radicalization. Being home to the Wahhabi-inspired of Sunni Islamism, the Saudi state has historically sponsored the transnational extraversion of radical Islamist activists, especially since the late 1970s. Since 9/11, then, the Saudi state has – somewhat ironically perhaps – been at the forefront of the very curbing of this radicalized activism. Drawing on fieldwork insights and a close reading of Saudi documents, Meijer stressed that the state authorities have not been able to develop an all-encompassing counter-narrative and strategy. According to him, this is partly a function of the large conceptual overlap in ideological-religious concepts between the Wahhabi state and the radical Islamist activists as well as the state's previous strong support of radicalization abroad.

The third paper presentation was *Manuela Caiani's and Linda Parenti's* "Right-Wing Political Radicalization Using the Internet in Italy and Spain". Based on a comprehensive survey and detailed reading of the contents and web-links of right-wing homepages, the authors showed the degrees and connections of right-wing radicalization on the internet. They also highlighted that in comparison Italian right-wing groups are more transnational than Spanish ones, having stronger connections to other activists and organizations in Europe and Northern America. Overall, Caiani and Parenti underline the importance of taking into account the relevance of the internet as a key medium for political radicalization in the early 21st century.

Finally, *Thomas Olesen* presented his work "Transnational Injustice Symbols: Al-Qa'ida and Guantanamo Bay". Taking a sociological approach to radicalization, he pointed out that terrorists – Islamist or other – are motivated by a deeply felt sense of social and political injustice. In today's mediatized world, it is therefore the existence of so-called 'transnational injustice symbols' which serve as widely, almost globally held shared conceptions and images (e.g. Guantanamo Bay: cages/caves, orange uniforms etc.) and which can also function as means to legitimize and mobilize for radicalized political action. Olesen's analysis thus convincingly highlighted the important and often forgotten symbolic dimension of radicalization.

Following these thought-provoking paper presentations, the panel discussion revolved around three more general themes: First of all, the adequate conceptualization of the transnational dimension of radicalization and de-radicalization was discussed. Against the commonly used understanding of 'diffusion', more agency-oriented perspectives of 'appropriation' and 'translation' were suggested. Secondly, and related to this, the exact understanding of the transnational-local dynamic interplay was brought up; might it be that the transnational level is the realm of mobilization, whereas the specific processes of radicalization take place locally? The aspect of the very context specificity of radicalization and de-radicalization were highlighted again. Thirdly and finally, the relevance of media coverage of radicalization and de-radicalization was underlined.

IIIa. Panel: Institutional de-/radicalization

Chair: Alex Veit

The panel on institutional radicalization and de-radicalization focused on state government and administrative entities. It thereby served to complement a perspective that detects radicalization solely among societal actors. The most obvious example of radicalized states is of those committing genocide. Such states transgress both legal and moral norms, and use violence in ways usually considered illegitimate. The presentations and the discussion largely evolved around the question on how processes of state radicalization (and to a lesser extent de-radicalization) can be analyzed, and whether the terms 'radicalization' and 'de-radicalization' are appropriate.

Hank Johnston (San Diego State University) presented on "Radicalization, De-radicalization and State Hegemony". Using examples from within authoritarian states around the globe, he argued that even under supposedly totalitarian regimes, there may be space for oppositional practices. How states react to oppositional activities is dependent not only on the highest echelons of power. The heterogeneity of states - with diverging interests between local, regional, and national level bureaucrats and security officers, as well as between elites – provides space for opposition. Johnston pointed out numerous contingent factors for processes of state radicalization and de-radicalization regarding the repression of opposition.

Scott Straus (University of Wisconsin, Madison) introduced the terms "escalating" and "restraining" regarding mechanisms of state de/radicalization. In his paper "Escalation and Restraint in African Genocide and Non-Genocide Cases" he compared various cases of mass violence. Straus argued that genocide research fails to adequately account for factors leading to genocide, because its comparative approach is too narrow. By including cases of mass violence that did not lead to genocide – although many factors considered constitutive for processes of state radicalization were present – he distilled a number of conditions impacting on state actors perspective and behavior.

Charlotte Heath-Kelly (Aberystwyth University, Wales) in her presentation "State of Exception, State of Prevention: The Radicalization of British Counter-terrorism policy during the War on Terror" scrutinized state discourse and practices regarding Muslim youth and communities in Great Britain. Using Giorgio Agamben's concept of the state of exception, she argued that policymakers adopted seemingly irrational ideas about the spread of dangerous ideas. In this process, Heath-Kelly argued, state discourse radicalized by singling out minority groups as specifically dangerous and thus subject to special treatment.

Christian Davenport (University of Notre Dame), who could not attend the conference, described in his paper (presented by Teresa Koloma Beck) "The States Must be Crazy: Dissent and the Puzzle of Repressive Persistence" state repression against an African American separatist, militant group. Arguing that states' repressive strategy generally fail to result in the decrease of militant action, Davenport analyzed that repression may have other aims than officially stated.

Initiated by discussant Klaus Schlichte (University of Bremen), the debate revolved around the question of terms and definitions. Can states actually radicalize? While it seems to be reasonable regarding genocides to speak of radicalized state institutions, being violent actually defines statehood to a large extent. Would a state's own norms than constitute the threshold between normal behavior and discourse, and radicalism? As theoreticians of the state such as Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben have pointed out, the adjournment of norms and rules such as in a state of emergency or exception, can however be considered as the very core of statehood, or state power.

IIIb. Panel: Organizational dynamics of radicalization and de-radicalization

Chair: Stefan Malthaner

Panel IIIb focused on organizational dynamics in processes of radicalization and de-radicalization; that is, it discussed the way organizational structures of militant movements and groups, mechanisms of leadership and control, or relations within and between different parts of an organization or a movement contributed, facilitated, or prevented processes of radicalization. The panel included four presentations which were highly relevant to the topic, all approaching the issue of organizational dynamics from very different angles.

Veronique Dudouet offered insights of her project on intra-party dynamics during processes of political transformation, when armed groups disengage from violent campaigns and engage in political activities. Interesting for the panel's discussion was her emphasis on the need to maintain organizational coherence during processes of transformation to ensure discipline and reliability, which to some extent counters common assumptions that militant organizations have to be destroyed or weakened to make peace negotiations possible. The discussion then in particular took up the conceptual difference between disengagement and de-radicalization.

Gianluca de Fazio's presentation, then, introduced a relational perspective to the discussion by emphasizing the role of intra-movement competition in processes of radicalization, drawing on the example of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland between 1968 and 1972. He argued that interactions between different movement-organizations entailed a mechanism of political outbidding that contributed to the gradual radicalization of some groups. The discussion highlighted the fact that relations within a movement relations and relations with external actors are closely intertwined.

The third presentation by *Ekaterina Stepanova* focused on the organizational makeup of the modern global jihadist movement, starting from the question: how can this movements efficacy in carrying out terrorist attacks despite its decentralized network-character be explained? She argued that in addition to hybrid elements, which also includes hierarchical structures, the answer to this question lies in the integrating and guiding function of this movement's ideology, which provides direction also on a tactical level.

Finally, *Alexandra Stein* presented her study on the radicalizing function of control in totalist groups from a social-psychological perspective, which emphasized the role of isolation-strategies of "totalist" groups and their leaders, which create relationships of disorganized attachment among its members, making them susceptible to manipulation.

One overarching theme of this panel, developed by speakers and taken up by discussants, was the topic of control in organizations: How is control established in clandestine organizations and in transnational networks? When is organizational discipline and control necessary to enable, for example, the transition towards political engagement? And when, finally, does control by charismatic leaders contribute to the radicalization of group-members? Thereby, the discussion also highlighted the problem of the specificity of violent organizations. As many mechanisms and dynamics can be found in all forms of organizations, the crucial question is what are the effects of specific characteristics of violent organizations, such as organizational structures specialized on militancy, clandestine forms of operation, and the particular problem of legitimating and integrating a violent organization.

IIIc. Panel: Outcomes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization

Chair: Lorenzo Bosi

Panel IIIc was organized with the intention to stimulate further work on the outcomes of radicalization and de-radicalization processes. Despite the visible development of the terrorism and political violence literature ethical issues and methodological problems seem to have hindered systematic investigations as well as theoretical developments in this important research area. Three papers relevant to the panel topic were presented and discussed in depth first by a distinguished scholar, *Rowell Huesmann* (University of Michigan), and secondarily by the audience (around 10 academics).

Lasse Lindekilde's presentation (Aarhus University) has shown the intended and un-intended outcomes of radicalization prevention policies, focusing on the Danish action plan to prevent radicalization from 2009, and Danish Muslims as the primary target group. Lindekilde has argued that the intended outcome of the policies is the transformation, shaping and disciplining through various governing techniques of illiberal and violence prone 'radicals' into active, liberal citizens. However, he has asked if the implementation of the action plan in practice may yield also unintended (negative) consequences. Here he has argued that at least three sets of unintended outcomes may occur: first that the formulation, content, presentation and implementation of policies conveys important information to target groups (in this case particularly the Muslim minorities) of their position in society; second that perceived misrecognition in policies may shape negatively identity strategies among target groups; third, that political level radicalization prevention policies and the radicalization discourse in general, limits the possibilities for Muslim participation in public debates.

Kevin Bean (Liverpool University) has discussed the British State strategy in responding throughout the 1970s-1980s-1990s to the Provisional IRA armed campaign. Particular importance has been placed on the PIRA impact on the British State welfare system in Northern Ireland. In making these assessments, Bean's work suggests that British state strategy in its various manifestations of both 'hard' and 'soft' power has been effective in creating an essentially stabilizing structure of power that will continue to define Northern Ireland for the foreseeable future. However, it was also suggesting that the contradictions of this process of incorporation make the definition of success and failure a far from simple matter for both the state and the former insurgents.

Joceylan Viterna (Harvard University) using data from in-depth interviews with 230 Salvadorans—guerrillas and non-guerrillas, men and women, leaders and grassroots combatants— has told us of the personal and political consequences for women in El Salvador. Her findings show that women who successfully walked the line between combatant and civilian during the war occupied powerful "brokerage" positions that in turn allowed them to capitalize on new political and economic opportunities after the war had ended. In contrast, women who "bent gender" the most during times of war—the full-time, front-line combatants—were the least likely to benefit politically or economically from their wartime actions, because they lacked the necessary connections or respect. Finally, she has argued that the Salvadoran Left has actively promoted conservative gender ideologies as a strategy to "prove" their "de-radicalization" in the post-war era—a strategy that has left their female supporters remobilized into a different (feminist) fight, altogether demobilized, or even incarcerated.

Generally the debate of the panel has developed around methodological issues concerning this specific field of research. Political and biographical types of outcomes of radicalization and de-radicalization processes were also mainly discussed. Only briefly other further possible types of impacts have been touched: economic and socio-cultural ones.

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IV. Plenary session

The plenary session on the last day of the conference brought together the various lines of discussion. In her keynote-talk “Comparing the incomparable?” *Donatella della Porta* (EUI, Florence) considered different analytical approaches to the study of processes of radicalization, thereby preparing the floor for a general debate on theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon. In particular, the plenum took up her suggestion that a relational perspective aiming at identifying mechanisms of radicalization might be fruitful to comparative research. Adding a historical perspective, *Heinz-Gerhard Haupt's* (EUI, Florence, Bielefeld University) talk “A historical comparison between violent organizations and individual careers” discussed some of the core questions in the study of radicalization in light of research on participation in Nazi-Organizations in Germany and social-revolutionary terrorist Organizations in Europe, which provoked numerous comments in the final, concluding discussion.

Arrangements for publishing the results of the conference

The hosts and organizers of the conference are preparing two major publications to ensure that the results of this conference are made accessible to the international academic community. Participants will be invited to submit their papers for publication in a special-focus section in the *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* (IJCV, II/2012), which will be guest-edited by Donatella della Porta and Gary LaFree, or to contribute articles to a volume on *Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization*, edited by Lorenzo Bosi, Chares Demetriou, and Stefan Malthaner, and published by Springer U.S. (in negotiation).